

Policy Summary

Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy

October 2019

POLICY STATEMENT

FAITH believes that everyone it comes into contact with has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, bullying, neglect, and exploitation. FAITH will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by executive board members, staff, or associated personnel, and commits to addressing safeguarding through the three pillars of prevention, reporting, and response.

3 Pillars: prevention, reporting, response	6 Associated FAITH policies	9 Key terms defined in the glossary	Oct 2019 Policy adopted
--	---------------------------------------	---	-----------------------------------

About this Policy

For FAITH, safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing, and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect — a means to protect people, including children and vulnerable adults, from harm arising from contact with FAITH's staff or programs. The policy applies to all executive board members, staff, and volunteers contracted by FAITH, as well as associated personnel such as consultants, contractors, and partner organizations while engaged in FAITH-related work.

The purpose of this policy is to protect people — particularly children, vulnerable adults, and beneficiaries of assistance — from harm arising from the conduct of FAITH staff or personnel, or from the design and implementation of FAITH's programs and activities. It does not cover workplace sexual harassment, which is addressed separately under FAITH's Code of Ethics and Conduct and GESI Policy, nor safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by FAITH or its associated personnel.

Prevention — FAITH's Responsibilities

- Ensure all board members, staff, volunteers, and associated personnel read, understand, and know their responsibilities under this policy before entering into agreement with FAITH, with hard copies available in Nepali.
- Design and undertake all programs and activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm, including in how information about individuals is gathered and communicated.
- Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing, and deploying staff and associated personnel, following the HR policy.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers receive safeguarding training at recruitment, with annual refresher training organized.
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process.

Staff and Volunteer Responsibilities

FAITH executive board members, staff, volunteers, and associated personnel must not:

- **Child Safeguarding** — engage in sexual activity with anyone under 18, sexually abuse or exploit children, subject a child to physical, emotional, or psychological abuse or neglect, or engage in commercially exploitative activities including child labour or trafficking.
- **Adult Safeguarding** — sexually abuse or exploit vulnerable adults, or subject a vulnerable adult to physical, emotional, or psychological abuse or neglect.

- **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse** — exchange money, employment, goods, or services for sexual activity, or engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance, given the inherently unequal power dynamics involved.

Additionally, all board members, staff, and associated personnel are obliged to contribute to an environment that prevents safeguarding violations, and to report any concerns or suspicions of violations to the appropriate staff member.

How to Report a Safeguarding Concern

FAITH ensures that safe, appropriate, and accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are available to staff and the communities it works with. Staff reporting through formal whistleblowing channels are protected by the Whistleblowing Policy, and FAITH also accepts complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners, and official bodies.

Concerns should be reported immediately to Reena Lama, Executive Director, at reena@faith.org.np or 9841519414. Staff who do not feel comfortable reporting to the Executive Director may report directly to any other appropriate staff member, including an executive board member. Contact details for reporting are also available on FAITH's official website.

Response, Investigation & Resolution

On receiving a report, the person to whom the disclosure is made escalates it to the executive board, which conducts a preliminary investigation. Allegations judged trivial, fanciful, or malicious are dismissed with notice to the person making the allegation; allegations judged significant put an investigation process in motion within 30 days.

- The allegation is reviewed in confidentiality, with the whistleblower contacted to justify their allegations if needed.
- An investigation plan is drawn up, proportionate to the seriousness of the allegation, with sufficient resources allocated.
- The alleged individual is given the opportunity to provide input and evidence in their defense; all relevant witnesses are interviewed and documents examined.
- Strict security and confidentiality are maintained throughout, and the case is heard without bias, acting only on evidence.

Following investigation, the executive committee may take disciplinary action (including dismissal or a police complaint) against the individual alleged of malpractice, disciplinary action against the whistleblower if a claim is found malicious, or no action if the allegation is unfounded and made in good faith. FAITH offers survivor-led support to those harmed by board members, staff, or associated personnel.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to a concern and subsequent case management is shared on a need-to-know basis only, and kept secure at all times.

Associated Policies

- Code of Ethics and Conduct
- HR Policy
- Whistleblower Policy
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Non-discrimination, Workforce Diversity and GESI Policy

Glossary of Key Terms

Term	Definition
Beneficiary of Assistance	Someone who directly receives goods or services from FAITH's programme.
Child	A person below the age of 18.
Harm	Psychological, physical, and any other infringement of an individual's rights.
Vulnerable Adult	A person who is or may be in need of care and who is or may be unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.
Safeguarding	Taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm from occurring, to protect people from that harm, and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.
Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)	The term used by the humanitarian and development community to refer to preventing sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations by staff or associated personnel.
Sexual Abuse	The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.
Sexual Exploitation	Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes.
Survivor	The person who has been abused or exploited; used in preference to 'victim' as it implies strength and resilience, though the choice of term is the individual's own.

This summary is published by FAITH for transparency and accountability. It is a condensed presentation of the internal Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy (October 2019); in case of any discrepancy, the full internal policy document prevails and is available on request.