



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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Approval Body	Board
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Applicability	LISUDEV
Review Date	Every two (2) years or earlier where required.

Introduction

Local Initiative for Sustainable Development (LISUDEV) is committed to creating and maintaining an environment where every person is treated with dignity, respect, fairness, and equality. We believe that everyone has the right to live free from abuse, exploitation, neglect, harassment, discrimination, and violence.

Policy Statement

LISUDEV has zero tolerance for all forms of safeguarding misconduct, including child abuse, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), sexual harassment, neglect, bullying, trafficking, abuse of power, and any conduct that causes harm to children or adults at risk.

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility. Every member, employee, volunteer, intern, consultant, contractor, partner, supplier, and any individual representing LISUDEV has a duty to prevent harm, identify safeguarding risks, report concerns promptly, and contribute to creating a safe organisational culture.

All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation. Each child has a fundamental right to life, survival, and development. All children should be encouraged to fulfill their potential, and inequality and discrimination should be challenged.

Children must be assured the right to express their views freely, and this must be given ‘due weight’ in accordance with their age and level of maturity. We will not discriminate against the child. Everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children.

LISUDEV has specific responsibilities to protect all children who come in contact with us. No child should be harmed as a result of their engagement with LISUDEV, in a LISUDEV program, or as part of any LISUDEV fundraising or advocacy campaign.

These specific responsibilities extend to all those individuals or organizations who are associated with LISUDEV. Therefore, everyone working for or associated with LISUDEV’s work must be aware of and adhere to this safeguarding policy.

No individual acting on behalf of LISUDEV must engage in behaviour that exploits, abuses, harasses, or harms another person. Any breach of this policy will result in disciplinary action and up to termination of employment or contractual engagement, and referral to law enforcement authorities for appropriate action.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure we are all able to identify safeguarding concerns, harassment (including sexual harassment), bullying, or discrimination and understand the role each of us has in preventing these behaviours, and the consequences of such actions and conduct to create and promote a safe and supportive environment and culture.

Scope

This Policy applies to all LISUDEV's staff, associates, suppliers, and partners, who must comply with its requirements and understand the sanctions that may be applied for breaches of this policy.

Policy Principles

LISUDEV processes and activities must comply at all times with this policy and with applicable law.

- Zero Tolerance: LISUDEV maintains zero tolerance for abuse, exploitation, sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, child abuse, trafficking, neglect, intimidation, retaliation, and abuse of authority.
- Survivor-Centred Approach: LISUDEV's response to safeguarding concerns shall primarily take into account the safety, dignity, rights, and well-being of survivors, without discrimination.
- Best Interests of the Child: In all actions affecting children, the best interests of the child must be the primary consideration. Every child has the right to protection from abuse, exploitation, neglect, violence, and harmful practices.
- Do No Harm: All our decisions and activities must seek to minimise risks and avoid causing unintended physical, emotional, psychological, financial, or social harm.
- Accountability: All personnel are responsible for complying with this policy and reporting safeguarding concerns. Managers are responsible for promoting a safe organisational culture and ensuring appropriate action is taken whenever safeguarding concerns arise.
- Confidentiality: Safeguarding information must only be shared with individuals who have a legitimate need to know in order to protect individuals, investigate concerns, or fulfil legal obligations.

Definitions

- **Child Safeguarding:** The responsibility of LISUDEV to ensure that its staff, programmes, operations, and activities do not cause harm to children or expose them to abuse, neglect, exploitation, violence, or any other safeguarding risk.
- **Safeguarding Concern:** Any suspicion, allegation, disclosure, incident, observation, or information suggesting that an individual may have experienced, or be at risk of, abuse, exploitation, neglect, harassment, or other safeguarding violations.
- **Abuse:** Any act or failure to act that results in actual or potential harm to another person. Abuse may be physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, financial, or involve neglect, exploitation, coercion, intimidation, or deprivation of rights
- **Harm:** Any physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, financial, social, or reputational injury or adverse effect suffered by an individual.
- **Sexual Exploitation:** Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes, including profiting financially, socially, politically, or otherwise from the sexual exploitation of another person. This includes exchanging money, employment, goods, services, assistance, or any other benefit for sexual activity or sexual favours.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Any actual or threatened sexual act carried out through force, coercion, intimidation, manipulation, abuse of authority, or by taking advantage of a person's inability to provide informed consent.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favours, sexual comment, gesture, communication, or other conduct of a sexual nature that could reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation, intimidation, or create a hostile, intimidating, or offensive environment.

Harassment may include, without limitation:

- Unwanted physical conduct, including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing or gestures;
- Offensive, derogatory language or intimidating actions or behaviours;
- Insulting or threatening gestures, language (overt or implied) or continual and unwarranted shouting;

- Unjustified and/or unnecessary comments about a person’s work or capacity for work;
 - Openly displayed pictures, posters, graffiti, written materials, emails or digital media which might be offensive to some;
 - Displaying of racially offensive material;
 - Verbal threats, insults or racist jokes;
 - A statement, action or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle or unintentional discrimination, prejudice, stereotyping or otherwise unfair against members of a marginalised group such as a racial or ethnic minority;
 - Phone calls or messages on voicemails or electronic mail or computer networks which are demeaning, threatening, abusive, humiliating, offensive or otherwise unwanted;
- **Exploitation**
- The abuse of a position of trust, power, authority, or vulnerability for personal, financial, political, or sexual benefit.
- **Bullying** is any offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or otherwise unfair or unacceptable behaviour which may involve the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined, threatened or otherwise adversely affected. Bullying may include, without limitation: intimidation; victimisation; verbal abuse or threats, including yelling, screaming or offensive language;
- **Discrimination:** Any unfair or unequal treatment based on characteristics such as age, sex, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, political opinion, marital status, social origin, or any other protected characteristic.
- **Child Abuse:** Any action or omission that causes, or is likely to cause, physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual harm to a child, or results in neglect, exploitation, trafficking, or any other violation of a child's rights.
- **Child:** Any person below the age of eighteen (18) years, irrespective of the age of majority or legal status under national law.
- **Child Labour:** Work performed by a child that deprives them of their childhood, education, health, dignity, or development, or exposes them to hazardous conditions, contrary to applicable national laws and international labour standards.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

All activities involving children should be for the:

- The best interests of the child;
- Protects from abuse, exploitation, neglect, and violence.
- Every child should be treated with dignity, fairness, and respect.
- The welfare and safety of children should be a priority.
- All children must be protected without discrimination of any kind.

Safe Recruitment process

All personnel will undergo appropriate safeguarding screening before engagement. Recruitment procedures will include:

- verification of identity;
- verification of qualifications and employment history;
- reference checks;
- criminal record or police clearance checks where possible;
- safeguarding interviews;
- declaration of previous safeguarding concerns or disciplinary actions; and
- signing of the LISUDEV Safeguarding Code of Conduct.

No person known to have committed offences against children shall be employed, contracted, or engaged by LISUDEV.

Standards of Behaviour When Working with Children

Personnel must always:

- treat every child with dignity, patience, and respect;
- work in ways that promote children's safety and well-being;
- use language that is appropriate, respectful, and non-discriminatory;

- encourage children's participation without intimidation or coercion;
- ensure, wherever possible, that interactions with children are open and observable by others;
- obtain informed consent from parents or legal guardians where required before involving children in activities;
- immediately report any safeguarding concern involving a child.
- Personnel must avoid situations where they are alone with a child.

Prohibited Conduct When Working with Children

Under no circumstances should any person acting on behalf of LISUDEV:

- engage in any sexual activity with a child;
- sexually exploit or sexually abuse a child;
- groom a child for abusive or exploitative purposes;
- physically assault or deliberately harm a child;
- humiliate, ridicule, intimidate, threaten, or emotionally abuse a child;
- neglect a child placed under their care or responsibility;
- use corporal punishment or any degrading form of discipline;
- discriminate against a child;
- exploit a child for labour, fundraising, publicity, or personal benefit;
- invite a child to their home or private accommodation
- to sleep in the same room or bed with a child unless required by an emergency situation or where this is in the child's best interests and approved by management;
- exchange money, gifts, employment opportunities, favours, or assistance for any inappropriate relationship with a child;
- communicate privately with children through personal social media accounts or messaging platforms;

- photograph or record children in ways that are degrading, sexually suggestive, exploitative, or likely to place them at risk.
- Ignorance of a child's age or mistaken belief that a child is over eighteen years of age shall not be accepted as a defence.

Photography, Media, and Communications Involving Children

Children have the right to privacy, dignity, and protection.

Personnel must:

- obtain informed consent from a parent or legal guardian before taking photographs, videos, or audio recordings of children;
- explain, in an age-appropriate manner, how images or information will be used;
- ensure children are appropriately dressed and portrayed respectfully;
- avoid revealing personal information that could identify or locate a child where doing so could place them at risk;
- store images securely; and
- use photographs and recordings only for legitimate organisational purposes.

Responding to Child Safeguarding Concerns

Where a child discloses abuse or where safeguarding concerns arise, personnel should:

- remain calm and listen carefully;
- reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking up;
- take the concern seriously;
- avoid expressing shock, disbelief, or judgement;
- avoid asking leading or investigative questions;
- explain that the information must be shared only with people who can help protect the child;
- accurately record the information as soon as possible; and

- immediately report the concern using LISUDEV's safeguarding reporting procedures.

Immediate Protection Measures

Where a child is believed to be at immediate risk of harm, take appropriate protective measures without delay:

- ensuring the child's immediate safety;
- arrange urgent medical care where necessary;
- separate the alleged perpetrator from contact with children, where appropriate;
- notify the designated Safeguarding Focal Person immediately;
- refer the child to appropriate child protection services or competent authorities, in accordance with national law and the child's best interests; and
- document all actions taken.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Safeguarding is the responsibility of every individual associated with LISUDEV. All personnel have a duty to prevent and report safeguarding concerns.

All Staff and associates must:

- Treat others with dignity and respect;
- Behave at all times in accordance with LISUDEV's values
- Create and contribute to building an environment of mutual dignity and respect that is free from harassment, bullying, and discrimination and promotes a safe and healthy environment;
- Hold themselves accountable for their actions, understanding how their actions may affect others and make changes as necessary;
- Be aware of harassment, bullying, and discrimination and the forms it can take and of the damage it can cause to individuals and to LISUDEV as an organisation;
- Act quickly and immediately to report any suspected acts of unacceptable behaviour or wrongdoings, including any breaches of this policy.

- Speak out against, challenge, and address harassment, bullying, or discrimination you experience or witness.

The Board, Directors, managers have the responsibility for ensuring that safeguarding is embedded within LISUDEV's governance, leadership, and organisational culture.

The Board will:

- promote a healthy work environment, culture of transparency, integrity, and zero tolerance for abuse, exploitation, harassment, and retaliation.
- Ensure all staff and associate understands safeguarding and adhere to LISUDEV's safeguarding principles
- Ensure all staff reads and understands the safeguarding policy and demonstrate leadership and commitment to safeguarding;
- Periodically train staff and associates on safeguarding
- Ensure all Staff and Associates are clear on the steps to take to raise issues harassment, bullying and discrimination
- ensure safeguarding risks are incorporated into the organisation's risk management framework;
- Take action to address reports of harassment, bullying or discrimination to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those affected; and
- Encourage all Staff and Associates to speak out against harassment, bullying or discrimination.

The Safeguarding Focal Person will:

- provide guidance to staff, volunteers, and partners on safeguarding matters;
- coordinate safeguarding awareness and training programmes;
- coordinate safeguarding risk assessments;
- support safeguarding investigations while maintaining confidentiality and impartiality;
- monitor compliance with this Policy;

- maintain secure safeguarding records;
- prepare safeguarding reports for senior management; and
- recommend improvements to safeguarding systems and procedures.

All partners, consultants, suppliers, contractors, and service providers must uphold safeguarding standards that are consistent with this Policy.

Partners must:

- adopt or comply with safeguarding standards;
- ensure their personnel receive safeguarding awareness training;
- report safeguarding concerns involving LISUDEV activities promptly;
- cooperate fully with safeguarding investigations; and
- implement corrective actions where safeguarding weaknesses are identified.

Safeguarding obligations will be incorporated into partnership agreements, contracts, and memoranda of understanding.

REPORTING

Every person covered by this Policy has a personal responsibility to report any safeguarding concern, suspicion, allegation, disclosure, or incident as soon as possible.

Failure to report a safeguarding concern, deliberately concealing information, interfering with an investigation, intimidating witnesses, or retaliating against a reporter may result in disciplinary action, termination of employment or contractual engagement, and referral to the appropriate authorities where required by law.

No person shall suffer retaliation for reporting a safeguarding concern honestly and in good faith, even if the allegation is not ultimately substantiated.

RELATED POLICIES

This policy should be read alongside:

- Code of Conduct
- Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- HR Policy
- Communications and Media Policy

ANNEX A: SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT REPORT FORM

CONFIDENTIAL - SAFEGUARDING CONCERN REPORT

Date: _____ Time: _____ Reported by: _____
Position: _____

INDIVIDUAL(S) OF CONCERN:

Name: _____ Age/DOB: _____ Gender: _____

Location/Community: _____

Relationship to LISUDEV: ☐ Beneficiary ☐ Staff ☐ Community member ☐ Other:

ALLEGED PERPETRATOR (if known): Name: _____

Position/Role: _____

Relationship to LISUDEV: ☐ Staff ☐ Volunteer ☐ Partner ☐ Beneficiary ☐ Community member
☐ Other

TYPE OF CONCERN: (Check all that apply)

☐ Physical abuse ☐ Emotional/psychological abuse ☐ Sexual abuse ☐ Sexual exploitation

☐ Neglect ☐ Bullying/harassment ☐ Discrimination ☐ Code of Conduct violation

☐ Other: _____

DETAILS OF INCIDENT/CONCERN:

What happened? (Describe in detail, use individual's own words if possible)

When did it happen? (Date/time if known): _____

Where did it happen? (Location): _____

Who else was present or involved?

How did you become aware of this concern?

☐ Direct disclosure by the individual ☐ Witnessed the incident ☐ Told by someone else:
_____ ☐ Other: _____

Has this been reported elsewhere?

☐ No ☐ Yes - Where: _____

IMMEDIATE ACTION TAKEN:

☐ Individual removed from dangerous situation ☐ Medical attention provided

☐ Parents/guardians informed ☐ Police notified ☐ DSL informed ☐ Other:

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Any other relevant details, evidence, or concerns:

Reporter's Signature: _____ Date: _____

FOR DSL USE ONLY:

Date received: _____ Received by: _____

Initial assessment: _____

Action plan: _____

Follow-up date: _____

Case status: ☐ Open ☐ Under investigation ☐ Closed

Date closed: _____ Outcome: _____

ANNEX B: SAFEGUARDING SELF-DECLARATION FORM
FOR ALL APPLICANTS AND PERSONNEL

CONFIDENTIAL

This form must be completed by all individuals applying for positions or volunteer roles with LISUDEV.

Full Name: _____

Position Applied For: _____

Date: _____

Please answer all questions honestly. Information provided will be kept confidential and used only for safeguarding assessment purposes.

SECTION A: CRIMINAL HISTORY

1. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense (excluding minor traffic violations)?
☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please provide details:

2. Have you ever been investigated, charged, or cautioned for any offense against a child or vulnerable adult? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please provide details:

3. Are there any current pending charges or investigations against you?
☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please provide details:

SECTION B: EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

4. Have you ever been dismissed, asked to resign, or resigned from any position due to concerns about your conduct with children or vulnerable adults?
☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please provide details:

5. Have you ever been subject to disciplinary action or investigation related to safeguarding concerns?
☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please provide details:

6. Is there any reason why you should not work with children or vulnerable adults?
☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please provide details:

7. Are you aware of any information or concerns that might make you unsuitable for this position?

☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please provide details:

SECTION C: DECLARATION

I declare that the information provided above is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that:

- Providing false information may result in dismissal or termination of my application/contract
- LISUDEV may verify the information provided
- I am required to immediately inform LISUDEV of any changes to this information
- This information will be kept confidential and used only for safeguarding purposes

I agree to:

- Abide by LISUDEV's Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct
- Report any safeguarding concerns immediately
- Participate in safeguarding training as required
- Undergo background checks as deemed necessary

Signature: _____ Date: _____

For LISUDEV Use:

☐ Self-declaration reviewed ☐ References checked ☐ Police clearance obtained

☐ Safeguarding induction completed

Approved by: _____ Date: _____