

58 SAFEGUARDING POLICY

58.1 Definition of Safeguarding:

AwazCDS-Pakistan introduces safeguarding policy to protect, people with whom it works or whomever work for AwazCDS-Pakistan, from any form of harm, bullying, harassment, exploitation, abuse, neglect or any other act that may cause injury or suffering.

58.2 Scope and Application of Safeguarding Policy:

58.2.1 The safeguarding policy is applicable to everyone concerned or related to AwazCDS-Pakistan in any way but not limited to its staff, grantees, partners, associates, board members, beneficiaries, program participants, volunteers, vendors, consultants, interns, resource persons, or whosoever connected with organization one way or the other.

58.2.2 The safeguarding policy is applicable to be part of terms and conditions / clauses, in all contracts with partner organizations, vendors, staff, interns and consultants etc.

58.2.3 The safeguarding policy especially protects vulnerable groups like women, children, people living with disability, sexual minorities, religious minorities, young people, scheduled castes, survivors of gender based violence and other socially excluded groups.

58.2.4 This safeguarding policy is, therefore, fundamental to AwazCDS-Pakistan's professional integrity. In addition, it reinforces the value that it places on all people associated with AwazCDS-Pakistan to feel protected against any type of discrimination on the basis of gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, income, social status, race, caste, creed, color, physical appearance, disability or any other feature.

58.2.5 It also provides a method of properly addressing bona fide concerns that individuals or groups within or outside of organization might have.

58.2.6 AwazCDS-Pakistan's management shall appoint a designated Safeguarding Focal Point and publicize his/her name for recording / investigation or complaints / concerns etc.

58.2.7 AwazCDS-Pakistan's management shall formulate a designated Safeguarding Committee for follow up, redressals and risk management and assessments etc.

58.3 Fundamental Elements of the Policy:

58.3.1 Any harmful incident may be reported, highlighted or noticed by any concerned person associated or connected with the organization as defined above

58.3.2 AwazCDS-Pakistan requires the concerned person(s) to identify themselves by providing their name, CNIC number and phone number for follow up and support.

58.3.3 The concerned person or whistleblower shall be protected from victimization, harassment or disciplinary action as a result of reporting; where the report is made in good faith and is not made maliciously or for other unjustified reasons.

58.3.4 Reported matters shall be investigated fully and formally including interviews with all the witnesses and other parties involved. The identity of the concerned person shall be held confidential at all stages by the Safeguarding Committee.

58.3.5 AwazCDS-Pakistan shall provide internal anonymity; it cannot guarantee such a confidentiality will be retained if any external legal actions would follow.

58.4 Reporting Information & Documentation

58.4.1 If the circumstances require, the issue may be reported to Mr. Ishfaq Khan Khalil – Safeguarding Focal Point by the victim/ complainant / concerned person personally or via Phone # +92-51-2305233 or 2305234 or email at cito@awazcds.org.pk or by post letter marked as “ Attention: Mr. Ashfaq Ahmed Khan, Safeguarding Focal Point, AwazCDS-Pakistan, House # 288 (Basement) Street 87, Services Society, Sector E-11/2, Islamabad”. Or through online Complaint Response Mechanism at www.awazcds.org.pk

58.4.2 In case the victim/ complainant / concerned person requires to submit his /her complaint or instance against higher management of the organization or not comfortable to report to Mr. Ishfaq Ahmed Khan, Safeguarding Focal Point he/she may complaint to Ms. Anita Bakhtiar, Board Member, AwazCDS-Pakistan at complaints@awazcds.org.pk .She will initiate the process of the investigation / redressal immediately as per procedure.

58.4.3 The Safeguarding Focal Person shall maintain a Log Incident Register for immediate registration of incident and then initiate the further investigation or redressal process with the support of Safeguarding Committee members

58.4.4 The Safeguarding Focal Person reviews the instances on monthly basis and prepares the analysis report on monthly basis to share the findings with Senior Management Team(SMT) during monthly/ periodic meetings of SMT.

58.4.5 The annual analysis report may also be consolidated by Safeguarding Committee and learning may be shared with board members for appropriate policy changes / SOPs reforms etc.

58.4.6 The Log Incident Register shall be safely kept in the custody of Safeguarding Focal Person and the Head of Human Resource Department or any member of the Safeguarding Committee shall inspect the register on periodic basis.

58.5 Safeguarding Committee and its Role

58.5.1 The Safeguarding Committee shall comprise of;

- One member from the senior management of the organization
- Head of / Director/ Manager HR and;
- Safeguarding Focal Point

In cases, where needed, a Board Member can be requested to be part of the committee or for the oversight of the process and redressal. The Head of / Director /HR will be secretary of all meetings, and will be kept in the loop throughout the proceedings of the case or complaint.

58.5.2 The Safeguarding Focal Point will be responsible for maintaining the record and documentation of all such proceedings. If any one of the members of the Safeguarding Committee is a victim or complainant or accused, then he or she will be replaced on the Committee for that case by the Management or Board.

58.5.3 After conducting investigations, if the Safeguarding Committee feels that the issue raised by the concerned person/ whistleblower is critical to the operations of AwazCDS-Pakistan and threatens to have pervasive negative implications, the Committee will escalate the matter to the CEO and Board of Directors for further deliberation.

58.5.4 The Board members will take up the case as per the policies and procedures of the organizations or as per the law of land.

58.5.5 The members of the Safeguarding Committee shall also review the Risk Register of the organization on periodic basis to pre-empt the prospective harms and suggest mitigation. The risk register may also share the learning from the past instances that can be inculcated in the future plans.

58.5.6 The safeguarding policy shall be reviewed annually during the annual review and planning meeting of the organization. The recommendations shall be shared with Board members for improvements and amendments accordingly

58.5.7 The focal point and members of the Safeguarding Committee shall be provided with specialized trainings at the time of induction and later, on periodic basis to equip them with modern day's harmful practices to pre-empt ensure protection and do no harm at all levels.

58.5.9 All the staff / board members shall be given orientation on safeguarding policy and SOPs at the time of induction.

58.5.10 In case of engagement with children below the age of 18 consent of their parents/ guardian/custodian shall be attained

58.5.11 Photographs and videography of all the organizational events and their further use at all

publications / social media / electronic media / print media shall be made with the consent of participants in order to safeguard their privacy and identity.
