



SEAFEGUARDING (WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS) POLICY

Reviewed: 07 November 2023

Introduction to the Policy

PIABC Limited intends to treat all candidates equally and fairly. The objective of this guidance is to assist External Quality Assurers (EQAs) to be effective in their role and to make professional and prudent judgements regarding best practice and risk when involved with Children and Vulnerable Adults. The overall aim is to protect Children and Vulnerable Adults, PIABC Limited's EVs, and Centre Staff from abuse or allegations of abuse.

This document is in two sections.

The first section deals with the Policy of PIABC Limited and its applicability and the second section with 'Best Practice Guidance' to be considered where Children and Vulnerable Adults are involved when undertaking External Quality Assurance (EQA) duties.

The Policy and Guidance are there to help provide the expected protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults and to avoid situations in which well-intentioned actions could be misinterpreted.

The Policy does not contain any complete definition of what is 'an abuse'. To prepare a rigorous legal definition would prove difficult and is unlikely to include all possible circumstances; the Guidance does state some possible scenarios and how these might be treated.

EQAs are expected to evaluate each potential involvement with Children and Vulnerable Adults before they undertake a verification visit, then prepare and act accordingly. EQAs are also expected to consider potential risk before offering guidance and advice to Centres.

Notes:

1. In the Policy and Guidance document the definition of Children and Vulnerable Adults is intended to be guidance and is not exclusive. If there is any doubt contact the PIABC Limited. The Guidance will be periodically updated.
2. This introduction of a Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy is not an addition to the criteria for Centres; EQAs should encourage Centres to have an appropriate policy as good practice.

1. The Policy

Through this Policy PIABC Limited aims to:

- Adopt the highest possible Children and Vulnerable Adults protection standard.
- Take all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of Children and Vulnerable Adults with whom we come into contact in relation to our activities within PIABC Limited and our Centres.
- Prevent EQAs being exposed to risks or occasions of potential alleged abuse.

You (the EQA) Are Expected To:

- Treat everyone with respect. **THIS IS THE GOLDEN RULE.** Any misuse of power or influence could be regarded as an abuse and will be treated as serious misconduct.
- Take all sensible actions not to put yourself in a vulnerable position.
- Not physically, emotionally or sexually abuse, or be complacent, in any abuse of a Child or a Vulnerable Adult.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of any candidate but specially Children and Vulnerable Adults
- Be aware of Children and Vulnerable Adults issues in relation to the work you do and do not become complacent.
- Ensure that you are never alone and out of sight of others, when with a Child or a Vulnerable Adult.
- Take appropriate action if you become aware of anyone physically, emotionally or sexually abusing a Child or Vulnerable Adult.
- Report any evidence or reasonable suspicion that a Child or Vulnerable Adult has been physically, emotionally or sexually abused to the appropriate Child Protection Agency and PIABC Limited.
- Apply this Policy to all of your work with Children and Vulnerable Adults.
- Do everything reasonable in your power to ensure the safety and welfare of Children and Vulnerable Adults while they are in contact with PIABC Limited and to act in accordance with the guidance below.

2. Guidance

This section gives general Guidance; the intention is not to constrain an open and relaxed environment when conducting Verification but to provide guidance to ensure a prudent and sensible approach to Children and Vulnerable Adults. If you have any doubt about best practice in any specific area, contact the PIABC Limited for further advice.

A. Scope of your Responsibilities

The aim is to ensure Children and Vulnerable Adults are accompanied by a responsible adult during any meeting. If this is not possible as a confidential discussion is required or requested take appropriate precautions, i.e. use a room with a window where you can clearly be seen by others; sit in an 'open' office but at a distance beyond the hearing of others; leave the door open at all times and sit where you can be seen. You should NOT undertake interviews where you are the only adult present with children. In all cases:

- Keep a physical and professional distance.
- Refrain from close physical contact.
- Do not allow yourself to be put in a position of risk.
- Be aware of the effect that your words and actions may have.
- Don't exchange personal contact details with children.
- Always treat allegations seriously and act in accordance with this Policy.
- Report incidences of 'abuse' to the Centre Contact unless the allegation relates to that individual; in which case, contact their Manager.
- Understand that abuse may not be physical; emotional abuse i.e. bullying or intimidation can affect the candidate too.

B. Dealing with allegations of abuse

It is to be hoped that you will never have to deal with an alleged incident of abuse against Children and Vulnerable Adults but it is sensible that you are prepared to do so if necessary. You have a responsibility to report ANY concerns regarding the welfare of Children and Vulnerable Adults.

There are various scenarios which you should be prepared to deal with if necessary:

- a) There is suspicion or evidence that a person associated with the candidate is abusing a Child or Vulnerable Adult.
- b) A Child or Vulnerable Adult accuses a person associated with the Centre of abusing them.
- c) A Child discloses abuse happening elsewhere e.g. at home, College.
- d) A Colleague is accused of abuse.
- e) A Centre or candidate may contact you by telephone/email/letter alleging abuse.
- f) You, the EQA, are abused.

In all cases you must:

- Act in a calm manner and as quickly as you can without causing any further distress to the candidate.
- Keep any details strictly confidential and share only on an absolute 'need to know' basis.
- Do not ask the person to repeat the allegations.
- Do not give any undertaking of confidentiality.
- Do not prompt or ask 'leading questions'.
- Contact the PIABC Limited as soon as possible.
- All written or 'second-hand' allegations should be referred to the PIABC Limited who will investigate.

- Make your own verbatim written notes as soon as practicable, including the date, time and place.
- If you are reporting personal abuse to yourself (the EQA) this should be reported immediately as practical to a senior manager of the organisation you are visiting (if appropriate) and the PIABC Limited.

C. Use of Information relating to children

Information about all candidates especially children e.g. names and addresses must be treated in strictest confidence. It must be kept securely, used only for the purpose required, retained only as long as necessary for that purpose and disposed of in a way which maintains the candidate's confidentiality.

D. Photographs of Children and Vulnerable Adults

It is preferred that Photographs of Children and Vulnerable Adults (including Group photographs) are not used in portfolios. Permission should be sought from parents or responsible adults to take and/or use photographs and a Consent Form signed. Any information that can allow the Children and Vulnerable Adults to be identified by name or location must not be put in the Public Domain unless a 'disclaimer' is signed and included in the Portfolio.

E. Suitability for working with Children and Vulnerable Adults

At present, there is no explicit requirement in Law or PIABC Limited Policies for the circumstances applicable to this Policy for any checks regarding the suitability of EQA s to work with children under the Protection of Children Act 1999 or Vulnerable Adults. PIABC Limited reserve the right to ask for CRB checks on EQA s in the future. This would not be done without the written consent of the EQA s.