



**Ryder-Cheshire Australia**  
**Working with Children and People with Disabilities**  
**Australia, India and East Timor Policy**  
**2012**

**Abbreviations Used in this document**

RCA - Ryder-Cheshire Australia – The National Body

RCF - Ryder Cheshire Foundations - State bodies are called “Foundations”

RC – Ryder-Cheshire

**Purpose of this Policy**

- To demonstrate Ryder-Cheshire Australia’s commitment to the care and protection of all children, people with disabilities; staff at homes in East Timor and India; patients, families, volunteers, supporters and the community in general. To provide a framework for managing and reducing risks of child abuse and abuse to people with disabilities by persons engaged in activities under the auspices of Ryder-Cheshire Australia.
- To provide Ryder-Cheshire Australia volunteers, Ryder-Cheshire Foundation volunteers and volunteers who are going to East Timor or India, guidance in their dealings with children and people with disabilities,
- To provide guidance in areas of cultural sensitivity when volunteering overseas.
- To provide a caring, open and aware environment for children and people with disabilities to grow and thrive.

**Guiding Principles**

- Abuse and exploitation of children and people with disabilities is not acceptable and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.
- All children and people with disabilities have the right to be safe at all times.
- RCA has a duty of care to ensure all children and people with disabilities, especially those in its care, are safe from harm.

**Scope and persons affected**

All RCA volunteers whether in Australia, India or East Timor, are required to comply with this RCA policy.

**Goal**

- To bring these issues to a volunteer’s attention;
- To stop a volunteer going for the wrong reasons;

- To make a volunteer more aware of what is, and what is not allowed, in the hope that the volunteer will not put themselves in a vulnerable position;
- To ensure that the volunteer is made aware of what sort of photos they can and can't take, and how they can and can't be used.

### **Definitions**

**Child** - In accordance with the United National Conventions on the Rights of the Child, RCA defines a child as any person under the age of 18, regardless of local laws and other definitions.

**People with disability** - RCA defines people with a disability as anyone who has a mental or psychiatric disability, physical, sensory (ie, deaf) or intellectual disability.

**Protection** - An activity or initiative designed to protect children and people with disabilities from any form of harm.

**Abuse** - The term abuse is used to cover any physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect. Both boys and girls can be the victims of abuse, and abuse can be inflicted by men, women and children.

- **Physical abuse** occurs when a person purposefully injures, or threatens to injure, a child or young person. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing.
- **Emotional or psychological abuse** occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected and/or intimidated through verbal and non-verbal means. This may involve insults, taunts, threats and ridicule, or continual coldness from parent or caregiver to the extent that it affects the child's physical and emotional growth.
- **Neglect** is the persistent failure or the deliberate denial to provide the child with clean water, food, shelter, sanitation or supervision or care to the extent that the child's health and development are placed at risk.
- **Child sexual abuse** occurs when an adult, more powerful child or adolescent uses his or her power to involve a child in sexual activity. That coercive power can be physical, verbal or emotional.

### **Implementing RCA's Policy Within Australia**

Based on activities run by RCA and RCF groups, where members/supporters do not have direct one-to-one dealings with children and people with disabilities on an on-going basis, it is not necessary for RCA/RCF members to obtain a Police Check.

With regard to "Opportunity Shops", the authority running these Shops should have developed requirements for their volunteer staff. Members working in one of these shops need to check on these requirements.

RCA has developed a set of "Guidelines on Interacting with Children at Ryder Cheshire Fundraising Functions & Other Activities (2012)" (Appendix 1). This will be given to every new member to read when they join RCA.

In order to keep up with changing Child Protection Laws the President of each State's Board, will be responsible to keep their Foundation updated with requirements on Child Protection policies pertaining to their state. The President of each State will check that requirements for police checks for RCA volunteers within that State have not changed in the past year. He/she will be responsible for passing this information onto members and the Overseas Volunteers' Co-ordinator at the time of the annual general meeting of that state.

In order to help States obtain this information, contacts for each state's policy are set out below:

#### **New South Wales**

<https://check.kids.nsw.gov.au/#are-you-volunteer>

Commission for Children and Young People

Ph: (02) 9286 7219

email: [check@kids.nsw.gov.au](mailto:check@kids.nsw.gov.au)

#### **Victoria**

<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/justlib/Working+With+Children/Home/Application+Process/Who+Needs+to+Apply/>

Working with Children Check Unit - Department of Justice

PH: 1300 652 879

Email: [workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au)

#### **South Australia**

<http://www.police.sa.gov.au>

<http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/CHILDRENS%20PROTECTION%20ACT%201993.aspx>

email: SAPOL Records Release [SAPOLRecordsRelease@police.sa.gov.au](mailto:SAPOLRecordsRelease@police.sa.gov.au)

PH: 131 444

#### **Implementing RCA's Policy Overseas**

RCA supports homes, Klibur Domin in East Timor, and Raphael in India. In order to protect children, people with disabilities, staff and volunteers in these centres the following procedures will be followed by the Overseas Volunteers' Co-ordinator with regard to Protection, Codes of Conduct and the taking and use of images:

The Volunteers' Co-ordinator will be responsible for:

- remaining informed of requirements in East Timor and India;
- updating information and policies if changes to requirements in East Timor, India or Australia require RCA to update existing policies;
- ensuring volunteers who or are 18 years of age or over going to India or East Timor, obtain a Police Check. If the volunteer turns 18 while volunteering they will also be required to obtain a

Police Check. If the volunteer has a current Police Check, or a current Working with Children check, that may be used.

- informing volunteers that if they do not hold a current check, they will need to arrange for a check to be done through the Australian Federal Police at their own expense.
- ensuring a prospective volunteer read, sign and get witnessed, a copy of **Ryder-Cheshire Australia - Code of Conduct for Children and People with Disabilities (2012)** (Appendix 2)
- ensuring a prospective volunteer read, sign and get witnessed, a copy of **Ryder-Cheshire Australia - Use of Images– (2012)**(Appendix 3).

### **Reporting Procedures**

Complaints regarding protection, or the taking of, and, use of images of a child or a person with disabilities should be made to the RCA National President for further action.

If a complaint has been made to the Overseas Volunteers' Co-ordinator or any other member of RCA, that complaint will be passed onto the RCA National President for further action.

RCA members and volunteers should be reassured that there will be no action taken against those who report, in good faith, information indicating a breach of this Policy.

### **Confidentiality**

RCA will ensure that any concern raised is handled according to the principles of confidentiality, safety, impartiality, thoroughness and accuracy.

All complaints and reports, and the names of people involved, will be handled in the strictest of confidence. Details will only be released on a "need to know" basis, or when required by relevant local or Australian law, or when a notification to police or child protection authorities has been made.

### **References**

AusAID Child Protection Policy, January 2009

[http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/child\\_protection.pdf](http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/child_protection.pdf)

Australian Volunteers International Child Protection Policy – July 2010

[www.australianvolunteers.com](http://www.australianvolunteers.com)

Australian National Maritime Museum Child Protection Policy 9 July 2007

[www.anmm.gov.au](http://www.anmm.gov.au)

Appendix 1:

**Ryder-Cheshire Australia**  
**Guidelines on Interacting with Children at Ryder-Cheshire**  
**Functions or Other Activities - 2012**

- Avoid physical contact with children and people with disabilities unless there is a legitimate reason for such contact, ie, the child's own safety and welfare (eg, administering first aid, removing a child from impending danger, supporting a child with a disability). If you feel you need to have contact, where possible ensure that you keep a clear distance between you and the child and only touch them on the shoulder that is closest to you.
- Use non-invasive physical greetings commonly accepted in the community only if this is initiated by the child or person with a disability (eg. shake hands, high five with hands). Children or people with an intellectual disability may attempt to initiate more intimate greetings such as hugging, sensitively discourage this by comments such as "we don't know each other very well, how about we shake hands".
- Never use physical force or restraint on a child or person with a disability unless this is necessary for the immediate safety or to prevent immediate physical harm to them or others. Physical force or restraint should only be to the extent necessary to prevent serious harm from occurring. If confronted with a situation of an older child threatening to harm others or wielding a weapon, seek immediate assistance (from Security or Police) rather than attempt to disarm the child.
- Never use corporal punishment of any kind as a method of discipline or behaviour management with any child.
- Ensure that you are not alone with a child, group of children or people with a disability in any location where you are not in visual contact by another adult unless there is a legitimate reason for doing so for that person's own safety and welfare. First Aid should be administered in the presence of another adult (preferably one known to that person) unless it is an emergency and the delay in getting another adult would jeopardize their safety. If you are the only adult in a shop or on a stall when a child, children or a person with a disability walks in, it is advisable to call another person to the area if possible. Keep an eye out for each other.
- Ensure that you are never alone with a child or a person with a disability in a room with the door closed unless that room has a glass wall allowing visual contact by another adult.
- Never remove an item of clothing from a child or a person with disability's body unless this is necessary for their immediate safety to prevent serious harm (eg - to administer emergency first aid).
- Avoid swearing and any language that is derogatory towards others.

Appendix 2

**Ryder-Cheshire Australia**  
**Code of Conduct for Children and People with Disabilities (2012)**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ volunteering with Ryder-Cheshire Australia, agree that I will:

- treat children and people with disabilities 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 and people with disabilities that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate;
- not engage children and people with disabilities in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts, where under the law(s) applicable to the child (including Part IIIA of the Australian Crimes Act 1914 (Cwlth) as amended), 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 and people with disabilities;
- not invite unaccompanied children and people with disabilities into my current residence, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger;
- not sleep close to unsupervised children or people with disabilities unless absolutely necessary, in which case I must obtain my supervisor's permission, and ensure that another adult is present if possible;
- not use any computers, mobile phones, or video and digital cameras inappropriately and never exploit or harass children and people with disabilities, or, access child pornography through any medium (see also 'RCA – Use of Images (2012)');
- refrain from physical punishment or discipline of children (excluding my own children) and people with disabilities;
- comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour and people with disabilities;
- immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse and abuse of people with disabilities in accordance with appropriate procedures.

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read and agree to this document:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 3

**Ryder-Cheshire Australia  
Use of Images (2012)**

When photographing or filming a child or people with disabilities, I \_\_\_\_\_,  
must:

- assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images before photographing or filming;
- check with those I wish to photograph or film to ensure that they are happy to be photographed or filmed, and get their consent;
- explain how the photograph or film may be/will be used;
- ensure that photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children and people with disabilities in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children and people with disabilities should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive;
- ensure that when I post photographs, films, videos and DVDs on the net that they present children and people with disabilities in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner;
- ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts;
- ensure file labels do not reveal identifying information about a child or people with disabilities when sending images electronically.

I understand that the onus is on me to use common sense and avoid actions or behaviours that could be construed as child abuse, or abuse of a disabled person while volunteering for Ryder Cheshire Australia.

I understand that when I give photographs, films, videos and DVDs to Ryder-Cheshire Australia for use on the net or in brochures, before they use them, Ryder-Cheshire Australia will ensure that permission has been given by the Directors of Raphael, India, and Klibur Domin, East Timor, to use these items.

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read and agree to this document:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_