

Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

This publication is part of a suite of EngenderHealth policies, procedures, and frameworks that govern our operations. These materials are grounded in principles of intersectionality and feminist accountability and governance. Colleagues from across our global and country offices collaborated with the Centre for Transnational Development and Collaboration in developing these materials.

Policy ownership: Tonee Mwangi, Vice President of Finance and Administration, is the primary owner of this policy and its associated procedures.

Policy issuance and revision dates: This policy was initially published in January 2019 and was updated in July 2022. EngenderHealth will update this policy every three years.

Applicability: This policy applies to all staff, associates, and partners.



EngenderHealth

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Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Introduction

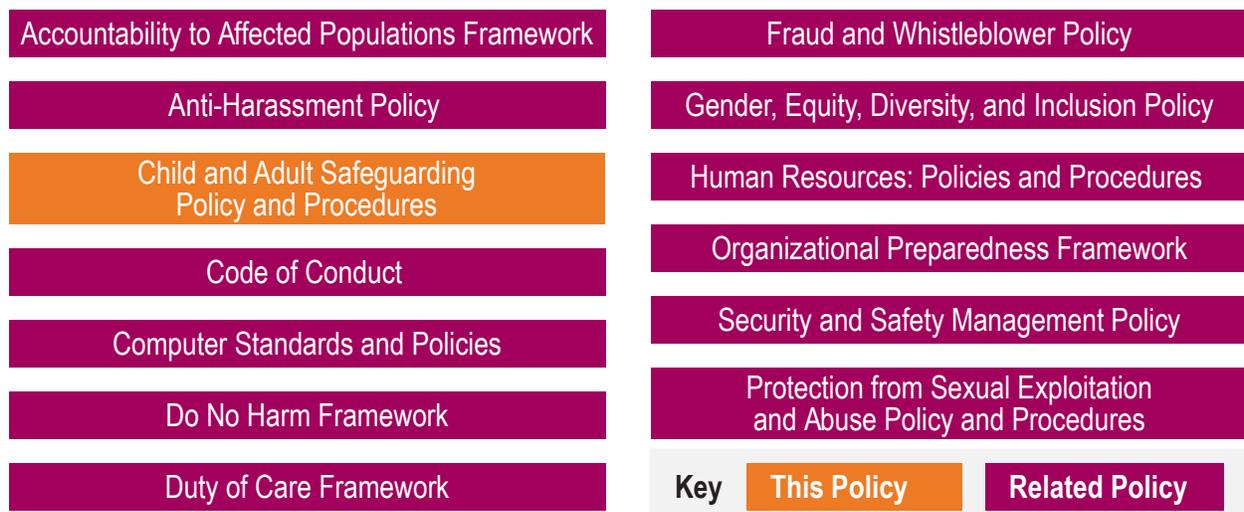
EngenderHealth is a nonprofit organization aiming to contribute to a gender-equal world where all people achieve their sexual and reproductive health and rights, through implementing high-quality, gender-equitable programs that advance sexual and reproductive health and rights. As part of our vision, EngenderHealth is committed to safeguarding all people—particularly children, vulnerable adults, and impact populations—from any harm that may be caused due to contact with EngenderHealth.

EngenderHealth partners with diverse people and organizations across sectors with the shared goal of supporting women and girls in determining their futures. For this reason, we believe it is imperative that our communities feel safe and protected from any harm that could result from our work. EngenderHealth has developed this Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures resource, as part of our accountability to our communities and particularly affected populations.

Our definition of accountability is expansive and acknowledges that some people are more vulnerable than others, due to intersecting social markers of exclusion. As an international organization, we have a duty of care particularly toward our impact populations in conflict- and crisis- affected contexts, and we acknowledge that this accountability also extends to our personnel, partners, and funders. While our definition of accountability is broad, it still centralizes and prioritizes those affected by conflict and crises and those who receive EngenderHealth assistance. EngenderHealth has developed this policy and its procedures to particularly safeguard children, vulnerable adults, and impact populations.

This policy and its procedures are a component of a larger suite of policy and procedures (see Figure 1). In this policy, safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to protect people (especially vulnerable adults and children) from harm (particularly sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment) and responding appropriately when harm does occur. This includes harm arising from the conduct of staff, associates, and partners as well as from the design and implementation of programs and activities.

Figure 1. Key EngenderHealth Policies and Procedures



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Scope of Application

We expect all of our personnel (including permanent and seasonal employees, contractors, consultants, volunteers, and members of our board) as well as our partners and other stakeholders to adhere to this policy. This policy applies to all EngenderHealth's country programs, offices, operations, and sites.

The Vice President of Finance and Administration is responsible for disseminating this policy. Adherence to this policy is monitored by:

- At the organizational level: Vice President of Human Resources
- At the global office level: Director of International Human Resources
- At the country office level: Country Representatives
- At the project level: Chief of Party, Project Director, Project Manager (as applicable)

EngenderHealth holds all staff responsible for implementation of and adherence to this policy. Any breaches to the minimum safeguarding standards included in this policy or other safeguarding concerns must be immediately reported to relevant personnel.

Guiding Principles and Commitments

The guiding principles and commitments of this policy are summarized below.

Confidentiality: EngenderHealth is committed to confidentiality and we will not share information outside of our safeguarding committee unless it is absolutely necessary. The safety of the person(s) involved is our primary concern. For this reason, EngenderHealth maintains an anonymous reporting system. Individuals may submit reports anonymously for investigation via www.ethicspoint.com or by calling the local hotline. In the US, the hotline number is +1 866 739 4117; country-specific hotline numbers are available on the EthicsPoint® webpage. All disclosures will be treated in confidence. Refer to EngenderHealth's Whistle-Blowing Policy for more information.

Continuous improvement: EngenderHealth maintains assessment, feedback, and reflection mechanisms to inform improvements to policies and practices. These mechanisms include quarterly incident reviews, periodic refresher trainings, regular policy reviews, and regular safeguarding audits.

Dignity and respect: EngenderHealth creates a work environment where the principles of dignity and respect for all staff, associates, partners, and communities in all locations are critical. This includes principles of being nonjudgmental when learning of related concerns and complaints.

Do No Harm approach: EngenderHealth is committed to a Do No Harm approach for programming and ensures that: (1) there is a common understanding of the operating context, including gender norms, political dynamics, and social norms; and (2) programs adhere to international best practices for effective and ethical development programming.

Effective communication: EngenderHealth effectively communicates with all staff, associates, and partners in simple and accessible language to create a positive and accessible culture where responsibilities for safeguarding are clear.

Safeguarding: EngenderHealth is committed to all children and vulnerable adults having the right to safeguarding and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse irrespective

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of ability, culture, ethnicity, faith, gender, sexuality, or other social characteristic.

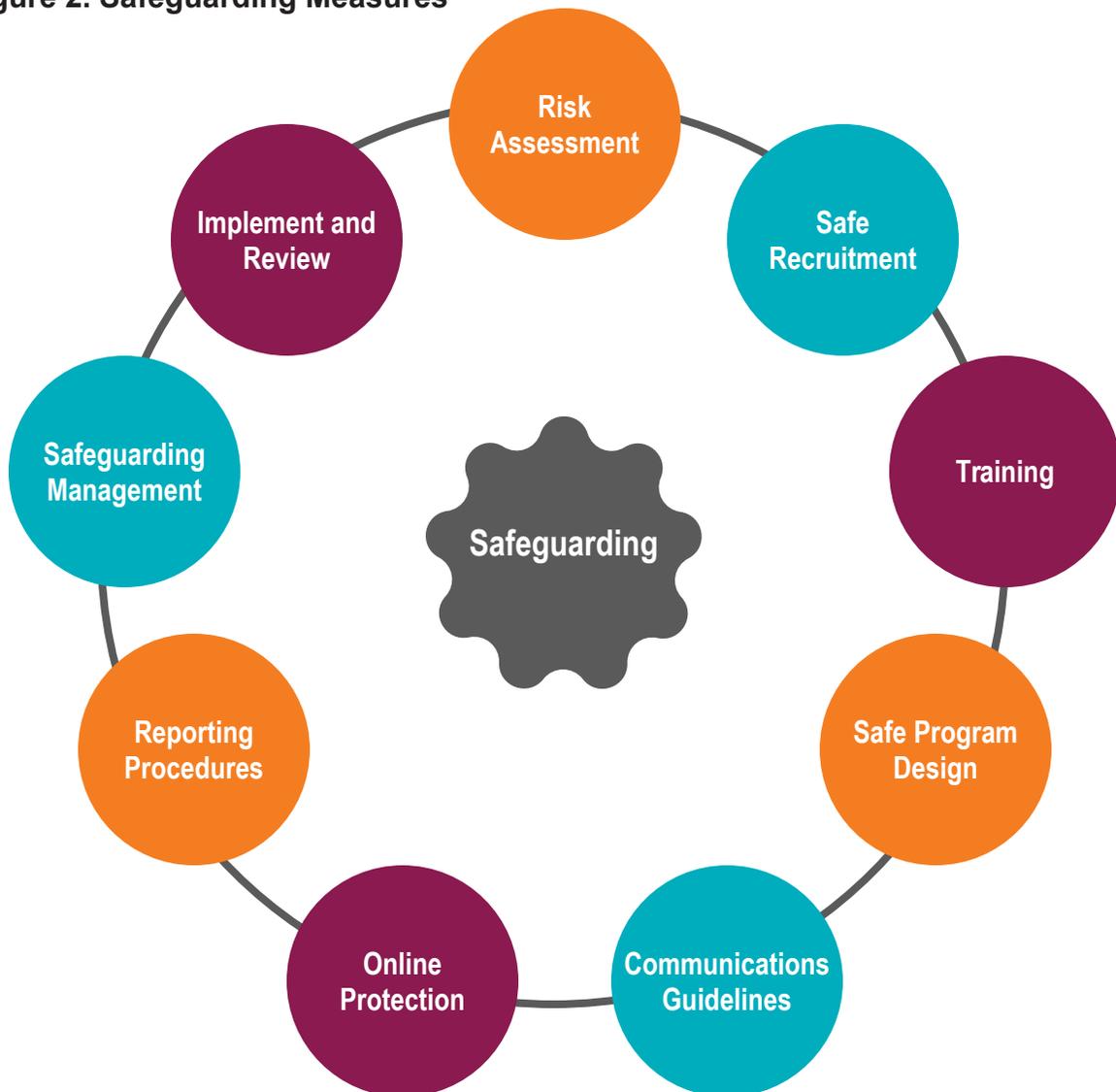
Shared responsibility: For our policies and practices to be effective in reducing the risks to impact populations and communities, everyone at EngenderHealth must share the responsibility for implementation and improvement. As such, a failure at one level of the organization constitutes a failure at all levels of the organization.

Zero tolerance: EngenderHealth has zero tolerance for any violations of this policy.

Safeguarding Measures

In addition to our guiding principles, EngenderHealth has established safeguarding measures (see Figure 2 and Table 1), including preventative measures, to ensure that adults and children are protected from harm that could arise from our staff, associates, and partners, and from the implementation of our programs.

Figure 2. Safeguarding Measures



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Table 1. EngenderHealth Safeguarding Measures

Measure	Details
Risk Assessment and Mitigation	<p>EngenderHealth conducts child and adult safeguarding risk assessments in all areas of work. As per safeguarding standards, the key elements of risk assessments include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing the context, scope, and setting where the work is being conducted • Identifying any potential contact with and impact on children • Identifying and analyzing any potential risks of that impact or contact • Evaluating risks in terms of likelihood and seriousness of impact • Implementing strategies to minimize or prevent risk • Reviewing and revising risks and preventative measures • Communicating risks and preventative measures <p>EngenderHealth is committed to ensuring that activities do not put vulnerable adults and children at risk and establishes measures to mitigate such risk. Strategies to prevent or minimize risk include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing the context, scope, and setting where the work is being conducted • Identifying any potential contact with and impact on children • Identifying and analyzing any potential risks of that impact or contact • Evaluating risks in terms of likelihood and seriousness of impact • Implementing strategies to minimize or prevent risk • Reviewing and revising risks and preventative measures • Communicating risks and preventative measures
Safe Recruitment	<p>EngenderHealth maintains robust procedures to ensure that safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is at the core of all recruitment efforts. Recruitment guidelines integrate safeguarding considerations into all stages of the process, including:</p> <p>Position profile and job description: The skills and knowledge required to work safely are included in all position profiles and job descriptions.</p> <p>Job advertisement: We include a statement of our commitment to safeguarding in all job advertisements.</p> <p>Interviews: Interviews always include at least one question about safeguarding.</p> <p>Reference checks: Reference checks include a question related to safeguarding.</p> <p>Proof of identification and qualifications: Candidates for selection must verify their identity and qualifications.</p>

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Measure	Details
Safe Recruitment	<p>Police checks: All positions require a police check. Depending on the timing of the police check, we may offer a candidate a position while simultaneously conducting the police check.</p> <p>Code of Conduct: All new staff must sign the Code of Conduct.</p> <p>Probationary period: During a probationary period (up to six months), EngenderHealth will monitor new staff for any safeguarding concerns.</p> <p>Induction: All new staff receive orientation and related briefs on the Safeguarding Policy.</p>
Safe Program Design	Child and adult safeguarding must be considered at every stage of program development and implementation. Staff and associates working directly with children must be regularly supervised and safeguarding practices must be regularly reviewed throughout the program cycle.
Communications Guidelines	<p>This policy is publicly available via our website. All staff, associates, partners, and communities receive orientation on this policy and how to raise a concern. Our communications department also ensures all external media and communications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are respectful of this policy, its measures, processes, and procedures • Maintain the safety and dignity of children, vulnerable adults, and impact populations <p>All photographs, videos, and other media material that include people require informed consent. Any materials featuring a child, require consent of both the child and a parent or guardian.</p>
Online Protection	We provide safeguarding education and awareness around the appropriate use of technology including the internet, mobile phones, and social media. All staff, associates, and partners will adhere to our Computer Standards and Policies.
Reporting and Investigation Process	<p>EngenderHealth ensures a timely response to complaints. Once any complaint is filed an investigation is launched (see Reporting Processes and Procedures) and appropriate actions follow. There are two reporting pathways for safeguarding concerns.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concerns related to actual, potential, or suspected abuse of a child or a vulnerable adult and safeguarding concerns raised by a family or community member will be managed by the local safeguarding committees, with any action conforming to international law. 2. Concerns that involve a staff member, associate, or partner must be reported to the local safeguarding committee as well as appropriate local management staff and to the global support office. <p>EngenderHealth maintains a zero-tolerance approach to safeguarding issues and commits to the following guiding principles throughout the reporting and investigation process:</p>

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Measure	Details
Reporting and Investigation Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidentiality: We will maintain confidentiality throughout the reporting and investigation process. Any staff, associates, or partners who violate confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary action. • Protection against retaliation: We will not tolerate any adverse treatment of staff, associates, or partners for reporting in good faith any sexual exploitation and abuse or other safeguarding concerns, or for providing information related to such complaints and investigations. We will undertake all measures necessary to ensure that retaliation does not occur. • Determination of complaint investigation: Once the safeguarding committee finishes compiling all evidence, completes all interviews, and resolves any credibility issues, we will determine whether sexual exploitation or abuse or a violation of the child or adult safeguarding policy has occurred. If we determine that sexual exploitation or abuse or another safeguarding concern has occurred, we will undertake immediate and appropriate corrective action proportional to the seriousness of the offense, up to and including the termination of employment and referral to local authorities. Corrective action will aim to stop the safeguarding concern, address its impact, and ensure that it does not happen again. Remedial measures will not adversely affect individuals who submit reports or complaints. • Referral to local authorities: EngenderHealth may refer alleged offenders to local authorities for prosecution for any conduct that is considered criminal. EngenderHealth determines whether referrals are necessary on a case-by-case basis. EngenderHealth will inform the alleged offender of any such referrals.
Safeguarding Management	<p>Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility, but the executive team and global leadership staff are particularly accountable for articulating and modeling safeguarding leadership and for setting and maintaining safeguarding standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All leadership complete safeguarding training and serve as champions for the protection of children and vulnerable adults. • Leadership and managers ensure all new staff and associates receive a copy of this policy and sign the Code of Conduct upon induction. • Leadership ensures all partners adhere to this policy. • In consultation with local advisors, country offices maintain local safeguarding policies and procedures that are consistent with this policy. <p>This policy and associated procedures are accessible to staff via the organization’s intranet. We also ensure this policy and associated procedures are available to associates, partners, and communities that we works with, in local languages, where possible.</p>
Implementation and Review	<p>All staff are responsible for implementing this policy. All global office and country teams conduct safeguarding self-audits annually and develop action plans to address any gaps. EngenderHealth monitors adherence to this policy through the mandatory tracking of this policy’s implementation standards and the Code of Conduct.</p>

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Commitments to Adults

EngenderHealth ensures our commitment to safeguarding vulnerable adults by requiring all staff, associates, and partners to adhere to this policy, report any safeguarding suspicions, sign the associated Code of Conduct, and acknowledge having read and understood the policy.

EngenderHealth commits to:

- Creating a safe culture for those we serve and those who work for and represent the organization
- Ensuring zero tolerance of any concern related to child or adult safeguarding or sexual exploitation or abuse
- Ensuring that all staff, associates, and partners have access to this policy, the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy and Procedures, and all other related policies
- Educating staff, associates, and partners that any violation of this policy may constitute gross misconduct and may be grounds for termination of employment or contract as well as possible legal action
- Ensuring all staff, associates, partners, and communities understand the procedures for reporting and investigating complaints
- Building a culture of dignity, honor, and respect where all those who work with and are served by EngenderHealth feel empowered to report complaints
- Reviewing all complaints and concerns in a timely manner through the safeguarding committee and taking all complaints seriously

Under this policy, all EngenderHealth staff, associates, and partners are prohibited from the following actions and behaviors.

- Sexually abusing or exploiting vulnerable and at-risk adults
- Engaging in any sexual relationships with impact populations, as such relationships are based on inherently unequal power dynamics
- Exchanging money, employment, goods, or services for sexual activity—including any exchange of assistance that is due to impact populations as part of an EngenderHealth project
- Subjecting a vulnerable or at-risk adult to physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect
- Discriminating against any adult
- Bullying or intimidating others
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while at work

Commitments to Children

EngenderHealth ensures our commitment to safeguarding children by requiring all staff, associates, and partners to adhere to this policy, report any safeguarding suspicions, sign the associated Code of Conduct, and acknowledge having read and understood the policy. EngenderHealth staff, associates, and partners agree to:

- Always treat children in a manner that is respectful of their rights, integrity, and dignity;

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that considers their best interest; and that does not expose them to or place them at risk of harm (for example, when capturing stories, audio recordings, or imagers of children, ensure adherence to EngenderHealth's communications guidance related to consent and ethical storytelling, including obtaining permission from the child and their parent or guardian)

- Help maintain a culture of communication and build an environment where all children are respected, encouraged to discuss their concerns and rights, are supported to participate in decision-making and respect children's right to privacy and maintain confidentiality as required
- Never abuse or exploit children or act in any way that places children at risk of harm, including by planning activities in ways that minimize the risk of harm and by always employing nonviolent and positive behaviors
- Care for children who may have been abused or exploited in accordance with this policy
- Only meet with children in spaces designated by EngenderHealth as safe and protected; for instance, in a child's home with the family's consent and on approval of accompanying EngenderHealth staff
- Never contact—in person, online, or otherwise—a child or family associated with EngenderHealth's work without the supervision of another staff member
- Inform children and their communities of their right to report any concerning situations
- Report any safeguarding concerns
- Cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns or allegations related to child safeguarding
- Comply with all other terms defined in EngenderHealth's Code of Conduct

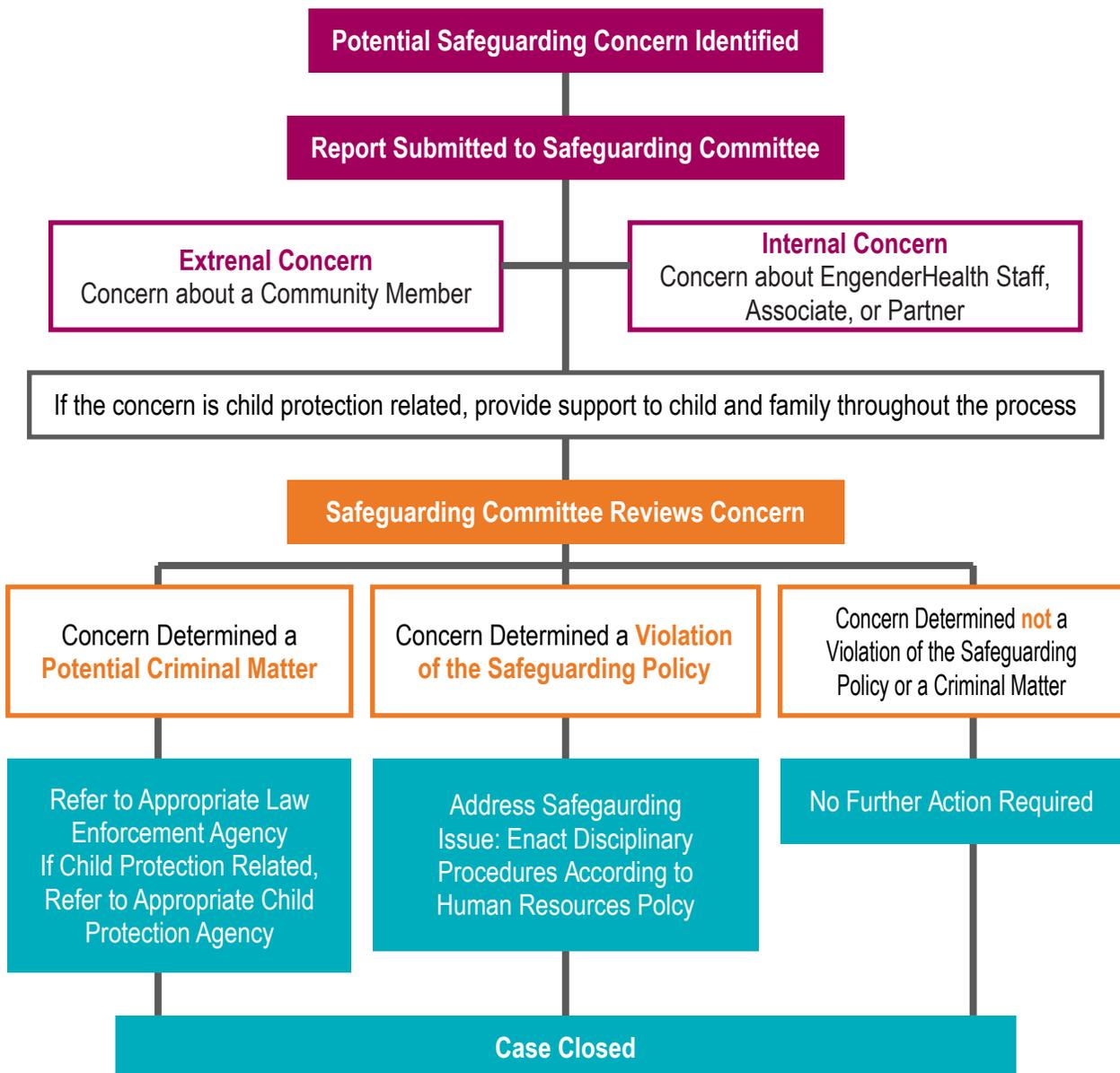
Under this policy, all EngenderHealth staff, associates, and partners are prohibited from the following actions and behaviors.

- Engaging in any form of sexual relations with anyone under 18 years old, regardless of the local legal age of sexual consent, local laws, or local customs (a mistaken belief that the child is of the age of consent is not a defense)
- Exchanging money, employment, goods, or services for sexual favors from a child
- Participating in any abusive or inappropriate physical or verbal behaviors with children, including touching or using language, such as those that may degrade, harass, humiliate, or provoke a child
- Exploiting or discriminating against any child
- Working with or transporting a child alone, without the authorization of a manager, unless necessary for ensuring the safety of the child
- Maintaining contact with children and their families via social networks, unless authorized by EngenderHealth (for instance, as part of social media awareness campaigns)
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while at work
- Allowing concerns, allegations, or suspicions related to child safeguarding to go unreported

Reporting Process and Procedures

EngenderHealth follows a set reporting process and procedure (see Figure 3) to address any concerns raised related to sexual exploitation and abuse or child and adult safeguarding. The process and procedures for reporting sexual exploitation and abuse as well as child and adult safeguarding concerns are managed via safeguarding committees. All incidents must be reported to the safeguarding committee. By facilitating immediate reporting of any concerns, EngenderHealth prevents further harm, ensures the health and safety of the individual(s) involved, and fulfils our accountability responsibilities.

Figure 3. Reporting Process and Procedure



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The steps for reporting and investigating reports of violations are as follows:

1. Once an individual identifies a concern related to sexual exploitation and abuse (or other safeguarding concern), they should share their concern with the safeguarding committee and complete the Reporting Form.
2. The safeguarding committee will begin to investigate the complaint promptly and thoroughly. All complaints will be taken seriously. A committee member will email or text the complainant to acknowledge the complaint as soon as possible.
3. Within 72 hours of receiving a complaint or concern, the safeguarding committee will convene a case conference to determine whether a full investigation is necessary. The independent member of the committee will assist in this process.
4. The time required to complete any investigation will depend upon the particular circumstances of the complaint. If the committee believes there may be evidence of sexual exploitation and abuse or of another child or adult safeguarding issue, they may undertake a full investigation.
5. An investigation may include a member of the safeguarding committee meeting with the complainant directly as well as with the alleged perpetrator. The investigator will also interview and obtain statements from any witnesses. All EngenderHealth staff, associates, and partners are required to cooperate and provide information during a complaint investigation. Refusal to cooperate in the process may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment or contract. The committee will maintain confidentiality best practices during the investigation.

Definitions of Key Terms

It is imperative that everyone shares a common understanding of sexual exploitation and abuse and other child and adult abuse safeguarding principles and terminology. To that end, the following definitions support a common understanding of this policy.

Abuse: Abuse may be a deliberate act or it may be a failure to act to prevent harm. Abuse includes anything which individuals, institutions, or processes do (or fail to do), intentionally or unintentionally, which harms a person or damages their prospect of safe and healthy livelihoods. This includes emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, and neglect.

At-risk or vulnerable adult: This refers to individuals who 18 years or older but—due to age, disability or illness (physical, mental, or similar), or other condition—may be unable to independently care for themselves or protect themselves against abuse, harm, or exploitation. This also includes those who—due to their gender identity, health status or disability, ethnicity, religious identity, sexual orientation, economic or social status, or as a result of disasters and conflicts—are at additional risk of abuse or exploitation.

Child: A child is a person under the age of 18.

Child abuse: Child abuse includes all forms of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as neglect or negligent treatment, and any other exploitation of a child or other actions that may harm a child. Abuse can occur anywhere and anytime. Research shows that the perpetrators of abuse are likely to be known and trusted by the child. Some of the most common types of child abuse are: (1) physical violence toward or deliberate injury of a child; (2) neglect, or the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs; (3) sexual abuse, which involves using a child for sexual stimulation or gratification, and (4) emotional abuse, which harms a child's self-esteem.

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Child marriage: Child marriage includes formal and informal unions in which one or both parties are under the age of 18, regardless of local laws, and therefore under the age of consent.

Child sexual exploitation: Child sexual exploitation involves children receiving a form of benefits (including gifts, money, or affection) in exchange for engaging in sexual activities.

Child protection and safeguarding: Child protection and safeguarding refers to the responsibilities and preventative and responsive measures and activities that EngenderHealth undertakes to protect children. This includes ensuring that no child is subject to child abuse because of their association with EngenderHealth staff, associates, or partners and/or their participation in any EngenderHealth activity, including our projects and programs. “Child protection” is an element of safeguarding promoting welfare. It refers to any activity that is undertaken to protect children who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Communities: The term communities, for the purpose of this policy, includes healthcare providers, frontline health workers, and other service providers as well as children and adults within a particular locale or who share specific social characteristic (e.g., persons with disabilities).

Coercion: Coercion includes a spectrum of degrees of force, such as physical force, psychological intimidation, blackmail, or other threats—including threats related to not obtaining or retaining employment. Coercion may also occur when a person is unable to give consent; for example, while asleep, intoxicated, or mentally incapable of understanding the situation. While coerced sex may result in sexual gratification for the perpetrator, its underlying purpose is to express power and dominance over another person.

Emotional or psychological abuse: Emotional or psychological abuse includes any behaviors that aim to or result in emotional or psychological harm, for example humiliating and degrading treatment such as belittling and name calling, excessive criticism and shaming, confinement, and isolation.

EngenderHealth associates: Associates include paid and non-paid individuals who have committed to work with or support EngenderHealth, such as volunteers, interns, consultants, and contractors.

EngenderHealth managers: Managers are staff who manage or supervise the work of other EngenderHealth staff or associates.

EngenderHealth partners: Partners include staff and/or representatives of partner organizations and local governments operating in partnership with EngenderHealth.

EngenderHealth staff: Staff are individuals who receive a salary for work, including those based in EngenderHealth country and project offices, working as part of the global support team, or operating in any other location where EngenderHealth works.

Harm: Harm includes emotional and psychological, physical, and any other infringement of an individual’s rights.

Grooming: Grooming is behavior that an offender uses to procure sexual activity from a child, including by building trust with children directly, and/or with their caregivers, to sexually abuse them. In some cases, a person may send electronic messages to a child with the goal of engaging the child in sexual activity; this is called “online grooming.”

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Modern slavery: Slavery is a situation in which a person exercises (perceived) power of ownership over another person. Related terms include forced labor, which covers work or services that people engage in under threat of punishment; human trafficking, which involves deceptive recruitment and coercion; and bonded labor, which is demanded in repayment of a debt or loan. Modern slavery encompasses a spectrum of labor exploitation, ranging from the mistreatment of vulnerable workers to human trafficking to child labor and forced sexual exploitation.

Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse: The development and humanitarian communities use this terminology in reference to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations by personnel. The term derives from the United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13).

Safeguarding: Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to protect people (especially vulnerable adults and children) from harm (particularly sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment) and responding appropriately when harm occurs. Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across programs, partners, and personnel. It requires proactively identifying, preventing, and guarding against all risks of harm, exploitation, and abuse by having mature, accountable, and transparent systems for incident reporting, response, and learning. Systems must be survivor-centered and protect those accused until proven guilty. EngenderHealth places impact populations and affects persons at the center of our safeguarding approach.

Sexual abuse: Sexual abuse includes the actual as well as threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Sexual exploitation: Sexual exploitation includes any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This definition includes any exchange of money, material assistance, employment, goods, or services for sexual favors or other forms of sexually humiliating, degrading, or exploitive behaviors. This includes all forms of human trafficking and modern slavery.

Sexual harassment: Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other conduct that creates a coercive, hostile, intimidating, or offensive work environment. Sexual harassment may be directed toward a person of the same or the opposite sex and includes uninvited, unreciprocated, and unwelcome behaviors that cause the recipient to feel threatened, humiliated, or embarrassed. This also includes behaviors that are characterized by any of the following conditions: (1) submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of employment of the recipient, (2) submission to or rejection of this conduct is used as a basis for an employment decision that affects the recipient, (3) such conduct has the purpose of or results in creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Sexual violence: Sexual violence includes any unwanted sexual acts or coercive behaviors, any unwanted sexual comments or advances, and any attempts to traffic a person for sexual exploitation. Anyone may perpetrate sexual violence, regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including at home or at work. Types of sexual violence are commonly distinguished as: (1) sexual violence involving intercourse (rape), (2) violent sexual contact (unwanted touching excluding intercourse), and (3) noncontact sexual violence (threats of sexual violence, exhibitionism, and verbal sexual harassment).

Survivor: A survivor is a person who has experienced abuse or exploitation. Note: We

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frequently employ the term “survivor” rather than “victim” to imply strength, resilience, and the capacity to survive. However, it is the individual’s choice as to how they wish to identify.

Vulnerable adults: See “at-risk or vulnerable adult” above.