



Nossal Institute for  
Global Health

# Safeguarding Policy



## 1. Purpose of Policy

The Nossal Institute for Global Health (Nossal Institute) considers the integrity and value of the individual to be paramount and as such it is strongly committed to the safety and protection of all people, including children, young people, older people and at-risk adults. Nossal Institute has zero tolerance towards all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. We recognise and honour the importance of caregivers, families, cultures, and communities around the world in protecting and nurturing children and supporting at-risk adults. We commit to working together with communities and partners in the safeguarding of all people we work and connect with.

This policy outlines the ethical standards, responsibilities, procedures, and practices required by Nossal Institute and all employees, partners, consultants, volunteers, interns, and associates. It provides the framework for a safe organisation which has strategies and procedures in place to safeguard children, young people, older people, people with disability, members of culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and other at-risk adults from the risk of abuse, neglect, harm and exploitation.

## 2. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to:

- All members of the Nossal Institute Community including employees, students, Board members, volunteers, interns, consultants, partner organisations and associates.
- Individuals and organisations contractually obliged to comply with this policy.

All others engaged in activities reasonably connected with the Nossal Institute are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with this policy.

The policy applies in all operational settings – domestically and internationally - and without fail wherever children, young people and at-risk adults come into contact with or are impacted by Nossal Institute's activities, programs, services and/or facilities.

Any person, whether they are a member of the Nossal Institute community or not, can report a safeguarding concern that is current or from any time in the past that is related to the Nossal Institute.

## 3. Policy Context

The Safeguarding Policy has been formally approved and endorsed by the Nossal Institute Board.

As a subsidiary of the University of Melbourne (the University), this policy supports compliance with the University's [Child Safety Policy MPF1337](#) and [Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy MPF1359](#) and utilises the University's associated support services and reporting process.

This policy is situated within and supports compliance with domestic frameworks including:

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic).
- Child Employment Act 2003 (Vic).
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic).
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030.
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992.
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic).
- Family Violence Protection Act 2008.
- Gender Equality Act 2020.
- Victorian Child Safe Standards.
- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic).

As a global health Institute, Nossal Institute also reaffirms through this policy our commitments to:

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and its 3 optional protocols.
- The Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child.
- The International Labour Organization Convention 182 Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

As a research Institute, Nossal Institute and its research programs and personnel must adhere to the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018), the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2018), and any other required research approvals and registration processes when conducting research activities with human participants, including research activities that involve contact with children, young people, people who may require supported decision making, and at-risk adults.

## Defining safeguarding

**Safeguarding** is the responsibility of organisations, such as the Nossal Institute, to make sure that our own staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children and at-risk adults. It encompasses the processes and policies we put in place to ensure that we do not expose children or at-risk adults to risk of, or actual, harm and abuse.

**At-risk adults:** People aged 18 years and over who are at risk of abuse or neglect and may be unable to protect themselves from this because of their care and/or support needs (including communication needs), personal circumstances, and/or systemic barriers. We use the term at-risk adults and not vulnerable adults in this policy. Vulnerable can imply an innate characteristic of an individual and deny the agency of people placed in situations where they are at risk.

**What is the difference between safeguarding, child protection, and child safety?** While these terms overlap, safeguarding is more specific to our responsibilities to protect children from harm caused by our own actions as an organisation. We also extend our safeguarding policy across the life course to include all those who may be at risk of abuse, harm or neglect.

**Child protection** encompasses the wider responsibility of all individuals and communities to prevent and respond to all violence, exploitation, and abuse against children, regardless of the context in which it occurs or in which it is detected. Child protection extends beyond harm caused by

our own actions as an organisation into all aspects of life as individuals, families, communities, and societies. Child protection also describes the range of responses that may occur as a result of the detection and report of a suspected harm to a child or children, through response child safety and law enforcement agencies.

**Child safety** encompasses child safeguarding and protection as well as physical and environment child safety issues, such as hazards in a child's physical environment that could lead to trips or falls, exposure to potentially dangerous equipment, materials, and substances (such as chemicals), or exposure to substances that pose a risk of cross-infection. This Code of Conduct does not comprehensively address such physical and environmental hazards.

For definitions relating to harm to children and at-risk adults, refer to Section 11 Definitions.

## 4. Guiding Principles

### Zero tolerance

Nossal Institute has zero tolerance towards abuse, neglect and exploitation of children, young people and at-risk adults. All concerns, suspicions, or incidents of actual or risk of harm will be treated seriously.

The prevention of harm to children and at-risk adults is prioritised through careful assessment and mitigation of risks across the organisation, programs, and activities. Nossal Institute is committed to providing a safe environment for all children, young people and at-risk adults.

### Rights based approach

Nossal Institute is committed to upholding the rights of all people in line with United Nations conventions and frameworks. Consideration of what is in the best interests of the person who may be at risk is key in any decision related to our work. Ensuring those at risk have the opportunity to express and communicate their preferences and concerns is paramount.

## Shared Responsibility

Safeguarding children and at-risk adults is a shared responsibility within our organisation. All personnel, including leadership and Board members, are trained and supported to uphold the Safeguarding Policy and expected to role model safeguarding behaviours.

## Accountability and Transparency

Members of the Nossal Institute community are expected to adhere to ethical and professional standards of behaviour that prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the children, at-risk adults and families we engage. Nossal Institute encourages feedback from all stakeholders and is committed to continuously improving our practice.

Nossal Institute will notify funding bodies of reported safety concerns and incidents where required and appropriate.

Nossal Institute is committed to ensuring the Safeguarding Policy is available to all stakeholders including the children, at-risk adults, families, and communities where we work, all members of the Nossal Institute community, and the wider public. Nossal Institute communicates key messages including standards of behaviour and reporting mechanisms.

## Equity and Diversity

Nossal Institute has zero tolerance of racism and other forms of discrimination and takes action when discrimination or exclusion is identified. Our safeguarding strategies must be responsive to the unique experiences, and the diverse circumstances of children, young people and at-risk adults. This includes children, young people, older people and at-risk adults who are, or identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, culturally and linguistically diverse, LGBTQIA+, people with disability, people who are experiencing family violence, and people who are unable to live at home and/or experiencing homelessness. Nossal Institute informs children, young people and at-risk adults of their rights and gives access to information, support, and complaints processes.

## 5. Framework for Implementation

### Safeguarding Code of Conduct

Nossal Institute's Safeguarding Code of Conduct clearly outlines the expected standards of behaviour for all members of the Nossal Institute community in their interaction with or in the presence of children, young people and at-risk adults

The Safeguarding Code of Conduct has been designed to reflect the highest standards of practice in the environments in which members of the Nossal Institute community can reasonably expect to engage with children, young people and at-risk adults within Australia or overseas.

Compliance with this Code of Conduct is mandatory. Non-compliance will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of engagement with Nossal Institute and criminal proceedings.

Nossal Institute's behavioural expectations will meet or exceed all donor safeguarding requirements.

### Reporting

Any person, whether they are a member of the Nossal Institute community or not, can report a child, young person or at-risk adult safety concern that is related to Nossal Institute community members and/or activities. A concern can be raised about an incident that occurred in Australia or overseas and a current incident or one that has occurred at any time in the past.

### Reporting requirements for members of the Nossal Institute community

All members of the Nossal Institute community (including staff, students, volunteers, consultants and partner organisations) are required to immediately report suspected or actual child, young person or at-risk adult safety incidents, policy breaches, or code of conduct breaches in accordance with the reporting process outlined in this policy. Failure to do so is considered misconduct and may result in disciplinary action. Reportable conduct includes:

- Disclosures or complaints of harm or potential harm to a child or at-risk adult made by children, young people, or adults.

- Breaches of policy and/or code of conduct.
- Concerns, allegations, suspicions, or observations of inappropriate behaviour by members of the Nossal Institute community.
- Child exploitation or child abuse materials that are received on Nossal Institute electronic equipment (this can include, but is not limited to, SPAM, popups, text messages, emails, or social media communications).
- Any additional information relating to an incident that has already been reported.

Members of the Nossal Institute community must create and keep accurate and secure records relevant to child and at-risk adult safety and wellbeing, including recording incidents, responses and decisions affecting children and at-risk adults.

Members of the Nossal Institute community covered by this policy may be subject to mandatory reporting obligations while carrying out Nossal Institute business in Australia and overseas. As soon as any member of the Nossal Institute community becomes aware of a risk of sexual abuse, including child sexual abuse, they have the legal duty to take steps to remove or reduce that risk, or to inform someone else who has the authority to do so.

Depending on the location, failure to disclose and protect may result in legal implications, including imprisonment. As such, members of the Nossal Institute community must be aware of their mandatory reporting obligations whilst carrying out Nossal Institute business and must report concerns in accordance with the process outlined in this policy.

Project design for all work undertaken outside of Victoria or Australia must encompass a review of local legislation, child protection systems and support systems to ensure that all personnel are aware of how to report concerns locally, and to highlight where external reporting may pose safety risks to children, young people and at-risk adults.

### Where to report

As a subsidiary of the University of Melbourne (the University), the Nossal Institute utilises the University's support services and reporting process as outlined in the University's [Child Safety Policy MPF1337](#).

**Note:** in case of an immediate and severe threat to a child's or at-risk adult's safety, call emergency services on 000 in Australia or 112 overseas if safe to do so.

### Step 1

- **Reports from people outside the Nossal Institute community:** People external to Nossal Institute can report child or at-risk adult safety concerns and incidents related to Nossal Institute personnel and/or activities by contacting the [Safer Community Program](#) via phone, email, the online anonymous portal, or in-person on University campus. For urgent on-campus concerns, [University Security](#) is also available 24 hours. If reporting to Safer Community Program is not accessible, reports can be made to Nossal Institute personnel not implicated in the child or at-risk adult safeguarding issue, including personnel from in-country partner organisations. Nossal Institute personnel will then immediately pass on the reports to the Safer Community Program and the Nossal Institute Chief Operating Officer (COO) to feed into the reporting process.
- **Reports from members of the Nossal Institute community:** Members of the Nossal Institute community (including staff, students, volunteers, interns, consultants, partner organisations, associates, and Board members) who become aware of child or at-risk adult safety concerns and/or incidents in Australia or overseas must immediately report these in the first instance to the [Safer Community Program](#), or if outside the Safer Community Program hours to the Nossal Institute COO. For urgent concerns on campus, [University Security](#) is also available 24 hours. The individual must then inform the Nossal Institute COO that a report has been made if they have not already done so. If necessary and appropriate, the individual should also consult with non-implicated local partner personnel to identify the safest immediate response in urgent situations outside of Australia.

### Step 2

Following receipt of child or at-risk adult safety reports (from people external or internal to Nossal Institute in Australia or overseas), staff from the Safer Community Program/University Security and (if required) the Nossal Institute COO will consult with the University's Child Safety Officer to

determine next steps. Where required and appropriate, next steps could include:

- Further information gathering about the child or at-risk adult safeguarding concern.
- Consulting with in-country partners about country-specific frameworks and systems.
- Seeking advice from appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies in relation to safety matters involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children or at-risk adults.
- Contacting relevant national and/or international child safety and law enforcement agencies or other support services.
- Nossal Institute COO notifying funding bodies of reports of child or at-risk adult safety concerns and incidents.
- Disciplinary or remediation measures.
- Changes to or termination of contracts.
- Review of relevant policies and procedures.

Where personnel assess that external reporting to child or at-risk adult safety and law enforcement agencies may pose a risk to a child's or at-risk adult's safety, a written justification is provided and kept on file, and alternative sources for support and protection should be sought.

See Appendix A for the flowchart of this reporting process.

## **Confidentiality and non-victimisation**

Procedural fairness will be applied when responding to incidents, concerns or allegations of child or at-risk adult exploitation or abuse. The confidentiality and privacy of all concerned (including the alleged perpetrator) will be maintained, except for when doing so would compromise the safety and wellbeing of the child, young person or at-risk adult and/or investigation of the allegation, or when other reporting legislative requirements apply (such as, but not limited to, mandatory reporting, criminal offences, and reportable conduct scheme). Members of the Nossal Institute community must not treat someone unfairly or harshly or otherwise subject another person to reprisal action or detrimental action in response to that person reporting a child or at-risk adult safety concern or incident.

## **Risk assessment and management**

Nossal Institute recognises that potential risks to children and at-risk adults can arise from our work in both the physical and online environment, and that implementing risk management processes that actively anticipate, respond to and prevent child and at-risk adult abuse and exploitation risks is paramount in our practice. In undertaking international development assistance and research activities the Nossal Institute will:

- Institute child and at-risk adult safe practices within its project systems.
- Assess risks to children and at-risk adults in the online or physical environment prior to implementing a new activity and institute specific risk management strategies to reduce the risk.
- Consult with in-country partners regarding reporting procedures, legal frameworks, and risk management for child and at-risk adult abuse and protection specific to each country and local context.

For Australian Aid Projects (projects involving children undertaken by Nossal Institute that uses funds or aid provided by the Australian government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for international development), Nossal Institute project supervisors and personnel for these projects must adhere to the [Guidelines for Child Protection in Australian Aid Projects](#).

Monitoring and reviewing risks regularly (including after incidents, near misses and complaints) is vital to ensuring continuous improvement. Nossal Institute is committed to reviewing any systemic issues which may be contributing to or hindering the organisation from being safe for children and at-risk adults.

## **Recruitment and selection**

Nossal Institute is committed to ensuring robust recruitment and selection processes that signal the organisation's commitment to safeguarding children and at-risk adults at all stages of engagement. All personnel undergo rigorous selection processes to identify suitable personnel and deter unsuitable applicants. All contracts for engagement with Nossal Institute include provisions for suspension or transfer of duties for any personnel under investigation and

provisions for dismissal at the conclusion of an investigation.

There is a focus on assessing for appropriate standards of behaviour at every stage of engagement through the following:

- All prospective positions are risk-assessed and appropriately screened.
- Nossal Institute's commitment to safeguarding children and at-risk adults is included in all position descriptions.
- A request that any prospective candidate disclose any charges of child and at-risk adult exploitation or abuse offences.
- A minimum of two referee checks that include safeguarding questions will be obtained for all successful candidates.
- A requirement for holding and maintaining a valid criminal record check and Working with Children Check. Where a person required by this policy to obtain a valid Working with Children Check refuses to apply for one or is not successful in obtaining one, this may affect their engagement by Nossal Institute.
- A requirement for all prospective candidates working with children and at-risk adults to undergo interviews incorporating behavioural based questions.

All personnel are required to:

- Complete a current criminal record check (or equivalent) and Working with Children Check during recruitment and renew these checks when expired.
- Complete child safeguarding training and sexual misconduct prevention training.
- Sign the Nossal Institute Safeguarding Declaration, which covers the Nossal Institute Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct.

## Ongoing training and support

Nossal Institute is committed to ensuring personnel are equipped with the skills and knowledge to safeguard children, young people and at-risk adults who come into contact with our programs and activities, understand the responsibilities and boundaries of their roles and respond to and report any safeguarding concerns.

Nossal Institute provides safeguarding induction within four weeks of personnel starting, and prior to any project deployment and/or access to children, young people and at-risk adult's personal information or data. Personnel are provided with copies of the Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Code of Conduct.

The induction process provides guidance relating to an individual's safeguarding responsibilities and offers opportunities to seek clarity in relation to the commitments and behavioural expectations set out in our safeguarding policies. Upon engagement with Nossal Institute, personnel are required to sign the Safeguarding Declaration to affirm their understanding of the policy and their obligations.

Safeguarding training is undertaken by all personnel, at induction, with refresher training undertaken at a minimum of every 3 years. Nossal Institute has a training plan that outlines agendas and timeframes for ongoing education for all our personnel in relation to safeguarding and sexual misconduct prevention and response.

Ongoing support is also available to Nossal Institute personnel via the Safeguarding Focal Points, who can discuss non-reportable safeguarding queries and support personnel in assessing safeguarding implications within their roles and programs.

## Engaging with Partners

Nossal Institute is committed to ensuring all partners and individual consultants are safe and appropriate to work with children and at-risk adults. Partner organisations involved in projects that includes contact with or may impact children, young people and at-risk adults are required by Nossal Institute to:

- Have embedded child and at-risk adult safeguarding/protection policies that meet the standards outlined in the Nossal Institute's Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct and the Guidelines for Protection in Australian Aid Projects where applicable, and/or ensure there are mechanisms in place to ensure partner organisations comply with the Nossal Institute Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct, under its contractual arrangements.

- Have embedded reporting procedures that meet Nossal Institute's reporting standards and/or comply with Nossal Institute's Reporting process outlined in this Policy.
- Report any incidents, disclosures, or concerns about partner personnel to Nossal Institute via the reporting process outlined in this Policy.
- Provide child and at-risk adult safeguarding/protection training that meets the standards outlined by Nossal Institute.
- Comply with any funding requirements.

Where required, Nossal Institute will work with partners to build capacity around child and at-risk adult safeguarding requirements and processes.

### **Engagement with children, at-risk adults, families, and the community**

All safeguarding approaches and relevant procedures are contextualised and localised to the communities we work in. Where possible, Nossal Institute involves children, young people, at-risk adults, and their families in developing a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment. We actively encourage children, young people and at-risk adults to take part in the decision-making process, particularly on matters affecting them, and to ask questions and speak up if they have concerns, feel unsafe or have experienced harm.

Nossal Institute makes available information to children, young people, their families and at-risk adults about:

- our commitment and approach to upholding and safeguarding the rights of children, young people and at-risk adults.
- the behaviour we expect of the Nossal Institute community members.
- the behaviour we expect from the children, young people, their families and at-risk adults involved in our projects.
- our policy and mechanisms for reporting abuse or concerns, translated and in accessible language where required.

### **Culturally safe environments for all Aboriginal children and their families and at-risk adults**

We are committed to fostering cultural safety for Aboriginal people and communities in all aspects of our work to ensure that Aboriginal culture is celebrated, and Aboriginal children, families, at-risk adults and community members feel respected and able to express their cultural identities. Strategies to embed cultural safety of Aboriginal children, young people, their families and at-risk adults include:

- An acknowledgement of country at the commencement of formal meetings or public events.
- Providing opportunities for children and at-risk adults to share their cultural identity and express their culture.
- Celebrating NAIDOC week and acknowledging significant events including National Day of Healing and National Reconciliation Week.
- Where appropriate, consulting and seeking feedback from Aboriginal children, families, at-risk adults and communities on their experience of expressing their identity and further opportunities to promote Aboriginal culture and practices.

### **International students**

Nossal Institute is responsible for ensuring that appropriate accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements are made to protect the personal safety and wellbeing of any child and at-risk adult who is currently enrolled in a Nossal Institute course, subject or program as an international student and is not being cared for in Australia by a parent or a suitable nominated carer.

### **Child employment**

Nossal Institute must comply with the appropriate child employment licence under the *Child Employment Act 2003 (Vic)* to engage a child under the age of 15 to perform work, whether paid or unpaid. As a condition of the licence, the University or controlled entity must ensure that:

- the work does not adversely affect a child's education, health, safety, wellbeing or development;

- the child is supervised at all times by a supervisor holding a valid WWCC who is 18 years of age or older;
- a record is maintained of the dates, times, hours and locations that a child performs work.

## 6. Policy non-compliance

Breaches of the Safeguarding Policy may lead to disciplinary action including possible dismissal and where a crime has or may have occurred, criminal proceedings.

For partners, breaches can also lead to termination of agreement.

## 7. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed at a minimum every 3 years. The review process will seek contribution and feedback from relevant personnel and external stakeholders. Nossal Institute is committed to reviewing the Safeguarding Policy following incidents and near misses. Changes may also be made to the policy following key legislative change or emerging best practice standards.

When there are any updates or changes to this Policy, they will be communicated to all members of the Nossal Institute community and stakeholders.

## 10. Roles and Responsibilities

### Nossal Institute Board responsibilities:

- Ensure compliance to the policy via the Board's review of the Institute's Risk Register and Framework, which includes reporting of child and at-risk adult safety concerns and incidents to support a culture of openness and continued improvement and accountability.
- Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow for the development, effective implementation, communication, and continuous improvement of this policy.
- Ensure the Institute reviews the Safeguarding Framework on a 3-year cycle as a minimum or at a time governed by legislation, regulations, or organisational learnings that promote a change to the Policy and all relevant policy or procedural guidelines.

### Director/Chief Operating Officer responsibilities:

- Advocate and promote child and at-risk adult rights, empowering and engaging children, young people and at-risk adults in support of this policy.

## 8. Related Policies and Documents

- *Nossal Institute for Global Health Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct*
- *University of Melbourne Child Safety Policy (MPF1337)*
- *University of Melbourne Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy (MPF1359)*
- *University of Melbourne Whistleblower Protection Policy (MPF1346)*
- *University of Melbourne Privacy Policy (MPF1104)*

## 9. Related Legislation

- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*
- *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*
- *Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic)*
- *The Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)*
- *The Sentencing Act (1991) Vic*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
- *Family Violence Protection Act 2008.*
- *Gender Equality Act 2020.*

- Ensure all members of the Nossal Institute community understand their obligations in accordance with this policy and any relevant policy and procedural documentation.
- Ensure this policy is implemented and adhered to.
- Ensure the development and implementation of required internal policy/ procedures and guidelines are in place to support safeguarding children, young people and at-risk adults practices in accordance with the expectations of this policy.
- Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation of this policy.
- Ensure members of the Nossal Institute community are fully supported with any decision to initiate action to protect children and at-risk adults from abuse and neglect.
- Develop opportunities for regular discussion and review at all levels to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of keeping children, young people and at-risk adults safe from abuse and neglect.
- Ensure that all personnel are aware of the appropriate recruitment, screening, and employment practice in relation to safeguarding children, young people and at-risk adults.
- Support the reporting process for child and at-risk adult safety concerns and incidents.

**University of Melbourne Provost responsibilities:**

- Act as the University of Melbourne and Nossal Institute's Child Safety Champion.

**University of Melbourne Child Safety Officer (Director Student Services) responsibilities:**

- Establish University internal processes for reporting and report suspected child abuse in accordance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme, mandatory reporting requirements (where applicable) and other applicable reporting requirements around child safety.
- Notify the Commissioner for Children and Young People of any reportable allegations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

**Safeguarding Focal Points responsibilities:**

- Provide advice to Nossal Institute personnel regarding questions and concerns about the Safeguarding Framework, Policy, and Code of Conduct, the safeguarding reporting process and whether something needs to be reported, and child and at-risk adult safeguarding implications in Nossal Institute programs and activities.

**Employees, students, volunteers, and contractors' responsibilities:**

- Advocate and promote child and at-risk adult rights, empowering and engaging children, young people, and at-risk adults in support of this policy.
- Maintain a full understanding of the commitments and expectations of this policy, as well as all other policy relevant to safeguarding children, young people and at-risk adults.
- Ensure compliance with this policy, fully implementing and adhering to the commitments and expectations.
- To undertake any induction and training anticipated in this policy, in relation to policy and procedures relevant to safeguarding children, young people and at-risk adults.
- To support a culture of openness, continued improvement and accountability to children, young people and at-risk adults by engaging in regular review and discussion of organisational policies and practices and providing feedback to support improvement.
- To seek guidance from a supervisor or manager if there is ever any lack of understanding in relation to the commitments and expectations as set out in this policy.
- To adopt appropriate safeguarding practice and behaviour.

- To take action to protect children, young people and at-risk adults from all forms of abuse and neglect.
- To report any abuse committed by members of the Nossal Institute community or by others.
- To assist in creating and maintaining a child and at-risk adult safe culture and a culture of inclusion and safety.

## 11. Definitions

**Child or young person:** A person under the age of eighteen years.

**Code of Conduct:** The Code of Conduct aims to identify and prevent behaviour that may be harmful to children, young people and at-risk adults. The Code of Conduct outlines what is, and what is not acceptable behaviour or practice when working with or engaging with children, young people and at-risk adults.

**Commercial exploitation:** Commercial exploitation refers to exploiting a child in work or other activities for the benefit of others and to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. It includes, but is not limited to, child labour.

**Emotional or psychological abuse:** This describes persistent emotional or psychological maltreatment that impacts on a child's or at-risk adult's emotional development. Emotionally or psychologically abusive acts can involve persistent verbal abuse, coercive or manipulative behaviour, restriction of movement, hostility, humiliation, belittling or scapegoating, conveying to a child or at-risk adult that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate, or rejected, and non-physical ways of causing a child or at-risk adult to frequently feel frightened or in danger.

**Family violence:** Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of family in a child's or at-risk adult's life. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.

**Grooming:** Grooming behaviour can involve the use of a variety of manipulative and controlling techniques used to build trust or normalise sexually harmful behaviour. Grooming can include communicating or attempting to befriend or purposely establishing a relationship or other emotional connection with a child, at-risk adult, their family, or organisations they are engaged with. Grooming can involve behaviour in person and activities on social media, email, or phone.

**Harm to a child:** Harm to a child is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological, or emotional wellbeing. Harm can be caused by:

- Physical, psychological, or emotional abuse or neglect.
- Sexual abuse or exploitation.
- A single act, omission, or circumstance; and
- A series or combination of acts, omissions, or circumstances.

**LGBTQIA+:** An acronym used to describe lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex and asexual, or other persons with diverse gender, sexual orientation or sexual characteristics, or the community.

**Neglect:** Allowing for context, resources and circumstances, neglect refers to failure to meet a child's or dependent adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in serious impairment of that person's healthy physical, spiritual, moral, and mental development. It includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children or older people from harm and provide for nutrition, shelter, and safe living/working conditions. It may also involve maternal neglect during pregnancy as a result of drug or alcohol misuse and the neglect and ill treatment of a child with disability. Neglect can arise from a single event or a combination of different events.

**Physical abuse:** Physical abuse refers to actual or potential physical harm perpetrated when another adult or child intentionally or recklessly uses physical force against, with or in the presence of a child or at-risk adult, which causes,

or could cause, the child or at-risk adult harm. Physical abuse can also occur when someone intentionally or recklessly causes a child or at-risk adult to believe that physical force is about to be used against them without their consent. Physical abuse can include actual, witnessed, or threatened hitting, punching, kicking, poisoning, drowning, burning, shaking, pushing or throwing something that strikes a child or at-risk adult.

**Risk management:** In the context of creating safe environments for children, young people and at-risk adults, risk management consists of assessing and taking steps to minimise the risk of harm to children, young people and at-risk adults because of the action of a member of personnel or another adult, child or young person. Risk management includes planning the work of the organisation to reduce or minimise situations where children, young people and at-risk adults may be abused.

**Child sexual abuse:** Child sexual abuse is when a person uses power or authority over a child to force, entice, or otherwise involve them in sexual activity. It includes a broad range of behaviours involving a sexual element that are committed against, with or in the presence of a child. Sexual offences may involve contact, like touching or penetration. It can also include acts that do not involve physical contact like 'flashing', grooming, involving children in looking at or producing sexual images, watching sexual activities, and encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Further information regarding Australian definitions, legislative frameworks, strategies, and resources for preventing, reporting, investigating, and prosecuting child sexual abuse can be found via the [Australian Government Department of Home Affairs](#).

**Child sexual exploitation:** Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse that involves situations and relationships where children and young people receive something (food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money etc.) in return for participating in sexual activities. It usually involves manipulation and coercion, which may involve the offender befriending children, gaining their trust, and subjecting them to drugs and alcohol. It is a form of abuse that involves a power imbalance where the victim's options are limited, and it can be misunderstood by children and adults as consensual. Child sexual exploitation manifests in different ways, including both online and offline. It can involve an older perpetrator exercising financial, emotional, or physical control over a young person. It may also involve opportunistic or organised networks of perpetrators who profit financially from trafficking young victims between different locations to engage in sexual activity.

## 11. Version

Version 1.3 approved by Nossal Institute for Global Health Board February 2025.

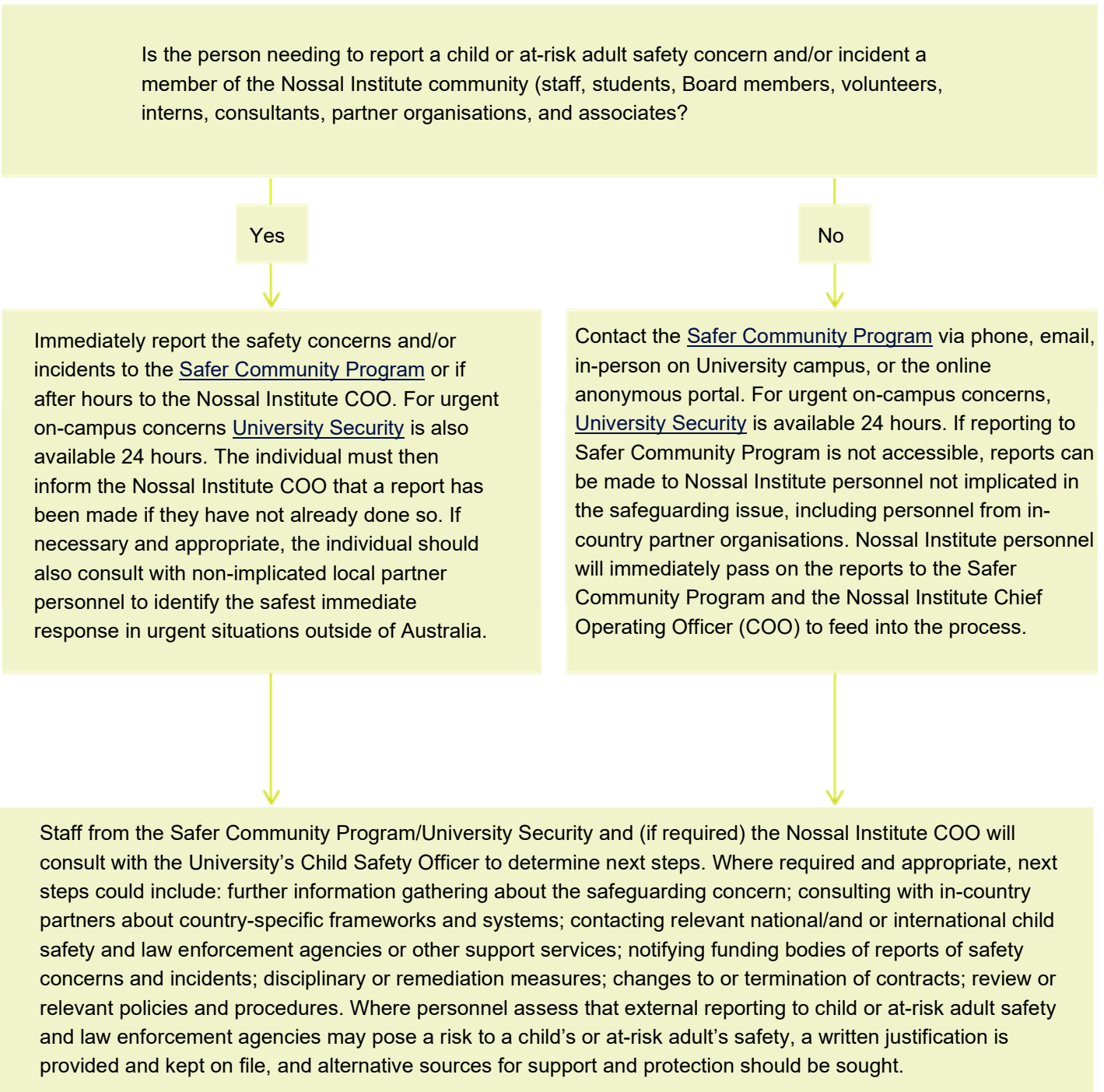
Version 1.2 approved by Nossal Institute for Global Health Board June 2024.

Version 1.1 approved by Nossal Institute for Global Health Board March 2024.

Date of next review: February 2027.

## Appendix A: Nossal Institute Safeguarding Reporting Flowchart

**Note: in case of an immediate and severe threat to a child's or at-risk adult's safety, call emergency services on 000 in Australia or 112 overseas if safe to do so.**



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