

Safeguarding Policy

Policy Owner	Scientific & Strategic Advisory Board
Approved By	ARNECH Scientific & Strategic Advisory Board
Effective Date	2021
Next Review Date	January 2027
Version	3.0
Applies To	All ARNECH staff, consultants, subcontractors, and field teams
Last Updated	January 2025

1. Purpose

This policy sets out ARNECH's commitment to protecting children, youth, and other vulnerable participants involved in its research, evaluation, and training activities from harm, exploitation, and abuse.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all ARNECH staff, consultants, and enumerators engaged in fieldwork, and to all activities involving direct contact with children, youth, or vulnerable adults, including studies in sexual and reproductive health, education, and humanitarian evaluation.

3. Policy Statement

ARNECH is committed to:

- Preventing sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (PSEA) by staff, consultants, and partners
- Ensuring field teams working with children or vulnerable participants are appropriately vetted, briefed, and supervised
- Applying a code of conduct that prohibits any form of abuse, exploitation, or inappropriate contact with participants
- Obtaining appropriate consent and, where children are involved, parental or guardian consent alongside child assent
- Referring safeguarding concerns to appropriate local child protection or support services

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- The Scientific & Strategic Advisory Board owns this policy and oversees safeguarding across ARNECH's project portfolio.
- A designated Safeguarding Focal Point receives and coordinates the response to safeguarding concerns.
- Field team leaders are responsible for day-to-day safeguarding practice and for briefing enumerators before deployment.

5. Procedures

- All staff and consultants working directly with children or vulnerable participants undergo background screening prior to deployment, where locally available and lawful.
- Field teams receive a mandatory safeguarding and code of conduct briefing before any fieldwork involving vulnerable populations.
- A clear, accessible reporting and referral pathway is established for each project, including local support and protection services.
- Reported concerns are assessed by the Safeguarding Focal Point within a defined timeframe and escalated to the Advisory Board and, where required, to local authorities and the client or funder.

6. Reporting Concerns and Breaches

Concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a participant, or about the conduct of ARNECH staff or partners, may be raised with the Safeguarding Focal Point, a field team leader, or through the confidential whistleblowing channel. All reports are taken seriously, treated confidentially, and acted upon promptly.

7. Training and Awareness

All field staff receive mandatory safeguarding training prior to each engagement involving direct contact with children or vulnerable adults, refreshed at minimum every two years.

8. Related Standards and References

This policy is aligned with the following external standards and frameworks:

Core Humanitarian Standard — <https://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/>

Keeping Children Safe — International Child Safeguarding Standards — <https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global/international-child-safeguarding-standards/>

IASC PSEA Minimum Operating Standards — <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-task-team-accountability-affected-populations-and-protection-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/minimum-operating-standards-protection-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-own-personnel>

9. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed by the Scientific & Strategic Advisory Board at least every two years, or sooner where changes in law, donor requirements, or organisational practice require it. Comments and proposed amendments may be submitted to the Policy Owner at any time.

Registration certificates, financial statements, and full policy documentation are available on request for prospective partners, clients, and funders as part of due diligence.

