



## **Introduction**

TGS supports the rights of children and is committed to their safety and well-being.

TGS staff members, students and those working with TGS share a common responsibility and commitment to the awareness, prevention, and reporting of and responding to child abuse in the course of their work.

TGS' Child Protection Policy sets out common values, principles, and beliefs and describes the steps that will be taken to meet our commitment to protect children.

TGS also adhere to the practices suggested by Child Safe organization <https://thinkchildsafe.org/>

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all part-time, full-time, and casual TGS employees, students, volunteers, and other experts, as well as associate firms and third-party providers working with TGS on the implementation of development assistance projects.

## **Working With children**

Working with children means being engaged in an activity with a child where the contact would reasonably be expected as a normal part of the activity and the contact is not incidental to the activity. Working includes volunteering or other unpaid work.

The risks of child exploitation and abuse generally increase with the frequency of contact, meaning that working with children is a higher risk than contact with children.

Examples of activities or services for children:

- Disability service
- Cultural youth exchange
- Residential care
- Child protection services
- Justice facilities for children
- Childcare services
- Child education services,
- Children in sports
- Child accommodation services
- Health services, Access to Sexual & Reproductive Health
- Counselling and support services for children
- Emergency response, Humanitarian assistance to children and families

## **Contact With children**

Contact with children means being engaged in an activity or in a position that involves or may involve contact with children, either under the position description or due to the nature of the work environment. This means physical contact, face-to-face contact, oral communication, written communication, or electronic communication.

Contact covers contact with children in the community not associated with the work being performed.

Examples:

- Any international work, in particular working in remote/rural locations
- Oral and written communication (including electronic communication) relating to a child
- Access to data relating to a person under 18

- Public diplomacy, official functions, visits, or other communication activity involving photography, filming, videoing, or social media activity where children are present
- Visiting premises e.g. schools, health, or residential facilities, that provide services to children
- Any community consultation (data collection, surveying, training)
- Women and Gender focussed activities
- Health Sector Programs

## Definitions

### Child

For this policy, the definition of a child is “every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”. This is in accordance with Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child.

### Child abuse

TGS define child abuse as all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including commercial exploitation, sexual abuse while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

## Principles and values

The following principles and values reflect TGS stance on child protection:

- **Zero tolerance of child abuse:** TGS does not tolerate any form of child abuse, nor does it tolerate possession or access to any material that is abusive towards children. TGS will not knowingly engage anyone who poses a direct risk to children.
- **Recognition of children’s interests:** TGS recognises that some children are at greater risk of abuse. Of vulnerability are children with disabilities, children in conflict situations as well as migrant children or children without parents.
- **Sharing responsibility of child protection:** When bidding for projects in association with firms that do not have a child protection policy, TGS will ensure that associate firms agree to adopt TGS’ Child Protection Policy.

## Goal

To protect children from all forms of abuse in the course of our work.

## Purpose

The purpose of this Child Protection Policy is to:

- provide a management strategy to prevent child abuse and protect children in the course of our work;
- protect TGS staff, students, volunteers and partners from unfair practices and processes; and
- provide TGS staff, students, volunteers, and partners with clear guidelines on what to do in the case of suspected child abuse.

## TGS commitment

TGS’ commitment to child protection will be guided by the following:

- **Awareness:** TGS will ensure that all TGS staff, students, volunteers, and partners as well as stakeholders involved in projects are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children.
- **Prevention:** TGS will ensure, through awareness and good practice, that TGS staff, students, volunteers, and partners minimise the risks to children.

- **Reporting:** TGS will ensure that TGS staff, students, volunteers, and partners are clear on what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children.
- **Responding:** TGS will ensure that action is taken to support and protect children where concerns of abuse arise.

Further to the above, TGS will:

- Not permit a person to work with children if it has been identified that they pose an unacceptable risk to children's safety or well-being.
- Take all child abuse concerns raised seriously.
- Ensure photographing or filming a child or using children's images for work-related purposes, are not permitted.
- Take positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of any concerns.
- Support children, TGS staff, students, volunteers, or other adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns.
- Act appropriately and effectively in instigating or cooperating with any subsequent process of investigation.
- Guide through the child protection process by the principle of 'best interests of the child'.
- Listen to and take seriously the views and wishes of children; and
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of children.

## **General Procedures**

The following general procedures will mainstream TGS's Child Protection Policy:

- Child Protection Policy is made an integral part of TGS' quality management system and the legally binding instructions it contains.
- All TGS stakeholders will be required to adopt a child protection policy that meets the standards of TGS's own policy in this matter.
- Any agreement between TGS and partners which concerns services directly to children will require assurance that appropriate child protection policies and procedures are in place.
- A reporting procedure is put in place to investigate and deal with possible child abuse.

## **Guidelines for reporting suspected or actual abuse of children**

### **Reporting Principles**

Reporting suspected or actual child abuse is mandatory for all staff, students, volunteers, consultants, and stakeholders.

No TGS staff, students, volunteer, or partner will prejudice their own position or standing with TGS by responsibly reporting someone who they believe is breaking the Child Protection Policy.

Responsible reporting also means that any person making a report should bear in mind that all concerns are allegations until they have been investigated. For this reason, it is important for anyone raising a concern to follow the specific reporting guidelines set out below. Confidentiality is expected within the reporting chain.

## **Reporting Procedures**

All staff, students and volunteers should discuss their concerns with their immediate manager or Director. Any information provided will be handled with strict confidentiality and who will only act if breaches of the Child Protection Policy can be proven conclusively.

Discussions should focus on:

- evidence that the Child Protection Policy has been broken;
- the identified risks to the child/children;
- measures to safeguarding children and minimise risk.

## **Action/next steps**

- An assessment of the reported concerns and support needs
- Whether, and at what stage, the issue should be reported to external bodies
- Appropriate response, e.g. disciplinary process, or urgent action if children are judged to be at risk.

## **Specific Reporting Guidelines**

Any concerns, allegations or disclosures must be recorded in writing, signed and dated, and communicated as soon as possible to TGS' Director. Records should be detailed and precise, focusing on what was said or observed, who was present and what happened. Speculation and interpretation should be clearly distinguished from reporting.

Any concern, disclosure or allegation is alleged rather than proven at this point. All such records should be treated as extremely confidential. They should be passed only to the persons specified in these specific reporting guidelines. It is the responsibility of everyone in possession of the information to maintain confidentiality.

However, confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed. It must be made clear that following the steps in this policy is an obligation. Explanations should be given about the possible outcomes that could result from information being reported.

In certain instances, there will be the obligation for TGS and its staff, students, volunteers to report concerns to the appropriate external bodies. This will usually occur because of the reporting procedure. However, if urgent action is required to protect children then it may be prior to the reporting procedure.

## **Responding to concerns**

In order to protect children, it may be necessary to take an immediate action to ensure that further abuse cannot take place. The best interests of the child and the desire to secure the best outcomes for the child should always govern decisions regarding what action should be taken in response to concerns.

Some concerns may be so serious that they would have to be reported to local authorities and police. In these circumstances, based on local guidelines, TGS will assess on a case-by-case basis what steps to take. If the concerns are reported to local authorities, TGS staff will assist the authorities wherever possible but may also need to make arrangements, possibly through the appropriate diplomatic representation, to seek representation for the person who has had allegations made against them.

## **Training**

TGS is committed to educating staff, students, volunteers, and others on the Child Protection Policy, how to reduce risks and create child safe environments. TGS will promote child safe practices which keep children safe in the organisation and in their own community and provide information about child protection to the children and communities to students on predeparture briefing and orientation day. This information will include reporting child abuse if they have concerns about a TGS staff, students, and volunteers.

TGS also encourage the students to prepare themselves for the experience by familiarising themselves with the Child Safe Movement's practices found here <https://thinkchildsafe.org/>

As part of its child protection training, TGS will incorporate extensive information on the company's Child Protection Policy in the briefing procedures for new staff, students, and volunteers:

- treat children with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status;
- not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate;
- not engage children in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts where, under the law(s) applicable to the child, the child is below the age of consent or the act(s) are an offence under relevant laws;
- wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children;
- not invite unaccompanied children into a member of the staff's home or accommodation without the permission of their parent/guardian, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger;
- not sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case the supervisor's permission must be obtained, and ensure that another adult is present if possible;
- use any computers, mobile phones, or video and digital cameras appropriately, and never exploit or harass children or access child pornography through any medium (see also 'Use of children's images for work-related purposes');
- refrain from physical punishment or discipline of children
- refrain from hiring children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury comply with all relevant Italian and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour; and
- immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse in accordance with appropriate procedures.

### **Supporting Documentation**

- TGS Company Code of Conduct 2020
- TGS Code of Conduct and Behavior

### **Implementation and Date of Effect**

The Policy will be implemented from 15 September 2020.