

PEAS CHILD PROTECTION POLICY¹

INTRODUCTION

Children have the right to protection from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse (UN Convention on the Right of the Child [1989], Article 19). As an international child-centred organisation, PEAS has a commitment to promoting the rights of all children².

This policy sets out the common values and principles of Child Protection held by PEAS and describes the rules that PEAS staff and associates must abide by and steps that will be taken to meet our commitment to protect children. This policy extends to students of PEAS schools, including those who are over the age of 18 whilst enrolled.

PEAS expects that all of its employees and associates³ have the child's best interests at the heart of their involvement with PEAS. This policy applies to everyone working for or associated with PEAS, and covers all areas of safeguarding, including bullying and harassment, corporal punishment and sexual abuse, whether physical, online or via phone.

OUR STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

PEAS is committed to keeping children safe from harm and ensuring that children's rights to protection are fully realised. We take very seriously our responsibility to promote child-safe practices and protect children from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation in any form.

Our decisions and actions in response to child protection concerns will be guided by the principle of 'the best interests of the child'.

OUR COMMITMENT TO KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

Our Child Protection principles:

- All children have equal rights to be safe and to be protected from abuse.
- All children have an equal right to fulfil their potential.
- PEAS will not discriminate against any child and will challenge any inequality.

¹ The PEAS Child Protection Policy draws from the Child Protection Policies of Plan International, Save the Children and the Keeping Children Safe Coalition but reflects on the views of PEAS

² A child is defined as any person under the age of 18 years as is the case in the UNCRC

³ An 'associate' of PEAS is defined as anyone who is contractually working with or for PEAS, is a volunteer or is a visitor/guest of PEAS. This includes but is not exclusive to media, donors, board members, partner organisations, contractors, consultants or anyone brought into contact with children or child-sensitive data whilst working for/ with or visiting PEAS. Where international posts are accompanied, the post holder's accompanying dependents are also classified as 'associates'.

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- PEAS has a commitment to protecting children with/for whom we work.
- PEAS will be guided by the principle of ‘the best interests of the child’.
- Child abuse is never acceptable.
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the protection of children.

How we will uphold these values and principles:

PEAS will protect children from abuse through the following means:

- **Awareness:** We will ensure that all PEAS staff and associates are aware of the need to keep children safe and the problem of child abuse.
- **Prevention:** We will ensure that all staff and associates minimise risks to children through awareness and good practice.
- **Reporting:** We will ensure that all staff understand the procedure when concerns arise regarding the safety of children.

If a legitimate concern about suspected child abuse is raised, which proves to be unfounded on investigation, no action will be taken against the reporter. However, appropriate sanctions will be applied in the cases of false and malicious accusations of child abuse.

- **Responding:** We will ensure that action is taken to keep children safe where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

How we will ensure that our commitments are met:

- All PEAS staff and associates will sign up to and abide by the Child Protection policy and PEAS Code of Conduct (Appendix 1)
- The PEAS Child Protection policy will be available and accessible to all PEAS staff, associates and students
- Recruitment procedures will include checks on suitability of working with children
- All PEAS staff will learn about the Child Protection policy, procedures and issues as part of their induction
- All PEAS students will learn how to identify child abuse, to understand the rights of the child and to report any concerns
- All PEAS staff at secretariat and school level will be trained in the relevant procedures for preventing, reporting and responding to possible child abuse

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY- RULES FOR STAFF

It is important for all PEAS staff and associates in contact with children to:

- Be aware of situations that may present risks to children, and manage these
- Plan and organise the work and the workplace so as to minimise risks to children

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- As far as possible, be visible to others when working with children
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged
- Talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns
- Take all Child Protection allegations, reports or concerns seriously and act on concerns quickly according to PEAS procedures
- Empower children - discuss their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.

In general, it is inappropriate to:

- Spend excessive time alone with a child/children with whom you are working away from others
- Take a child/children with whom you are working with to your home, especially where they will be alone with you.

PEAS staff and associates must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.

PEAS staff and associates *must* avoid actions or behaviour that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive. For example, they should never:

- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Behave physically in a manner that is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised
- Sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children that is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others
- Engage in sexual relationships with PEAS beneficiaries (including those who are aged 18 or over)

Any PEAS staff member who contravenes the above will be subject to PEAS disciplinary action. Any PEAS associate who contravenes the above will risk sanctions up to and including the termination of all relations including contractual and partnership agreements with PEAS.

REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS

Every member of PEAS staff must report all Child Protection allegations, reports or concerns according to reporting procedures laid out in the 'PEAS Child Protection Implementation Guidelines'. Delays and failure to report immediately or withhold information will be subject to PEAS disciplinary action.

All reported cases should be taken seriously and an investigation led locally, by a staff member who has undergone PEAS CP training.

Any action taken in response to the alleged abuse must be based on the best interests of the child. The child's views must be taken into account with respect to further action on the alleged abuse and they must be provided with the information required to make an informed decision on this. The objective of any response made by PEAS must be to protect the child from further harm and to support them both academically and emotionally.

PERSONAL CONDUCT OUTSIDE OF WORK

PEAS is committed to ensuring that PEAS employees apply high standards of behaviour towards children within both their professional and private lives.

The ability of PEAS to achieve its aims is linked to its reputation. Members of PEAS staff are perceived as PEAS representatives both inside and outside of working hours. All PEAS staff are, therefore, responsible for upholding the PEAS Child Protection policy and Code of Conduct both within and beyond their work.

IMPLEMENTING, MONITORING AND SANCTIONS

The PEAS Board of Trustees is ultimately accountable for this policy. The CEO, and Country Directors and senior managers of PEAS are responsible for its implementation.

The monitoring and adherence of this policy is made through the mandatory tracking of the 'Child Protection Policy Implementation Guidelines'.

Breaches of this policy and failure to comply with these responsibilities may incur the following sanctions:

- Disciplinary action leading to possible dismissal
- Termination of all relations including contractual and partnership agreements with PEAS
- Appropriate legal or other such action



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Attestation of Commitment to the PEAS Child Protection Policy

I, _____ (name), have read, understood and agree to abide by the contents of PEAS's Child Protection policy.

Name: _____

Sup./Mgr Name: _____

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

PEAS Global Child Policy has been reviewed and approved by the PEAS board, 14th June 2022.

Next Review Date: June 2024

Annex: Document Reference List

- CP Implementation Guidelines
- Case Management Procedures
- Code of Conduct,
- Adult Safeguarding Policy
- PEAS Supporting Female Students Additional Guidance
- Whistleblowing Policy