

Child Safe and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Allegation Management Procedure

In this Section

This section contains the following topics:

1. Reporting allegations or concerns about child safety, or sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment towards an adult ('SEAH')
2. Investigating allegations or concerns about child safety or SEAH
3. Concluding investigations about child safety or SEAH

Before you start you need access to:

- Child Safe Policy and/or Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy
- Child Safe and SEAH Reporting Form
- Safeguarding Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy

Overview

Who should report?

All TAI representatives and external stakeholders (e.g. supporters, partner organisation staff, community members, participants in events or trips conducted in whole or part by TAI or its subsidiaries) "the information provider" must report any concerns they have:

- For the safety or wellbeing of a child including child exploitation or abuse, the possession of child exploitation material, or policy noncompliance. (Please refer to the Child Safe Policy for definitions.)
- Regarding incidents of SEAH towards an adult. (Please refer to the PSEAH Policy for definitions)

Please note, if your concern relates to:

- A grievance not covered under this CS and SEAH Allegation Management Procedure (such as a grievance related to discrimination, vilification, bullying and conflict) please see the Grievance Policy.
- A complaint other than those addressed by the PSEAH, Child Safe or Grievance Policies, please see the Complaints Handling Policy.

What should I report?

Any behaviour that you suspect and/or a report made to you (including a report made by a child) about a TAI representative, supporter, associate or implementing partner regarding;

- breach of the Child Safe Policy, PSEAH Policy or Safeguarding Code of Conduct ("COC")

- child exploitation and/or abuse
- possession of any child exploitation material
- criminal proceedings being undertaken regarding child exploitation and/or abuse
- sexual exploitation of an adult
- sexual abuse of an adult
- sexual harassment of an adult
- criminal proceedings being undertaken regarding sexual exploitation and abuse of an adult
- any other concerns

What if I am not sure if what I have seen is a Child Safe or SEAH matter?

TAI requires that you report any concerns, rather than investigate yourself. You should report any concern or allegation, regardless of whether you believe that it is substantiated or not. Relevant TAI representatives who will respond to the matter are equipped to determine whether there has been a Child Safe or SEAH incident.

When should I report?

Immediately (within 24 hours).

Who do I report to?

After completing a Child Safe and SEAH Reporting Form (which can be found in the Governance Hub or on our website), follow the steps in the below Procedure to determine who to provide that Form to.

What happens to the information I provide?

Recording and sharing of information:

All misconduct complaints must be recorded, subject to the wishes and welfare of the complainant.

All information provided will be treated in accordance with relevant Commonwealth legislation, including the Privacy Act 1988. Records that may be or are required as evidence in any judicial proceeding must not be destroyed under section 317 of the *Crimes Act 1900* (NSW).

All information gathered is to be clearly documented, filed and maintained in a safe and secure repository either physically or electronically.

Information will only be shared with those persons who are directly involved in the investigation and decision-making process and/or the provision of professional advice on the matter.

Interests of those involved:

TAI will ensure that the best interests of the child/victim-survivor are reflected in the actions that the organisation takes to handle the abuse. TAI has a commitment to operating within a victim-survivor-centric approach and will respect the wishes and dignity of the survivor.

TAI will treat all concerns raised seriously and ensure that all parties will be treated fairly. TAI will meet country, state or territory specific legislative requirements. TAI will treat victim-survivors with dignity and respect and ensure that their needs are prioritised in the actions that the organisation takes to handle the incident. This may include involving them in decision making, providing them with comprehensive information, protecting their privacy and confidentiality, not discriminating against, and considering needs for counselling.

Transform Aid International (“TAI”) will treat all concerns raised seriously and ensure that all parties will be treated fairly. TAI will meet country, state or territory specific legislative requirements. Any person who intentionally makes a false allegation or malicious allegation will face disciplinary action (see Disciplinary Policy).

Reporting to authorities:

In relation to Child Safe matters, TAI must immediately notify the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of any behaviour that is suspected of being abuse or exploitation of children in DFAT funded activities. These reports must be immediately reported per the below process. The Director of International Programs will facilitate notification to DFAT. In consultation with DFAT personnel and processes, relevant authorities will be informed of criminal allegations against children.

In relation to SEAH matters, TAI must notify the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of any concerns relating to SEAH in DFAT funded activities. These reports must be reported per the below process. The Director of International Programs will facilitate notification to DFAT. In consultation with DFAT personnel and processes, and also the wishes and welfare of the adult victim-survivor, relevant authorities will be informed of criminal allegations.

In any case where it is suspected or becomes clear that a crime has been committed against a child or adult, the allegation should be reported to the local police and/or child protection authority, subject to the welfare and wishes of the survivor/victim.

Where allegations are made against an implementing partner or its representatives, the Implementing Partner will investigate and report to TAI. Where appropriate, TAI may conduct its own investigation pre- or post-finalisation of the implementing partner’s investigation.

Guide to Dealing with Victim-Survivors

This information provides guidance on how to respond to a survivor who raises a concern regardless of whether they are a child or an adult victim-survivor, before following the CS and SEAH Allegation Management Procedure.

When discussing abuse with the victim-survivor during the first telling ensure that there is a clear understanding of the emotional distress the victim-survivor may be experiencing. Ensure a caring and sensitive approach to the survivor and assure them of a willingness to listen and assist if there is a problem.

TAI will always show care and concern for the rights of the survivor.

- Listen carefully to what the survivor says about their concern or allegation
- Reassure the survivor that you believe what they are telling you
- Ensure that the victim-survivor understands and is reassured that they are not responsible for the abuse and it is not their fault that it has occurred
- Provide assurance to the victim-survivor that it was right that they shared the information with you
- Organise appropriate professional support for the victim-survivor including physical and/or mental medical support. In matters concerning adult victim-survivors, this is to be conducted in accordance with their wishes
- Ensure that the victim-survivor understands that a report will be made to those with the necessary authority to stop the abuse and that the child/victim-survivor is assisting in that process by sharing about their experience. In matters concerning adult victim-survivors, this is to be conducted in accordance with their wishes

- Follow the CS and SEAH Allegation Management Procedure for reporting purposes

It is also important when handling a disclosure that you don't:

- attempt to investigate or confront persons accused in the disclosure
- panic or show other negative emotions e.g. anger
- make promises you cannot keep
- ask why
- ask closed or leading questions
- give an impression that you blame the child/victim-survivor
- touch the child/victim-survivor.

Procedure

1. Complete the following steps to respond to allegations or concerns about child safety or SEAH.

Step	Action
1	<p>TAI representative or Implementing Partner suspects or receives allegation regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child exploitation or abuse • Possession of exploitation or abuse material involving children • Breach of Child Safe Policy or Code of Conduct • Criminal proceedings being undertaken in regard to the sexual exploitation and/ or abuse of a child • Sexual exploitation of an adult • Sexual abuse of an adult • Sexual harassment of an adult • Criminal proceedings being undertaken regarding the sexual exploitation and abuse of an adult
2	<p>The TAI representative or implementing partner will take immediate necessary actions to protect the child/adult from exploitation or abuse. This may include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Checking that the child/adult is safe b) Reporting the suspicion or allegation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the relevant IPC and/or a member of the Safeguarding Committee (mandatory) using the TAI Child Safe and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Reporting Form. • Reporting to police and/or government authorities (Director of International Programs will decide if this is required) c) contact the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) immediately unless this would jeopardise the child's welfare.
3	<p>In relation to DFAT-funded activities, TAI's Director of International Programs will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to child safe matters, immediately (within 24 hours) notify the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) (via childprotection@dfat.gov.au) using the DFAT Child Protection Incident Notification Form, of any concerns relating to the abuse or exploitation of children, including suspected or alleged instances of child abuse. • In relation to SEAH matters, will notify DFAT immediately within 24 hours, using the DFAT Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Incident Notification Form (www.dfat.gov.au/pseah) and emailed to seah.reports@dfat.gov.au <p>In relation to non-DFAT or TAI funded activities, TAI may still receive reports or information regarding a safeguarding incident. In this event, TAI representatives should complete section 2 of this procedure.</p>
End of Procedure	

2. Complete the following steps to report and assess the allegation or concerns about child safety or SEAH. A 'quick-reference' overview of this Procedure is located in Appendix 1.

Step	Action
1	<p>Once a TAI representative receives a Safeguarding allegation, they are to complete the Child Safe and SEAH Reporting Form. If the person who is raising the allegation has already completed the Form, the TAI representative will review and complete any missing details. This can be found on the Policies and Procedures Portal on SharePoint or on our website, and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name and contact details of person lodging the Form. • Date/s of incident/s • Name of organisation/s involved • Alleged offender's details including name, nationality and occupation or relationship to TAI or Implementing Partner organisation • Details of alleged incident/s • Whether local law enforcement authorities or Australian Federal Police have been involved • If incident/s occurred in the course of a TAI activity or TAI funded activity, the name of the activity • Steps already taken • If the survivor is an adult, do they wish to be identified in reporting • If the survivor is an adult, do they wish for further action to be taken with regards to local authority reporting • Any other relevant information.
2	<p>Submit this form, either in person or via email, to the Chair of the Safeguarding Committee, who will notify the Director of International Programs and the relevant International Programs Coordinator, or the relevant Department Director about the allegation (if they are not already aware of the allegation). A report will be created in the Safeguarding entity in the NEO database by the Chair of the Safeguarding Committee.</p>
3	<p>The Child Safe and SEAH Reporting Form is to be reviewed by those to whom it was submitted, and the legitimacy of the allegation is to be assessed.</p>
4	<p>If it is determined that the allegation requires investigation, continue with the next stage of this Procedure below.</p> <p>If it is determined that the allegation does not require investigation, the Chair of the Safeguarding Committee is to respond to the allegation and resolve the matter. This will include logging all relevant information in the report in the Safeguarding entity on the NEO database.</p>
End of Procedure	

3. Complete the following steps to investigate allegations or concerns about child safety or SEAH

Step	Action
1	The Chair of the Safeguarding Committee or an appropriate delegate, is to commence the investigation process. If the victim-survivor is an adult, TAI is to confirm that the victim-survivor wants an investigation to be undertaken.
2	<p>Within 48 hours of receiving the report, the Chair of the Safeguarding Committee will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report the incident to the CEO • CEO is to appoint members and convene the Investigating Committee • Consider whether they require the support of other TAI representatives, who will collectively make up the Investigating Committee (e.g. the Director of International Programs, a relevant Departmental Director, the CEO, an IPC). • If a TAI representative is implicated in the allegation, determine alongside the CEO and HR whether to suspend their employment / engagement until the investigation is concluded. <p>In the event the allegation has been made against the CEO, the Board Chair will perform the duties assigned to the CEO and Chair of the Safeguarding Committee in this process.</p>
3	The Investigating Committee will make all decisions throughout the process. A representative from the Implementing Partner organisation will be included if incident/s occurred during implementation of TAI-funded program.
4	<p>The Investigating Committee will commence the investigation.</p> <p>The following principles will apply during the investigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When investigating, take care to act in a fair and reasonable manner. • Information will only be shared with stakeholders essential to the investigation and will otherwise be kept confidential. • Focus on the rights and wishes of the victim-survivor. If the victim-survivor is an adult, their wishes and welfare are important in deciding how the investigation is carried out. • The nature and extent of the investigations will depend on the matter. • Keep an open mind and look for evidence. • Give all attendees warning and time to prepare for investigation/ fact finding meetings. • Investigatory meetings should be conducted by the Investigating Officer and should be confined to establishing the facts of the case. <p>It is important that disciplinary action is not considered at an investigatory meeting. If it becomes apparent that formal disciplinary action may be needed, then this should be dealt with at a formal meeting at which the employee will have right to be accompanied.</p> <p>Any updated or new information is to be logged by the Chair of the Safeguarding Committee in the report in the Safeguarding entity on the NEO Database.</p>
End of Procedure	

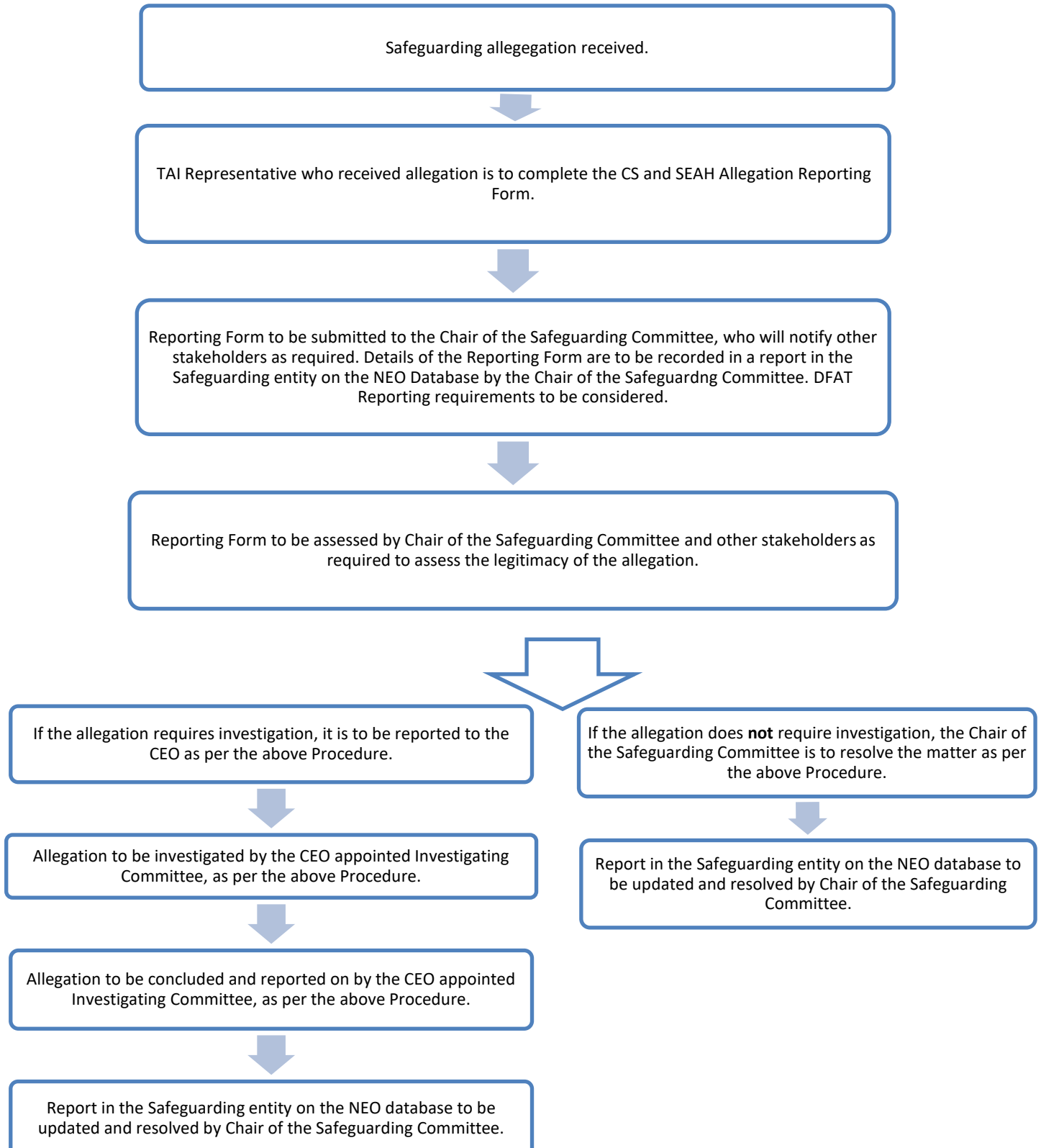
4. Complete the following steps to conclude investigations about child safety or SEAH matters

Step	Action
1	The Investigating Committee are to meet at the conclusion of investigation.
2	<p>If the allegation or concern is found to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsubstantiated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Provide ongoing monitoring and review ii. The CEO and HR will develop a return to work plan for a TAI representative that was suspended pending the investigation. For any TAI representative subject to investigation, counselling will be made available as per the Employee Assistance Program. • Substantiated but not require mandatory reporting to statutory and regulatory authorities, then: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. For TAI Representatives, implement Disciplinary Procedure (up to and including termination of employment) ii. For supporters, manage relationship up to and including termination of the relationship with the supporter iii. For implementing partners, Safeguarding Committee, Director of International Programs and CEO to monitor and advise on management of ongoing partnership and projects. • Substantiated and require mandatory reporting to statutory and regulatory authorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. For TAI Representatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Individual to be suspended from work (if applicable) until conviction determined by authorities b. Disciplinary procedure implemented following conviction result (up to and including termination of employment) c. Details of disciplinary procedures and/or conviction to be included in employee's file ii. For supporters, manage relationship up to and including termination of the relationship with the supporter iii. For implementing partners, Safeguarding Committee, Director of International Programs and CEO to monitor and advise on management of ongoing partnership and projects.
3	<p>The Investigating Committee will determine to whom the outcome will be reported, for example: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Committee, • Executive • Board • Parents/caregivers of the child/children involved • The victim/survivor (if they are an adult) • If police and state authorities have been informed then the provision of information will be undertaken in line with the direction of those authorities • DFAT or other external bodies.

4	<p>The Investigating Committee will review: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether this process and the Child Safe Policy or PSEAH Policy was followed; • Consider the outcomes of the investigation; • Consider whether the best interests of the child or victim-survivor were served throughout the process; • Determine steps to be taken to improve the process.
5	<p>All documentation evidencing the processes in this procedure must be stored by the Chair of the Safeguarding Committee in the report in the Safeguarding entity on the NEO database.</p>
End of Procedure	

Appendix 1: Child Safe and Allegation Management Flowchart

The below Flowchart is a 'quick-reference' overview of the above Procedure:



Document Control Information

CS and SEAH Allegation Management Procedure	
Owner	Director of Risk, Governance and Business Optimisation
Master Copy	Policy QA Coordinator
Date created	12/11/2011
Date last reviewed	28/05/2025
Approved by Director of Risk, Governance and Business Optimisation	22/7/2025
Approved by Executive	23/12/2019
Date next Review	28/5/2028

Date	Version	Revision Description	Reviewed / Updated by
12/11/2011	1	Created	
27/09/2016	2	Reviewed	
01/11/2017	3	Reviewed and updated against DFAT Child Protection Policy 2017 Consolidated this Procedure with BWAA Child Safe Complaint Handling Procedures 2012	Policy QA Coordinator, International Program Coordinator (Child Safeguarding Officer)
30/09/2019	4	Updated from Child Safe Reporting Procedure to the CS and SEAH Allegation Management Procedure, to account for ACFID/DFAT PSEAH requirements.	Policy QA Coordinator; Associate Director Strategic Relations
02/05/2020	5	Updated to streamline processes and include information about new Safeguarding entity on NEO.	Policy QA Coordinator
31/05/2021	6	Updated in line with ACFID suggestions.	Compliance and Risk Coordinator; Policy QA Coordinator
28/5/2025	7	Updated to support revised Child Safe and PSEAH policies	Risk and Governance Coordinator