



# CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

Last updated 16 Nov 2021

## Scope

The REACH for Nepal (RFN) Foundation is run by volunteers, including Board members and staff. The Foundation engages third party suppliers and contractors, primarily in Nepal, to deliver both development and humanitarian aid projects. A condition of association for any person or organisation with the RFN Foundation will be formal compliance with this Code of Conduct. This Policy applies to all associated with the Foundation whether they work here in Australia or in Nepal.

This Code of Conduct is based on the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Quality Assurance Framework, commensurate with the size and nature of the work of the RFN Foundation.

## Code of Conduct Commitments

Signature to this document is evidence of agreement to comply with what is outlined below.

### Personal behaviour

I will:

- comply with all RFN Policies;
- maintain a professional standard of behaviour and courtesy to all;
- act with honesty and integrity in all my dealings whether they are with sponsors, donors, partners, or the communities I serve in Nepal;
- not engage in bullying, harassment nor discrimination, and
- report any perceived or actual conflicts of interest between personal and professional roles and responsibilities.

### Cultural sensitivity and respect:

RFN values cultural diversity and expects everyone associated with the foundation to be sensitive to the ways in which their own behaviour, dress, and practices may be perceived by local people.

I will:



- be sensitive to those from different cultures and traditions, including those living with a disability;
- act in a manner that respects the culture of the people in Nepal and is consistent with the principles of basic Human Rights;
- respect the local leadership and maintain a serving attitude, and
- treat every child, fellow worker, communities and families I work with dignity and respect.

#### Standards and confidentiality:

I will:

- not engage in fraudulent behaviour and report suspicions of fraud involving RFN or the delivery partner in Nepal;
- not participate in any conduct that may bring RFN, its programs or the Australian government into disrepute;
- uphold RFN, its vision, goals and activities, and
- commit to operate with integrity and transparency in every aspect of what I do, including in using sponsor's, donors and partner resources.

#### Prevention of sexual exploitation abuse and harassment:

RFN staff, other volunteers and contractors must create a work environment free of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

I will:

- comply with Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, the Child Protection and Vulnerable People, and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment policies;
- not engage in sexual exploitation or sexual or physical abuse;
- abide by the RFN Professional Behaviour Standards for Protecting Children and Vulnerable People statement included as Appendix 1, and
- report any suspected or actual instances of sexual exploitation or sexual or physical abuse.

#### Reporting:

All RFN Staff and other volunteers or contractors are obligated to report violations of the Code of Conduct and associated policies to their supervisor or where not practicable to the [CEO](#). Any alleged breaches of this Code of Conduct will be the subject of investigation by RFN.

Where the breach also breaks a law, the police/relevant government unit will be informed. I also understand that knowingly making a false accusation against someone can have severe repercussions.

#### Abiding to the Code of Conduct



I agree to abide by this Code of Conduct and have read and will comply with the following policies:

- Communications Policy
- Complaints and Whistleblower Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Child and Vulnerable People Policy
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy
- How We Work Policy and Guidelines
- Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy
- Privacy Policy

In particular, I will abide by the 'Professional Behaviour Standards for Protecting Children and Vulnerable People' outlined in Appendix 1, encapsulating the key elements of the 'Child and Vulnerable People Protection Policy' and the 'Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy',

I understand I require a current Working With Vulnerable People card (if 18 years of age or over) for my association with the RFN Foundation as outlined in the Child and Vulnerable People Policy.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

## Professional Behaviour Standards for Protecting Children and Vulnerable People

The Professional Behaviour Standards for Protecting Children and Vulnerable People forms part of the Code of Conduct and is included here as an Appendix.

Professional Behaviour Standards reflect RFN's commitment to protecting the safety and wellbeing of everyone, especially children and vulnerable people, and preventing all forms of abuse, exploitation and harassment.

The commitments below capture the essence of professional behaviour expected by RFN but may not cover all potential situations.

### I commit to protecting the rights of everyone, especially children and vulnerable adults

- I treat everyone, especially children and vulnerable people, with respect.
- I am aware that I have a privileged position being associated with RFN. I am aware of unequal power relationships (such as between adult and child) and will not take advantage of my position. I prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable people.
- I am aware of situations and behaviours that may be perceived as exploitative or abusive (such as giving gifts, paying extra attention or developing 'special' friendships).
- I will avoid these situations or take extra measures to keep everyone safe.
- I will not use physical punishment or threats of physical punishment.
- I will not do things for children that they can do for themselves.
- I will not give alcohol, cigarettes or drugs to children.
- I will not speak or act in a way that is inappropriate, exploitative, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- Wherever possible, I ensure that another adult is present when I'm having contact with children.
- I will not sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary; if it is unavoidable, I will have my supervisor's permission, and have another adult present if possible.
- I will not invite unaccompanied children into my home or vehicle, unless they are at immediate risk of danger.
- These behaviours are not intended to interfere with normal family interactions.

### I help to create a culture that empowers and protects children

- I create an environment which prevents all forms of exploitation, abuse and harassment (including sexual, physical and emotional).
- I develop strategies for listening to the needs and interests of children.
- If I am a manager at any level, I am responsible for supporting and developing the culture and systems that maintain a safe environment.

#### I prevent all forms of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment

- In line with international standards, I will not have sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18 (regardless of local law). I understand that not knowing a person's age is not a defence or excuse.
- I will not engage in any sexual activity or relationship with those who are benefiting from our work. I will not improperly use my position or power for sexual purposes. Such relationships put the integrity of our work at risk.
- I will also make sure that no harm (including sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment) occurs during delivery of our programs or activities.
- I will not exchange money, employment, goods, assistance or services for sex including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to our program participants.
- I will not engage in the trafficking of human beings, in any form.

#### I act responsibly when I work with photos or videos

- I respect local traditions or restrictions when taking photos or videos of children.
- I get informed consent prior to taking a photo or video of a child. I will explain how the photo or video will be used. I will keep written records of the permission obtained.
- I make sure that photos and videos show children in a dignified and respectful way. I make sure they do not appear submissive or vulnerable. They should be adequately clothed and not appear in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive.
- I make sure that images are honest representations of the context and the facts. I do not exaggerate the truth to make the story more compelling.
- I will not use any technology (such as computers, mobile phones, cameras or social media) to exploit or harass children.
- I will not access exploitative material, such as child pornography, in any way.

#### I act within the law. I disclose offences

- I immediately disclose any investigations or offences (including charges, convictions, allegations and other outcomes) that relate to child exploitation and abuse including those under traditional law. I will disclose them whether they occurred before, or during, my association with RFN
- I comply with all relevant legislation (both Australian and local) including child labour laws.

#### I report immediately, even if I'm just concerned, suspicious or unsure

- I immediately inform my direct manager if I become involved in a personal relationship which may be perceived as inappropriate or exploitative, or where unequal power dynamics (real or perceived) exist. If I am unsure if my relationship falls into this category, I will discuss the situation with the CEO or Manager HR and Planning.
- I must immediately report if I have concerns, suspicions or allegations of:



- sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not;
  - a sexual relationship that involves a power imbalance (for example, between a personnel member from RFN or another agency and a program participant or community member);
  - a child being abused, exploited or at risk of harm, and
  - breaches of RFN's policies, Code of Conduct or this Professional Behaviour Standards for Protecting Children and Vulnerable People
- I understand that I can make a report via email to RFN [CEO](#).
  - I understand that RFN will take all reports seriously, elevate issues quickly and respond appropriately. RFN will take a 'do no harm' approach and prioritise the rights of the victim/survivor while ensuring procedural fairness to all parties.
  - I take responsibility for reporting. I must not assume that someone else will report a situation relating to the safety of children or people experiencing sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment.