



**African Population and
Health Research Center**

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Date of Approval	May 2020
Effective Date	June 2020
Review Date	May 2023

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) is an international non-profit organization that implements policy-relevant research on population, health and wellbeing in sub-Saharan Africa. Our goal is to transform lives on the continent by generating evidence for meaningful action. APHRC is committed to promoting and protecting its employees and all vulnerable persons including children, adolescents whose human rights, health and wellbeing are at risk.

This policy provides guidance on the procedures and practices to be adhered to by all APHRC representatives¹ (regular or temporary staff, consultants, partners, volunteers, fellows, Board members, interns, funders and guests) in safeguarding people and outlines actions to be taken in case of violation of the policy. APHRC representatives are expected to ensure emotional, physical, psychological, mental, and sexual safety for all by preventing discrimination, sexual and other forms of harassment, abuse, exploitation and harm of all people. The policy provides a framework for implementing activities in a way that minimizes the risk of harm, exploitation and abuse, both verbal and physical, to everyone both at our offices and in the communities where we work. Through this policy, APHRC seeks to ensure that peoples' basic human rights are not violated in the workplace or while carrying out APHRC assignments.

1.1 POLICY STATEMENT

APHRC has zero tolerance to any form of abuse, harassment, discrimination, or exploitation of any person.

Every APHRC representative must uphold professional work ethics that allow for mutual treatment with dignity and respect within the workplace and in the context of work performed on behalf of the Center.

2.0 PRINCIPLES OF SAFEGUARDING

To protect children, adolescents or adults at risk, this policy is founded on the six principles adopted from the UK Care Act 2014 below:

- Empowerment – Adults at risk will be supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent without coercion.
- Protection – APHRC will provide support and representation for those in greatest need.
- Prevention – Where possible, action will be taken before harm occurs.
- Proportionality - The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented will be made.

¹ See Appendix 1 for definitions

- Partnership – APHRC will partner with local services and communities to help prevent, detect, and report suspected cases of neglect and abuse.
- Accountability – APHRC will be accountable and transparent in ensuring safeguarding.

Whereas it is recognized that local legislation may vary from country to country, this policy identifies APHRC's minimum standards and may exceed the requirements of local legislation.

3.0 APPLICATION / SCOPE

This policy applies to all regular and temporary staff, consultants, partners, interns, contractors, volunteers, fellows, Board members, funders and guests.

It extends to situations that occur at or away from the workplace; during or outside working hours, if such situations have a negative effect on our study participants, people living within the communities we work, or any representative, work effectiveness and/or job security of an APHRC staff member, or if the situation reflects negatively on APHRC.

This policy shall be adapted as required to the local context of the countries where APHRC has offices as well as in countries where APHRC programs are implemented, subject to local law and custom. This includes the political, cultural, faith, humanitarian and / or development situations. For countries and partners whose policies are inconsistent with this policy, the policy that is more stringent will apply.

All representatives of APHRC will have access to copies of this policy so that they know what to do should any concern about safeguarding arise. It will be shared with all visitors by email and will be available on our website.

4.0 ENFORCEMENT

APHRC shall not engage and shall review its engagement with individuals that the Center has been made aware of their conviction for offences against a child or any adult at risk.

When planning for projects, consideration should be made on safeguarding issues at the time of undertaking risk assessment especially for projects where staff or other representatives will come into contact with children or adults at risk. Periodic reviews will also be necessary for any emerging or new safeguarding risks.

Safeguarding is embedded in and enforced through the following APHRC policies and guidelines:

- i) Policy on Working with Children and Adults at Risk
- ii) Policy on Harassment
- iii) Whistle Blowing Policy
- iv) Human Resources Policies and Procedures Manual
- v) Conflict of Interest Policy
- vi) Research Ethics and Data Protection Guidelines
- vii) Guidelines on Safety and Security of Staff Working on Contentious Issues

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

All APHRC representatives have a responsibility and should act on concerns relating to any risk. The figure below shows the responsibilities of the board and the safeguarding manager/focal point.



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APHRC Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and failure to act on concerns relating to any risk is not an option. The Board and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) holds overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation. Additional details of other people's responsibilities are reflected in the policies and guidelines listed above.

APHRC's Board shall:

- Ensure this policy is reviewed and updated periodically in line with legislative and organizational development.
- Receive and act on complaints and reports about the Executive Director.
- Receive and act on annual reports on safeguarding incidents and actions taken.

SAFEGUARDING MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director of Operations will be the Safeguarding Manager for the headquarters while the Head of the West Africa Regional Office (WARO) will be the safeguarding focal point for that office.

The Safeguarding Manager or Focal Point shall:

- Ensure implementation of the policy by providing advice and guidance on the application of this policy and monitoring its application.
- Keep records of any concerns expressed and actions taken about safeguarding issues. The report should be provided to the board annually.
- Notify the Executive Director of safeguarding concerns.
- Provide assistance in the complaint resolution process by designating an internal investigatory committee to review complaints, or obtaining, where necessary, the services of an external investigator, establishing the terms of reference for investigations, and advising concerned parties of the outcome of investigations. Where necessary, refer concerns to other agencies.
- Ensure that each complaint is addressed responsibly and impartially, facilitating a just and fair inquiry process without retribution (for complainants or witnesses).

6.0 TRAINING

Staff will receive training as part of their induction on how to identify, prevent, respond to and report risks. Training will specifically include:

- An overview of the concepts of safeguarding children, adolescents and adults at risk.
- A discussion of risks to children adolescents and adults in different contexts – national/political, cultural, religious.
- A discussion of the entire policy and related policies and guidelines in order for staff to understand its contents and seek clarification where necessary.

7.0 REPORTING PROCESS

All safeguarding incidents will be reported through existing channels and in line with the provisions of the policies and guidelines listed above as appropriate. The reporting process is illustrated in Figure 1.

Management will present a report on safeguarding to the Board once a year. The report will include all incidents reported in the preceding year and measures taken by management to address them.



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A GUIDE TO OUR Safeguarding reporting process

STEP 1



- You become aware of, concerned about, observe or suspect:
 - APHRC representatives engage in any malpractice within an APHRC office, project and or community

STEP 2



- Concern is raised/reported within 3 working days to focal point OR supervisor/ unit leader (who in-turn reports to the safeguarding manager OR anonymously utilise reporting channels

STEP 3



- Safeguarding manager /focal point manages the report, including appointing investigation committee and next steps, while at the same time offering support to victim

STEP 4



- Feedback to the reporter and / or the victim

STEP 5



- Conclude and monitor

Reporting channels are:

1. APHRC's anonymous whistle-blowing service <https://aphrc.ethicspoint.com>
2. Report to supervisor, unit leader, head of HR, Executive Director, safeguarding manager or whistle-blowing committee
3. Employee Assistance Program

8.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW OF POLICY

There will be continuous monitoring, annual reporting of the risks and review of the effectiveness of safeguarding measures. This policy will be reviewed by the Board every three years or earlier when deemed necessary.

APPENDIX 1: DEFINITION OF TERMS

Abuse - can be in a number of ways and it is not easy to categorize harm. We therefore broadly categorize abuse as taking many forms such as the following:

- Physical (including hitting, shaking, slapping, pinching, pushing, kicking, injuring, restraint or inappropriate sanctions).
- Sexual abuse - It involves forcing, enticing or coercing someone to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the vulnerable person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, groping, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving a person in viewing, production and distribution of sexual images, watching sexual acts, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse can be carried out by adults or other children.
- Psychological (including emotional abuse, degrading punishments, threats of harm or sanction, verbal abuse, isolation, intimidation, humiliation).
- Financial or material (including theft, fraud, exploitation, misappropriation of property).
- Discrimination (including isolation, racist, tribal and sexist remarks, ageism, sexual orientation, religion, disability).
- Neglect (including not meeting one's basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing and medical care, or not protecting a child from any form of danger) resulting in serious harm of the child, young person or adult at risk's health or development as a result of carelessness, indifference, or unwillingness.
- Bullying (includes physical or verbal intimidation, emotional intimidation for example, excluding or isolating someone).

Adolescents – A person aged 10-19 years.

An adult at risk - is someone older than 18 years who requires care and support due to their gender (or sexual identity), or disabilities that are physical, mental or emotional, or who cannot reasonably protect his/her/their self from abuse, harm or exploitation.

APHRC representative - regular or temporary staff, consultants, partners, interns, fellows, contractors, volunteers, Board members, funders, visitors and guests.

Child / Children - Children are defined by the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, as being individuals under the age of 18 years of age. Mistaken belief in the age of the child is not a defense for abuse.

Funder – Is a main grantee where APHRC is a sub-grantee or an individual, organization or government institution financing a part or all of a project's cost as a grant or financing APHRC's operational costs.

Neglect - the persistent failure to meet a child, adolescent or adult at risk's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of his/her health or development. Examples include failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, failure to protect them from physical or psychological harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment as a result of carelessness, indifference, or unwillingness.

Other forms of harassment – means engaging in unwanted and unwarranted conduct which has the purpose or effect of: (a) violating another's dignity; or (b) creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for another person. Harassing conduct may include offensive jokes, slurs, name-calling, physical assaults or threats, intimidation, ridicule, insults, offensive pictures, and more.

Safeguarding – means promoting and protecting people's human rights, health and wellbeing and enabling them to live free from harm, exploitation, neglect and abuse, both verbally and physically.

Sexual Harassment - is any unwelcome sexual advance; request for sexual favors; or other verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which a) interferes with an individual's work performance, or their general sense of well-being by creating an intimidating, hostile, and humiliating environment; or b) which is made a condition for employment or promotion.

Unit Leader - refers to unit head within divisions and division directors at APHRC.

AFRICAN POPULATION AND HEALTH RESEARCH CENTER (APHRC)

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

I, _____ (Name), have received a copy of the safeguarding policy dated May 2020. I have read and understood it and agree to adhere, at all times, to the stipulated terms. I acknowledge that this policy forms part of my contract with APHRC and is subject to change. I also understand that I shall be subjected to the stipulated consequences, if I fail to adhere to the terms.

Signed: _____

Date: _____
