

# CHILDREN AND YOUTHS SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Effective Date: November 2023

Revision Date: (every 3 years)

Signed by:

Approved:

*Paul Rugambwa Rumanda*

Oct 03 2023 09:34 EAT

*Andrew Kambugu*

Oct 11 2023 09:45

Paul Rugambwa Rumanda

Dr. Andrew Kambugu

Head of Human Resources Department

The Executive Director  
Infectious Diseases Institute

## Table of Contents

<a href="#">Key definitions</a>	4
<a href="#">Policy statement</a>	6
<a href="#">Scope of the policy</a>	6
<a href="#">Youths</a>	6
<a href="#">Children</a>	6
<a href="#">Application of the children and youths safeguarding policy:</a>	7
<a href="#">Guidelines for implementation of the Children and Youths safeguarding policy in practice:</a>	7
1. <a href="#">Prevention:</a>	7
2. <a href="#">Code of conduct:</a>	7
3. <a href="#">Gender equality and non-discrimination:</a>	7
4. <a href="#">Screening procedures:</a>	8
5. <a href="#">Awareness:</a>	8
6. <a href="#">Capacity building:</a>	8
7. <a href="#">Participation of children and/or young people:</a>	8
8. <a href="#">Reporting mechanisms for children and/or youths and staff:</a>	8
9. <a href="#">Response and follow-up:</a>	8
10. <a href="#">Implementation, monitoring and review:</a>	9
11. <a href="#">Sanction and discipline of organisational personnel:</a>	9
12. <a href="#">Informed consent:</a>	9
13. <a href="#">Protection of personal information:</a>	9
14. <a href="#">Working with partners:</a>	9
15. <a href="#">Responsibilities</a>	9
16. <a href="#">Safeguarding function and Safeguarding committee</a>	10
17. <a href="#">Reporting</a>	10
18. <a href="#">Retaliation</a>	11
19. <a href="#">Risk assessment</a>	11
20. <a href="#">Ramifications of Misconduct</a>	11
21. <a href="#">Policy monitoring and review</a>	11
<a href="#">Declaration</a>	13
<a href="#">Appendix 1:</a>	14
<a href="#">Child and Youths Safeguarding violation/ concern Reporting Template:</a>	14

## Key definitions

**'Child'** is anyone under the age of 18 years old. This is defined in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and for the purposes of this safeguarding policy, is defined as any person – girl, boy, young woman, young man, and children of other gender identities - under the age of 18 years

**'Child Abuse'** consists of anything, which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood. The main categories of abuse are defined by WHO as Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Neglect and Negligent treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation.

**'Child Protection'** refers to the actions we take when we have specific concerns that a particular child is at risk of significant harm

**'Youth'** refers to individuals who are in the stage of life between childhood and adulthood. While the specific age range that defines youth can vary from one culture or context to another, it typically encompasses the period of late adolescence and early adulthood. The Commonwealth identifies young people aged 15-29 years as youth, whereas the Uganda National Youth Council classifies youth as individuals aged 18-30 years.

**'Safeguarding'** is the responsibility of organisations to make sure their staff, operations and programmes do no harm to children and vulnerable adults or expose them to abuse or exploitation.

**'Sexual Exploitation'** means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from sexual exploitation or another.

**"Associate"** refers to a range of contracted paid and non-paid individuals who have committed to work with or support IDI. It includes, among others, board members, volunteers (including community volunteers), interns, sponsors, researchers, donors, consultants and contractors, staff and/or representatives of partner organisations and local governments (when operating in partnership agreement with IDI).

**"Direct beneficiaries"** are the people who are the target of and who we know will be immediately affected by one or more project outputs; irrespective of whether these are delivered directly by IDI or by partners or organisations who are acting on behalf of IDI

**"Harm"** is any detrimental effect on a child's or adult at risk including physical, psychological, or emotional wellbeing. Harm may be caused by abuse or exploitation whether intended or unintended.

**"Partner"** For the purposes of this policy, partner refers to any organisation or person (such as an external service provider or vendor) that IDI works with to deliver services.

**"Violence"** against a child or youth includes all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, emotional ill-treatment or psychological violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, harassment, and commercial or other exploitation of a child or young person. Acts of violence can also take place online through, for example, the web, social media or mobile phones. It may be an intentional act involving the use of physical force or power or it may be failing to act to prevent violence against a child or young person. Violence consists of anything which individuals,



**Infectious Diseases Institute**  
**College of Health Sciences**  
**Makerere University**



groups, institutions or organisations do or fail to do, intentionally or unintentionally, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in actual or potential harm to the child or young person's wellbeing, dignity and survival and development.

**“Visitor”** refers to a range of persons who are visiting our offices or programmes and may come into contact with children and young people through IDI, including journalists, media, researchers, visiting sponsors and celebrities.

**“Child Labour”** Child labour is work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. Whether or not particular forms of “work” can be called “child labour” depends on the child's age, the type and hours of work performed, the conditions under which it is performed and the objectives pursued by individual countries. It refers to work that is; mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school by obliging children to leave school early

**“Bullying”** is the inappropriate use of power by an individual or group, with intent to injure either physically or emotionally. It is usually deliberate and repetitive. The bullying may be physical or psychological (verbal and non-verbal). Cyberbullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies such as online chat rooms, sexting, Facebook or other social media.



## Policy statement

The Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI) is fully committed to responsive safeguarding of all children and youths from all forms of violence. We take very seriously our responsibility and duty to ensure that we, as an institute, and anyone who represents us does not in any way harm, abuse or commit any other act of violence against children and youths at risk or place them at risk of the same.

This Policy serves as a subsidiary of the IDI general safeguarding policy to specifically emphasise the institute's commitment and guidelines to safeguard children and youths within its operations and programs alongside other guiding HR policies.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- All who work for and engage with us are skilled, confident, understand and are well supported in meeting their responsibilities to safeguard children and youths from violence and engage positively with them in ways that enhance the achievement of our purpose;
- We have in place procedures to prevent and deal with the actions/behaviour of our staff, associates, visitors or us as an organisation that result in violence against a child or youths/or places them at risk of the same and;
- Children and young people we work with are aware of our commitment and responsibilities to prevent and respond to any harm against them arising from actions and behaviours of our staff, associates and visitors and the routes for reporting such incidents

This Children and youths Safeguarding Policy should be considered alongside other relevant policies and procedures in IDI's Human Resource Manual including; the Safeguarding Policy, staff code of conduct, Whistle blowing Policy, Sexual Harassment Policy among others.

## Scope of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to safeguard children and youths from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with IDI.

IDI is fully committed to safeguarding children and youths at risk against any form of harm (physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation and acknowledge that we have a duty to promote the gender responsive safeguarding of children and youths and particularly those with whom we work or are in contact.

### Youths

We work with the youths and therefore the scope of this policy extends to youths we are supporting or are in contact with, through our youth engagement work. We recognise that Youths have particular safeguarding needs requiring distinct consideration. The Commonwealth identifies young people aged 15-29 years as youth, whereas the Uganda National Youth Council classifies youth as individuals aged 18-30 years. IDI shall consider all aged between 15 years and 30 years to be youths for inclusiveness.

### Children

We define children as those people who are under the age of eighteen (18) years as per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Children's Act of Uganda.

## Application of the children and youths safeguarding policy:

- a) The policy applies to all staff, full time, part time, volunteers and to those engaged on short-term contracts e.g. consultants, researchers, sub-contractors and suppliers of IDI.
- b) The policy also applies to staff and representatives of partner agencies and any other individuals, groups or organisations who have a formal/ contractual relationship with IDI that involves any contact with children or vulnerable adults (unless it is formally agreed that a partner organisation enforces its own Children and youths safeguarding policy).
- c) Donors, journalists, politicians and other people who visit any of IDI's programmes or offices must be made aware that this children and youths safeguarding Policy applies to them.

IDI expects that all those above, when representing IDI, must act in accordance with this policy in both their professional and personal lives during and outside of working hours.

## Guidelines for implementation of the Children and Youths safeguarding policy in practice.

Implementation of this policy shall follow the guidelines outlined in the general safeguarding policy applicable to partners and staff working with IDI in carrying out our programmes involving children and youths.

This policy is also particularly applicable to organisations assessed as having contact with children and young people, and/or whose projects, programmes, processes, activities, advocacy and influence work impact on children and young people.

The guidelines illustrate our commitment to support and respect children's and young people's rights to be protected from harm and to provide a safe and protective environment for children and young people who are involved with any programmes funded by IDI. The guidelines should be applied in relation to children and/or young people as appropriate, depending on the group the organisation works with.

### 1. Prevention:

The Institute will endeavour to take appropriate measures to manage child and/or youth safeguarding risk factors and prevent abuse and exploitation before it occurs. Prevention measures will include organisational safeguarding policies, codes of conduct and associated procedures; the management of children and Youths safeguarding risks in relation to its operations, activities and interventions; and the production and promotion of children and youth friendly safeguarding information and resources.

### 2. Code of conduct:

All IDI staff are required to avoid any behaviour or conduct that compromises the safety and protection of children and/or young people within its activities, operations and programmes. In addition, programmes and activities working directly with children and/or young people towards each other.

### 3. Gender equality and non-discrimination:

IDI shall ensure that all policies and procedures consider gender equality and non-discrimination requirements. Recognising that girls, boys, young women, young men and children and young people

of different gender identities may face different risks relating to their safety and protection and that all children and/or youths have an equal right to protection, irrespective of age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, race, language, religious or political beliefs, marital status, disability, physical or mental health, family, socio-economic or cultural background or class.

#### 4. Screening procedures:

There shall be detailed screening procedures for all personnel including unpaid volunteers who will come into contact with children and/or young people (directly or indirectly). Screening procedures should be as available and updated on a regular basis, where possible. Screening procedures may include: certificate of good conduct, police reference checks or equivalent, verification that applicants are not listed in national registries of child offenders; a detailed application and interview process; references who support the applicant's suitability to work with children and/or young people

#### 5. Awareness:

IDI shall ensure that all personnel, sub-contractors or consultants or affiliates involved with children and young people's programmes are aware of children and youths safeguarding risks, policies and procedures; and their responsibilities in implementation of the policy. In addition, children and/or youths engaged and their parents, guardians or carers should be informed of the same so that they know what behaviours to expect and how to report any concerns

#### 6. Capacity building:

IDI shall develop the capacity its staff who work with and for children and/or youths to appropriately prevent, detect, report and respond to safeguarding concerns and particularly as they pertain to gender and other identities. Efforts should be made to ensure organisational policies and practices are understood and can be effectively implemented through mandatory inductions and on-going training courses for all employees and other associates.

#### 7. Participation of children and/or young people:

Children and/or youths should be actively, meaningfully and ethically involved in the development of safeguarding measures in accordance with evolving capacities. Children and/or youths must not be treated simply as persons of concern but rather listened to and taken seriously and treated as individual people with their own views and opinions.

#### 8. Reporting mechanisms for children and/or youths and staff:

Mechanisms shall be established to enable the safe reporting of safeguarding concerns. Such mechanisms shall ensure appropriate escalation of concerns within the organisation, referral to the appropriate authorities and confidentiality. In addition, child and youth reporting mechanisms should be accessible, friendly and sensitive to their differing needs.

#### 9. Response and follow-up:

Organisational policies and procedures shall include appropriate measures to support children or youths considering their best interest and be sensitive to their differing gender and other identities ensuring they are kept safe and protected. Concerns should be written up and information kept in accordance with the privacy and confidentiality policies of the organisation and/or Uganda's legislation. In addition, organisational processes should ensure response evaluation and follow up for organisational learning.



#### 10. Implementation, monitoring and review:

Implementation and monitoring of the children and youths safeguarding policy shall be reviewed at regular intervals as determined necessary by the organisation, preferably every three years, where possible.

#### 11. Sanction and discipline of organisational personnel:

IDI shall appropriately implement the general Safeguarding sanctions and disciplinary measures which ensures children and youths are protected from potential harm. This may include immediate suspension of personnel until such time as the allegations are followed up and either substantiated or refuted and/or where personnel is convicted of abusing a child or young person, the said personnel will be immediately terminated with cause from his or her position. Where Organizational Personnel is terminated as an employee or volunteer, such personnel will not be permitted to enter onto the Organization's premises or participate in activities of the Organization following termination.

#### 12. Informed consent:

The organisation should provide children and/or youths (and their parents/legal guardians where applicable) with all necessary details (include any associated risk) to make informed decision regarding their participation in programmes and activities, including any voice recordings, video or photographs of children and/or youths (including how and where these will be used). Participation and/or usage of information and/or images should only take place after consent is obtained in writing from the Child, Youth, and/or their parent(s) / legal guardian(s) (if applicable).

#### 13. Protection of personal information:

Personal information regarding any child or children and/or youths, whether or not such information is obtained as part of the programme involving children and/or youths should be treated confidentially. There should be clear procedures showing the responsibilities within the organisation for accessing and using such data with appropriate authorisations. In addition, such data should not be disclosed to any third party, except in accordance with the policies of the organisation or as required by applicable local laws. Personal information includes, but is not limited to, any information that can be linked to or used to identify a child and/or youth.

#### 14. Working with partners:

IDI shall ensure adequate safeguarding assessments are made as part of its due diligence processes when it comes to partnership working. Third party entities that are contracted or supported to work with children must be subject to the same children and youths safeguarding principles and approach outlined in the organisation's policy and procedures. Vendors, suppliers and other contractors that may be in direct or indirect contact with children must also be subject to appropriate safeguarding measures.

#### 15. Responsibilities

IDI management shall ensure that Staff, volunteers, associates, and visitors are made aware and have access to the children and youths safeguarding policy.

All departments shall have awareness training on children and youths safeguarding in their department to build the capacities of their staff. Before the training commences safeguarding risk-assessment shall be conducted and mitigation plan developed.

The OHSE & Safeguarding committee and focal persons shall ensure that;

- a) The policy is understood and is being put into practice.
- b) Being the first point of contact for all safeguarding issues and concerns.
- c) Communicating and addressing all children and youths safeguarding concerns.

All staff and associated personnel shall:

- a) Commit and contribute to an environment where children and youths feel respected, supported, safe and protected.
- b) Never act or behave in a manner that results in violence against a child or youths or places them at risk of violence;
- c) Understand correctly and adhere to all the provisions of this Policy
- d) Report and respond to children and youths safeguarding concerns and breaches of the policy in line with the applicable reporting procedures described in section 7 of the general Safeguarding policy of IDI.

### 16. Safeguarding function and Safeguarding committee

IDI shall ensure permanent appointment of a suitably trained designated person with a clearly defined role responsible for implementing the safeguarding policy to ensure a clear understanding among all representatives of the organisation of all relevant issues relating to safeguarding.

The safeguarding committee will be nominated by the Senior Management Team and will be formed by representative of each department and geographical region. Their roles will be to monitoring and enforcing compliance of this policy among staff within the Institute and its other stakeholders. The committee will also make quarterly reports regarding compliance with this policy.

### 17. Reporting

IDI will be proactive in creating a safe culture that enables beneficiaries, including children, youths and others to report any incidences, or suspicion of incidences, that breach this children and youths safeguarding policy. An incident, or suspicion of an incident, MUST be reported to IDI immediately or within 24 hours in line with the reporting template in appendix 1 and reporting criteria in the IDI general safeguarding policy.

- a) Reporting of safeguarding cases is mandatory and failure to report a safeguarding concern as bystander is punishable.
- b) Staff members who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding shall report it immediately to their Safeguarding Focal Point or line manager who will in turn report to the safeguarding committee. The reporting person is supposed to report the issue as it is; not to investigate or judge.
- c) If the staff member does not feel comfortable reporting to their Safeguarding Focal Point or line manager they may report to any other appropriate staff member, for example, a senior manager or a member of the HR Team or Executive Director, who will then report to the safeguarding committee.
- d) If the staff or any other person suspects any safeguarding concern, he or she is required to report the concern to the safeguarding reporting channels as explained above. IDI will follow up with partners to ensure appropriate action has been taken and report any incidences to the donor, all reports will be confidential.
- e) Senior management team and board shall receive a briefing on safeguarding status of the



institute on monthly bases. A report of proved incidences will be shared at IDI's senior management weekly meeting at the earliest opportunity.

- f) If an incident occurs in a health facility of hospital where we work, the incident will be reported to the facility head, the relevant Ministry of health representative and the focal person in the relevant IDI office, and if a crime has been committed, to the police.
- g) Victims will be linked to psychosocial support to reduce the stressful impact of the situation.

Children and youth involved in violation cases of this policy shall be protected, and their identity will be kept confidential in case of any exposure to harassment. IDI shall take reasonable steps to ensure they are protected, as well as implement the IDI whistle blowing policy accordingly.

### 18. Retaliation

Anyone that reports a concern regarding a colleague in good faith or a beneficiary reporting an IDI representative, will be protected under IDI's Whistle blowing procedure, as detailed in the Human Resource Manual.

No hardship, loss, benefit or penalty may be imposed on an employee in response to:

- a) Filing or responding to a bona fide complaint of safeguarding
- b) Appearing as a witness in the investigation of a complaint.
- c) Serving as an investigator of a complaint.

Lodging a bona fide complaint will in no way be used against the employee or have an adverse impact on the individual's employment status. However, filing groundless or malicious complaints is an abuse of this policy and will be treated as a violation.

### 19. Risk assessment

IDI is committed to perform risk assessment to identify the potential risks and understand the level of risk posed to children and youths to help integrate strategies to mitigate risks to children into the design, delivery and evaluation of all programs, operations and activities which involve or impact on children. A standard risk assessment form shall be used by the safeguarding manager, safeguarding focal person or any member of the safeguarding committee when conducting risk assessment. Risk assessment at IDI shall be done at least once a year all for all projects, programs, operations and activities which involve or impact on children and youths.

### 20. Ramifications of Misconduct

IDI takes children and youths safeguarding seriously and will implement this policy rigorously across the Institute. In the event that anyone acting on behalf of IDI violates any aspect of this policy, appropriate and commensurate action will be taken. Nothing in the policy shall preclude a victim from reporting a matter of violence to governmental authorities for redress.

Child abuse including sex with children and sex for money with anyone is a 'gross misconduct' as listed in the Human Resource Manual and will result in summary dismissal.

Abuse or suspicion of abuse not reported or a false allegation made, will be dealt with according to IDI's disciplinary procedures detailed in the Human Resource Manual. Grievance procedures are also detailed in the Human Resource Manual.

### 21. Policy monitoring and review

All IDI programs, projects and associates shall monitor compliance with this Policy through the



**Infectious Diseases Institute**  
**College of Health Sciences**  
**Makerere University**



mandatory tracking and auditing of the Safeguarding Code of Conduct. Auditing against the standards will be led by IDI safeguarding Manager alongside the safeguarding focal persons and the safeguarding committee or the safeguarding focal persons for partners.

In addition, we will work to ensure the participation of children, youths, staff, associates and visitors during the review, monitoring and evaluation as well as the implementation of this Policy.

IDI's Senior Management Team and Board will lead the review of this policy at least every two/ three years as will be assessed as necessary. Anyone acting on behalf of IDI will be asked to read and sign that they have understood this policy. Whenever the policy is revised, all must re-sign.

IDI receives advice from its legal advisor and HR teams on the formulation, enforcement and revision of the children and youths safeguarding policy and other policies and procedures linked to it.



## Declaration

I \_\_\_\_\_ fully understand and agree to abide by IDI's children and youths safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct. I understand that any breaches of the Code of Conduct and this Policy will be reported to the Executive Director of IDI and appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures.

I have read the attached policy and all the implementation guidelines.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 1:

### Child and Youths Safeguarding violation/ concern Reporting

#### Template:

Name and contact of the person filling this form	
Date and time of completing this form:	
Date and time of completing this form:	
Name(s) of person(s) the children and youths safeguarding concern or incident is about	
Age and Date of Birth of alleged victim (if known):	
Address and contact of person the children and youths safeguarding concern is about:	
Name, Telephone Number and Address of Parent, carer or guardian of alleged victim:	
Date and time of any incident:	
What have you seen or heard?	
Provide details of the incidence as per victim or bystander narration. Just record actual details) – Continue on another sheet if required  <i>Any other relevant information:</i>	
Any other action taken  (e.g Calling authority, protection and social service units and hospital)	