



# Child Safeguarding Policy

## Activity for Reformation of Basic Needs-ARBAN

Head Office: Rajpara, Purbadhala, Netrakona

Dhaka Office: 4/8, Block-B, Humayun Road, Muhammadpur, Dhaka-1207

Telephone: +88 02223311721

E-mail: [info@arban.org.bd](mailto:info@arban.org.bd)



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## Foreword

ARBAN strongly upholds that any form of violence against children, whether physical, sexual, psychological, or due to neglect, is entirely unacceptable. To effectively prevent and address such abuse, a clear and consistent policy framework is essential.

Across all our projects, we are committed to creating a safe and protective environment where children's rights are upheld and respected. To this end, ARBAN has developed a Child Safeguarding Policy aligned with international standards to ensure the protection and welfare of every child.

This policy is grounded in key legal and policy frameworks, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the Bangladesh Children Act (2013), the National Children Policy (2011), and the National Plan of Action to Prevent Violence Against Women and Children (2013–2025).

Focusing on both prevention and response, the policy serves as a practical guide for working with children. It outlines specific measures for staff recruitment, use of social media, visitor management, and procedures for reporting and communication. An annual action plan incorporating child safeguarding measures helps ensure the policy is effectively implemented across our operations.

Recognizing the serious risk of harm to children, ARBAN is committed to promoting this policy widely, not only within the organization but also among partners, donors, and other stakeholders involved in child-related work. In any case of actual or suspected abuse, our policy mandates an immediate and professional response, in accordance with applicable laws.

We believe that consistent application of this policy is the most effective way to ensure that all children are protected and safe. We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to its development.

Dr. Tarun Kanti Shikder  
Chairman, Governing Board  
ARBAN

## 1. Rational/Policy Statement

- a) ARBAN's child safeguarding policy is our commitment to preventing and protecting children from abuse, promoting the health, development and well-being of children and creating safe environments where children can grow up safely with their rights upheld.
- b) This policy applies to all children regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, regional or religion in the countries where ARBAN operates.
- c) This policy applies to all ARBAN staffs, volunteers, representatives (please refer to Definitions) supporters or visitors of our work.
- d) This policy applies to all ARBAN offices and Districts, Upazilas and Unions of operation now and in the future.
- e) This policy is underpinned by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Bangladesh Children Act 2013, National Plan of Action to Prevent Violence against Women and Children 2013-2025 and National Children Policy of Bangladesh 2011.
- f) ARBAN is committed to practices that protect children from harm and it is the duty of all ARBAN staff, executive committee members, patrons, staffs, volunteers, representatives, contractors, visitors/supporters to take steps to prevent the physical, mental, sexual and emotional abuse of all children with who they come into contact. This Child Safeguarding Policy outlines how ARBAN deals with child protection issues and is intended to safeguard the children who come into contact with ARBAN's staff, volunteers, supporters or visitors of our work.
- g) We will endeavor to safeguard children by: -
  - Ensuring all ARBAN staff and volunteers are subject to careful recruitment and selection.
  - Adopting a Code of Conduct for working with and interacting with children.
  - Putting in place clear procedures for responding and reporting child protection concerns.
  - Ensuring ARBAN staff, volunteers & representatives, consultants, contractors, supporters or visitors to our projects are aware of our child safeguarding policy (including code of conduct and reporting procedures).
  - Designating Child Safeguarding Officers (CSO) in ARBAN's Head office as well as other offices in each of the concerned districts.
  - Ensuring that our network partner organisations, children, parents/carers and communities where ARBAN operates are aware of ARBAN's Child Safeguarding Policy (including code of conduct and reporting procedures).
  - Incorporating child safeguarding into all aspects of our Program Cycle Management to achieve high standards in child safeguarding in all our direct and partnership work.
  - Reviewing our Child Safeguarding Policy at least every three years (or earlier if there is significant legislative changes in Bangladesh where ARBAN operate).

## 2. Definitions

**Child:** Using the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and as per the Bangladesh shishu Ain 2013, a child for this policy is anyone aged 18 or under regardless of the legal age of majority in the areas where ARBAN works. ARBAN's projects in its working areas will treat the people as child aged under 21 following the Child marriage restraint act 2017 on human rights perspective.

**Child abuse:** Whilst there is no universal definition of child abuse as an international child- focused charity, ARBAN broadly defines child abuse as the harm and maltreatment of a child/ren with five main categories of abuse: Physical Abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation), Mental Abuse, Sexual Abuse (including Sexual Exploitation), Emotional Abuse and Neglect. ARBANs staffs and visitors to our projects should familiarize themselves with the detailed guidance "*Awareness and Indicators of Child Abuse*" in Annex 1.

**Child safeguarding:** It is the term to describe a broad range of policies, processes and action that:

- Protect children from harm.
- Prevent damage to children's health and development.
- Ensure children can grow up safely in a healthy environment
- Give children have the best start in life.
- Facilitate children to get their rights
- Treat every child equally irrespective of race, colour, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender etc.

**Child protection-** is one aspect of child safeguarding and refers to the specific actions individuals, organisations, countries take to protect specific children who are, or are at risk of abuse.

**Direct contact with children:** Being in the physical presence of child/ren whether contact is occasional or regular, short or long term. This includes providing services or engaging children and families in projects to delivering talks to schools, mosjids, churches, pagoda or youth groups; it includes visits to projects and organisations ARBAN supports. This list of examples is not exhaustive.

**ARBAN staff, volunteers & representatives:** A collective term that refers to all members of staff, volunteers, executive committee members, patrons and any other person who can be said to be representing ARBAN in some capacity e.g. ARBAN Heroes, Student Ambassadors and any future Office ARBAN may open in the future. Consultants or contractors engaged by ARBAN for delivery of services are also included in this term.

**Indirect contact with children:** Having access to information on children, such as children's names, locations (addresses of individuals or organisations/schools/projects), photographs or case studies; social media access to children or their information. Albeit indirectly, this nonetheless has an impact on children, and therefore a responsibility arises for child safeguarding and protection. This list of examples is not exhaustive.

**Network Partner organisations:** An independent organisation that ARBAN cooperates with to achieve shared goals.

**ARBAN direct program/projects:** Projects or services that are directly implemented or provided by ARBAN and its staff, volunteers, contractors.

**Donors:** Donors who financially and technically support ARBAN projects in Bangladesh

### 3. Recruitment, Selection and Human Resources

- a) All prospective ARBAN staff, volunteers and representatives will be asked to sign a declaration of criminal convictions as part of the application process. During the interview process applicants will be asked about previous work with children.
- b) All applicants who will be subject to pre-appointment checks including:
  - Proof of identity
  - At least two reliable character references from people who have known the applicant for at least three years to include specific question on any areas of concern relating to working with children.
  - Criminal record checks. If require, ARBAN can investigate the past career in a criminal perspective collecting data from local police station and from the elite of the candidate's native villages. In ARBAN Offices this will be relevant criminal record or police checks available.
- c) Each individual or organisation who provide services to ARBAN (consultants or companies) and whose work will involve direct or indirect contact with children will be subject to pre-appointment checks including:
  - Proof of identity
  - Two reliable character references from people who have known the applicant for at least three years, to include specific question on any areas of concern relating to child protection.
  - Criminal record checks. In ARBAN Offices this will be relevant criminal record or police checks available.

In the case of companies providing services to ARBAN the company is required to confirm that it has undertaken at least this level of checks for staff that will be working with ARBAN. This confirmation must be in writing (either within terms of contract or in letter of appointment)

- d) In the case of criminal record checks (Police Clearance Certificate for ARBAN Offices)
  - All appointments will be made subject to receiving clear criminal record check, if require.
- e) In case of senior staff recruitment, one of the members of governing board of ARBAN would be invited to ensure the quality of the recruitment process as well as the best choice of the candidature



#### 4. Child Safeguarding Officer (CSO) and Child Safeguarding Representative

- a) ARBAN will designate Child Safeguarding Officers (CSO) in the Headquarter and one in each ARBAN field Offices. The names and contact details of CSOs will be prominently displayed in each office.
- b) The role of a CSO is to:
  - Promote awareness of ARBAN 's Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures with staff, volunteers, executive committee members and visitors through group or individual briefings so that all are aware of this and their own responsibilities.
  - To train and enable others to provide inductions or briefings in relation to the Child Safeguarding Policy.
  - To assist ARBAN's Human Resources Manager [*or person with HR responsibilities*] in the induction and training on child safeguarding matters, this includes advising on any specific child safeguarding trainings.
  - To be the focal point for receiving reports of child protection concerns or disclosures.
  - To assess reports received and act on these as outlined in the "*Responding and Reporting Procedure*" in Section 6 and Annex 4 including referrals to statutory agencies or law enforcers as appropriate.
  - To keep secure written records and advise of appropriate keeping of children's data.
  - Seek advice from senior management and relevant bodies.
  - To advise and recommend on review or amendment of ARBAN's Child Safeguarding Policy and procedures in line with changes in legislation or best practice.
- c) It is not the role of a CSO to decide if a child has been abused or take sole responsibility for decisions and actions following a reported concern, rather their role is to ensure reported concerns are handled according to this policy, enabling ARBAN to fulfil its organisational responsibility.
- d) ARBAN will ensure that its designated CSOs receive appropriate training to fulfil this role and this will be specifically addressed as part of personal development plans and annual appraisal processes.
- e) ARBAN's Governing Board will designate one of their members as Child Safeguarding Representative (CSR). Their role is to:
  - Promote awareness of Child Safeguarding and ARBAN's policy at the Governing Board level.
  - Ensure ARBAN's Child Safeguarding Policy is reviewed at least every three years.
  - As CSR to take part in the meetings, actions and decisions that flow from receipt of a reported concern of child abuse as part of Reporting Concerns or Disclosures of Child Abuse outlined in Section 6.
  - To advise and support the ED and CSO on child safeguarding issues.

## 5. Code of Conduct (Behaviour Protocols)

- a) ARBAN has a Code of Conduct that gives clear boundaries for behaviour when working and inter-acting with children. The “*Code of Conduct (Behaviour Protocols)*” can be found in Annex 3 and it applies to all ARBAN staff, volunteers, representatives, consultants, contractors and visitors to ARBAN’s projects.
- b) The Code of Conduct will be prominently displayed and easily accessible in all ARBAN offices.
- c) Executive Director is responsible for sharing the Code of Conduct with all ARBAN’s network Partner Organisations in their respective locations so that all are aware of the standards of conduct to expect from ARBAN’s representatives and visitors.
- d) If a member of ARBAN staff, volunteer or representative or visitor linked to ARBAN becomes aware of, or observes, a breach of the Code of Conduct by any person connected to ARBAN (a colleague, volunteer, executive committee member, contractor/consultant, patron, visitor etc.) this must be reported to their line manager. If the line manager is the subject of the report, then that person’s line manager should be contacted.

In the case of visitors, their reports should be made to any ARBAN member of staff who in turn has a duty to report this to their line manager as outlined above.

The line manager (or other ARBAN member of staff who has been made aware of a breach of the code of conduct) must report this to the CSO.

The CSO will report this to the HR Officer/ED [*or person responsible for HR issues*].

- e) Reported breaches of the Code of Conduct by ARBAN staff, volunteers, consultants, contractors and trustees will be investigated and addressed as Misconduct or Gross Misconduct in accordance with ARBAN’s Disciplinary Policy and Procedure or contract for services.
- f) Breaches of the Code of Conduct by other ARBAN representatives (e.g. Patrons, Advisory Committee members) visitors or supporters may result in ARBAN breaking association with these individuals.
- g) ARBAN’s Project Managers together with CSO will ensure that our network Partner Organisations and children, families in our own projects are fully aware of ARBAN’s Code of Conduct and the reporting processes for them to raise concerns about breaches of these to us.

## 6. Reporting Concerns or Disclosures of Child Abuse

- a) There are various ways you may become aware of, or become concerned about actual or potential abuse of a child/ren. These are outlined in the “*Awareness and Indicators of Child Abuse* in Annex 1. A *disclosure* is when a child tells a person that they have been or are being abused. A *concern* is a possibility or suspicion that a child is suffering or is at risk of abuse.
- b) It is mandatory for ARBAN staff, volunteers, consultants, contractors and representatives to report immediately any disclosures or concerns about a child/ren



abuse involving a member of staff, or any person linked to ARBAN, or the safety and/or wellbeing of a child in our work.

- c) In all cases ARBAN has a duty, and will report to the relevant authorities and law enforcers (police and/or social services) any person suspected of abusing a child/ren.
- d) It is not the responsibility of the person with the concern or to whom a disclosure is made, to investigate or decide what should be done. These decisions and actions are to be taken through the reporting process outlined in this policy. ARBAN will treat all reports with sensitivity and appropriate confidentiality so as not to put a person making a report at risk of any repercussions.
- e) ARBAN staff, volunteers, executive committee members and others will be given guidance on what and how to report as part of child safeguarding training, inductions and briefings. This includes practical information on how to respond to a child and what information to report. This guidance is contained in *“Responding and Reporting Child Protection Concerns”* in Annex 4.
- f) Reports should be sent to ARBAN’s designated Child Safeguarding Officer (CSO) ideally using the *“Child Protection Reporting Form”* in Annex 5, but even without this form a report should be made.
- g) ARBAN will treat all concerns raised seriously and ensure that all parties will be treated fairly and the principles of natural justice will be a prime consideration.
- h) The rights and welfare of the child is of prime importance. Every effort must be made to protect the rights and safety of the child throughout the reporting and any investigation process.
- i) The rights and welfare of any alleged perpetrator or person breaching the code of conduct will also be upheld during any investigation process.
- j) On receiving a report, a Child Safeguarding Officer will assess and request any additional information and make a report to the Executive Director and Child Safeguarding Representative within 24 hours. The process for *“Responding and Reporting Procedure for Child Protection Concerns & Disclosures”* is shown in Annex 6.
- k) The CSO, Executive Director and the Governing Board’s Child Safeguarding Representative should agree the decisions and course of action to take. These will depend on whether it is a concern or disclosure and whether it involves an ARBAN staff member/volunteer/executive committee member or not. Thereafter the CSO should report back with the results of any investigations, outcomes of decisions and actions taken and make any onward referrals to statutory authorities etc.
- l) For disclosures or concerns reported to ARBAN Offices the CSO there should report first to ARBAN’s CSO (as organisational focal point for all reports).
- m) All records relating to child abuse disclosures or concerns must be treated as confidential. The transfer of this information (verbally or in writing) should be done securely and shared on a “need to know basis”. Records (electronic and paper) should be kept in locked files accessible to CSO and those who “need to know” and then securely archived. All reports should be signed and dated so that the origin and date of the information is clear.

- n) Children and community members with whom ARBAN works will be provided with information about how to report any child protection concerns about ARBAN staff or representatives and others.

## 7. ARBAN's Offices

- a) ARBAN Offices will prepare and display Responding and Reporting Procedures at their offices.
- b) ARBAN will resource its staffs, volunteers and representatives with the training and any identified specialist services/advice (legal, child protection or counselling) required to achieve high standards of child safeguarding and responses to child protection disclosures and cases.

## 8. ARBAN's Projects

- a) A network partner organisation with direct or indirect contact with children will be expected to carry out criminal record checks as part of their recruitment/retention of staff. Where no local system for criminal record checking exists, three references must be taken up. These must have known the individual for a minimum of three years. This is a requirement for all ARBAN partner organisations, those with their own Child Protection Policies and those in the process of developing one.
- b) ARBAN will incorporate child safeguarding priorities into points of its Project Cycle Management; the monitoring and reviewing of projects, to the evaluation and lesson learning.
- c) ARBAN will incorporate child safeguarding into its Monitoring and Evaluation framework.
- d) Child safeguarding and protection will incorporate into capacity building assessments for all network Partner Organisations. ARBAN will work with network Partner Organisations to identify suitable training, local resource people or other learning opportunities for staff within network Partner Organisations to meet identified child safeguarding needs.

## 9. Visits to projects and partner organisations

- a) Anyone travelling either as a representative of ARBAN (staff, volunteer, Executive Committee member, patron, contractor/consultant, fundraiser or otherwise in a representational role) or where ARBAN is responsible for that person, (e.g. donors, journalists and researchers) and who will have direct or indirect contact with children during the project visit, will be:
- Required to read ARBAN's Child Safeguarding Policy (or "*ARBAN's Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct for Supporters and Visitors*") and sign the "*Statement of Commitment*" (unless already done so) prior to travel.
  - Required to attend a child safeguarding pre-visit briefing. This briefing will cover Awareness & Indicators of Abuse, Code of Conduct, Responding and Reporting Child Protection Concerns and Disclosures and Communication Guidelines (including taking and use of images).
  - Provide two contacts for referees who will be written to or verified by telephone (if not already done as part of recruitment).

- b) Where the visit is one-off and supervised (e.g. exposure visits, donor visit) and is simply to visit a project the first two requirements (reading the child safeguarding policy and attending a pre-visit briefing) will be sufficient.
- c) The Child Safeguarding Officer is responsible for either leading these briefings or training other ARBAN staff members to deliver these.
- d) ARBAN will keep an accurate register of visitors to our projects with name, projects/locations visited and people met. This will be collected and kept in ARBAN offices

## **10. Children's Data**

- a) Personal data and information about children (and families) should be kept secure in locked cabinets or in password protected electronic files/folders with access restricted to the people who need to know this information for work purposes within the organisation.
- b) Any information relating to a child protection concern or disclosure must be kept secure in a locked cabinet in a specific file and not amongst other papers, and should be shared on a "need to know" basis to those involved in handling the report and any related investigation. Email communication in particular has risks of being forwarded to others and should be conducted with strict controls and documents password protected.
- c) Those who have access to information about children such as personal contact information, including their address, specific cases or incidents, or any other details of a child's personal life, must be inducted and fully understand what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable sharing of information regarding children. This is a responsibility of each line manager who in turn can seek guidance from the CSO if in doubt.

## **11. Marketing & Communications**

- a) Images, stories and communications of or about children in ARBAN's marketing, fundraising and public communications (print, broadcast or electronic materials such as brochures, reports, videos or websites) should comply with the following basic the following:
  - In images children should be appropriately clothed and not depicted in any poses that could be interpreted as sexually provocative.
  - Images and written materials must not include details that could be used to identify a specific child and/or their location as this could cause them to be put at risk. For example, using legal names, names of schools, naming home village or specific city location.
- b) Any web forum established or linked to ARBAN should be monitored closely to ensure that children do not place identifying information about themselves on it. Any such information will be removed by ARBAN staff as soon as they are aware of it.
- c) ARBAN should acquire informed consent/ permission of the child/child's parent/guardian to take and use any image or story of a child for publicity, fundraising, awareness-raising or other purpose (which should be made clear to the consent-giver). This consent should be recorded in writing.

- d) Written permission from a network Partner Organisation (or other agency) for images or stories they have provided before using these in ARBAN publicity or public materials.
- e) Individuals or organisations requesting the use of ARBAN's resources such as photographs are required to sign an agreement with ARBAN as to the proper use of such materials. Failure to adhere to the agreed use of the material will result in the termination of the organisation's permission to use the subject materials and/or require immediate return of all materials (including any copies made) provided by the organisation and could be subject to legal action.
- f) Every child has a right to be accurately represented through both words and images. Text and images included in any print, broadcast or electronic materials such as brochures, publications, reports, videos or websites should depict an accurate and balanced depiction of children and their circumstances. Sufficient information should be provided where possible as to their social, cultural and economic environment. Where children are indeed 'victims', the preservation of the child's dignity must nevertheless be preserved at all times.
- g) Guidelines on taking and using images or stories from children will be provided for ARBAN staff, volunteers, representatives or visitors to projects to ensure child safeguarding standards are kept as well as these being in keeping with ARBAN's wider Communications Standards and Guidelines.

## 12. Punishment Against Child Harassment

If any staff of ARBAN is accused of child harassment in the form of physical, mental or sexual then organization would immediate after prove, take disciplinary action against the person. After the occurrence, the organization may suspend immediately the person who held responsible for such child harassment and initiate further action for thorough investigation. A "show cause" letter can also be issued to the accused person mentioning the time frame of reply which may be 3-5 days.

An investigation team to be formed for thorough investigation of the occurrence consist of the following members;

1. Executive Director/Project Manager/Project Coordinator- Convenor of the team
2. A member of Governing Board – Member of the team
3. Child safe guarding Officer- Member Secretary of the board

*Note: Convenor may depend on the nature of the occurrence and or the identity of the accused person.*

The team will investigate or inspect the issue following the sequence mentioned below;

- a) Organise a meeting among the team members
- b) Set norms of investigation considering the organizational policy comply with state policy or act.
- c) Interview of the fatality and the accused person.
- d) A detail report of the proceedings and recommendation.
- e) Submit the report to the management within 15 working days for further action.

If the complaint considers to be an offense under the penal code or any other prevailing law, then it will refer to the legal court or tribunal concerned.

This clause also applicable for the ARBAN's volunteer and or the project stakeholders.

### 13. Annexes of the Child Safeguarding Policy

#### Annex 1: Awareness and Indicators of Child Abuse

##### Types of Abuse;

There are four main types of abuse. A child who is being abused may experience more than one type of abuse

- Physical abuse: hurting or injuring a child, such as hitting, slapping, shaking, scalding, or suffocating. The practice of Female Circumcision/Genital Mutilation (FGM) is included in this. Physical abuse also includes giving a child harmful substance, such as drugs, alcohol or poison.
- Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. It does not necessarily involve violence and the child may or may not be aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse includes grooming a child with the intention of sexually abusing them; all forms of penetrative and non-penetrative sex; the making, looking at and distributing indecent images of a child. Sexual exploitation is part of sexual abuse and involves the commercial sexual exploitation of children (in transactional sex) or manipulation or enticement of children to engage in sexual activities in return for gifts, money, food, affection or favour. It is a form of abuse which is often misunderstood by victims and outsiders as consensual. A child/family may believe it is a loving/consensual relationship but no child under the age of 18 can ever consent to being abused or exploited.
- Emotional and mental abuse: is persistent over time and can include verbally abusing a child, rejecting a child, humiliating them, making them feel worthless, inadequate or frightened. It also includes seeing or hearing abuse of others e.g. witnessing domestic violence is regarded as a form of emotional and mental abuse. Some form of emotional or mental abuse is part of any maltreatment but it may occur alone.
- Neglect: the persistent lack of appropriate care of children, including love, stimulation, safety, nourishment, warmth, education, and/or medical attention. It is failing to ensure a child is protected from physical or emotional harm and danger.

The practice of forced and early marriage is also viewed as a form of abuse and infringement of a child's rights.

Discrimination, harassment, and bullying are also abusive and can harm a child, both physically and emotionally.

##### Cultural and/or Religious Basis for Child Abuse

ARBAN works in many countries with diverse cultural and religious traditions, beliefs and practices. In some situations, cultural or religious traditions/beliefs can be given as the reason for practices that contradict a child's rights and actually constitute child abuse e.g. FGM, early or forced marriage, physical punishments.

ARBAN will work sensitively with communities to address these but the practices/actions are still to be viewed as child abuse and protection concerns and tackled as outlined in this policy.

##### Awareness and Indicators of Abuse;

There are various ways in which you may become aware of, or have concerns about actual

or potential abuse of a child/ren.

- A child may tell you.
- Someone else may tell you.
- A child shows signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation or injuries happen repeatedly. Regular unkempt appearance, loss of weight for no apparent reason.
- A child's behaviour may indicate to you that he or she is being harmed or abused. For example, nervous, mistrustful or fearful of others perhaps reluctant to be with certain people or places; sudden behaviour changes; noticeable aggressive; withdrawn from social group or inability to make friends; lack of confidence; hinting at secrets.
- Use of sexually explicit language or sexualised behaviour/games towards others.
- Something in the way that another person relates to a child/ren concerns you. This would include any behaviour and actions contradicting ARBAN's "*Code of Conduct (Behaviour Protocols)*" including,
  - Inappropriate petting or fondling.
  - Inappropriate physical contact
  - Sexually explicit behaviour
  - Suspicious behaviour in changing areas, cubicles or toilet areas or otherwise seem to seek out time alone with children.
  - Causing distress to children.
  - Use of inappropriate language in the presence of children.

## Annex 2: Child Safeguarding Officers

The following are designated as ARBAN's child safeguarding officers. If you have any concerns about child protection issues or welfare then they can be contacted using the details below.

Ms. Suhada Mehjabin, Director of Education and Skill Development will act as child safeguarding officer of ARBAN.

Md. Mushfiqur Rahman, Executive Member, Executive Committee will represent as child safeguard from Governing Board of ARBAN.

## Annex 3: ARBAN's Code of Conduct (Behaviour Protocols)

This code of conduct sets out rules for what is, and is not, appropriate and acceptable behaviour around children. These are designed to protect children but are also intended to protect adults from false accusations of inappropriate behaviour or abuse.



This Code of Conduct applies to All ARBAN staff, volunteers, consultants, contractors, trustees, advisory committee members, patrons, other ARBAN representatives and supporters or visitors to our projects.

If in any doubt you should seek advice from ARBAN's Child Safeguarding Officer or any ARBAN staff member.

#### Key Principles

- Remember you are in a position of trust and always behave professionally and appropriately. Speak and act in ways that respects children, treats them fairly, equally and keeps them safe from harm.
- As an adult you are always the responsible person accountable for your actions. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense.
- Always report any disclosure or concern about a child or the behaviour of another person, no matter who this is.

#### DON'TS

- Carry out physical punishments, hit, slap or pinch a child; restrain or hold a child in way that causes physical pain or discomfort.
- Do things of a personal nature that a child could do themselves, including dressing, removing clothing, bathing, or personal grooming. Where your role is to provide intimate care to children (e.g. young or with special needs) follow the guidelines given for these roles strictly.
- Be alone with a child, including (but this is not an exhaustive list) in the following situations: in a car (no matter how short the journey); overnight (no matter where the accommodation); share a room or a bed with a child; visit a child's home unaccompanied even if with a parent/career; invite a child to your home. Where your role may require these (e.g. home visits) or where they may occur as part of your role (e.g. escorting children on trips or to hospital) follow the guidelines given for these roles strictly

If you end up in any of these situations you must report this immediately to your manager explaining the situation surrounding the incident. This report must be sent to the CSO for that organization.

- Engage in or allow sexually provocative games with children to take place; kiss, hug, fondle, rub, or touch a child in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way; expose children to sexually explicit images and media materials (magazines, videos etc.) or use sexually suggestive language to or about or in front of a child.
- Use language or behave in ways that may frighten, embarrass, shame or humiliate a child; use derogatory language or show discrimination on grounds of race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality, or political persuasion.
- Give alcohol, drugs or cigarettes to children; drink, smoke or use drugs in front of children.
- Show favoritism or make promises e.g. "I will pay for you to go school" "I will send you a football kit when I get home"

- Share your personal contact details (phone, email or personal social media details) with a child.

## DO

- Wait for appropriate physical contact, to be initiated by the child e.g. holding hands.
- Use the “two-adult” rule, wherein two or more adults supervise all activities where children are involved and are present at all times.
- Be aware of the potential for child to child (peer) abuse; develop special measures/supervision to protect younger and especially vulnerable children; avoid placing children in high-risk peer situations (e.g. unsupervised mixing of older and younger children); report any peer-to-peer abuse or concerns about sexual activity between children as this will also constitute abuse (by a child towards another child).
- Report inappropriate language or behaviour and other breaches of this Code of Conduct to your line manager or Child Safeguarding Officer direct.
- Seek advice from your manager, Child Safeguarding Officer or ARBAN staff member if in any doubt on appropriate behaviour and interactions with children.

## Sexual Activity, Relationships and Exploitation

- A sexual activity with a child is always prohibited, regardless of the legal age of consent in the country concerned. Mistaken belief of the age of the child is not a defense. In most cases and countries, a sexual relationship with a child will also be illegal and will be reported to police/law enforcers but even if not illegal would be a breach of this policy. A child is not in a position to give consent and so the relationship is not consensual.
- Sexual relationships between ARBAN staff, volunteers, representatives and young people in our projects (albeit over the age of 18) is prohibited.
- Exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex between ARBAN staff, volunteers, representatives or visitors to our projects and beneficiaries in ARBAN’s direct or partnership projects is prohibited. This includes exchange of services/assistance that is due to those beneficiaries.

## Employment of children

- ARBAN Staff, volunteers and representatives should not employ children as “house help” or otherwise employ children below the age of 18 regardless of the legal working age in that country.

## Giving and Receiving of Gifts

Gifts are usually given, and received, with good intentions. ARBAN does not encourage to give and take gifts regardless to the position. However, people of different situations (e.g. a mother with little money and a relatively wealthy employee at ARBAN or visitor) gifts can be used negatively and become part of grooming, leading into the abuse of vulnerable children. For this reason, you should speak to ARBAN’s Project Manager if you wish to give a gift, so that the appropriateness of this can be discussed and if given it is done transparently. The giving of gifts (even

with this agreement of ARBAN) should never be regular pattern.

If you are offered a gift by a specific child/parent (rather than a whole project) then politely decline or if this would cause offence then inform member of ARBAN staff for that country so that it can be recorded and a decision made on whether it should be kept, shared amongst the team or returned.

A gift is something of monetary value where it appears the person has had to purchase of give something of value relative to their means.

#### Annex 4: Responding and Reporting to Disclosures and Child Protection Concerns

If a child tells you that s/he is uncomfortable or concerned with a specific person's (adult's or child's) behaviour towards them or another child, the following steps should be taken:

- Reassure the child that s/he right to report the behaviour o Listen carefully and calmly.
- Take it seriously and do not disbelieve the child or suggest they must be making a mistake.
- Ask open and non-leading questions *to clarify* the information they are telling you so that you can report this correctly, but avoid lots of questions. The main focus at this stage is to be clear about what the child is telling you so you can report the incident.
- If it is necessary to ask questions to clarify the information, they have told you try not to repeat the same questions to the child, as this may either confuse them or give them the impression that they are not fully believed.
- Do not promise secrecy to the child. Tell them you will have to tell others so that you can help them and reassure them this will be done sensitively.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
- If the child appears to need medical attention or be at immediate risk of harm (e.g. back to location where abuser is present) then arrange either immediate medical attention (local hospital/clinic) or place of safety (this may mean an immediate call to social services or police for example). For ARBAN staff, line managers should be told and involved in this. ARBAN visitors in this situation should speak to the closest ARBAN member of staff ideally the CSO for that country.
- Make an immediate, verbatim note of the conversation and store this somewhere safe where the contents will remain confidential. Make certain you distinguish between what the child has actually said and the inferences you may have made. Accuracy is paramount in this stage.
- Do not try to investigate the case, approach or confront alleged perpetrators.
- Report to the Child Safeguarding Officer using the *“Child Protection Reporting Form”* as soon as possible but at least within 24 hours. *If you don't have access to the form this should not stop you sending the report in whatever format to the CSO.*

If you have a concern about the safety of a child/ren or suspect abuse from your work or visit to a project or from things you have been told then you should;

- Use the Reporting Form with the information you have available and send to the Child Safeguarding Officer. They will ask you for more information should they need it.

## Annex 5: Child Protection Reporting Form

### Confidential

What is this form for? To report a concern or disclosure of abuse against a child/ren. The concern can be from something you have seen or have been told, either directly by the child or by another person.

Who should complete this form? Anyone with a concern. All ARBAN employees, volunteers, trustees, visitors, consultants, contractors have an *obligation* under ARBAN's Child Safeguarding Policy to report any concern or disclosure of a child/ren suffering physical, emotional, sexual abuse, neglect or sexual exploitation through to ARBAN's Child Safeguarding Officer. You do not need permission before completing this form but you can speak to the Child Safeguarding Officer if you are not sure.

When should it be used? As soon as possible but within 24 hours of the incident/conversation that has given you cause for concern. Reporting is not investigation and you are not required to verify allegations or seek more information before using this form. This form will help others make decisions about what should be done. Just complete what information you can.

Who should this form be sent to? ARBAN's Child Safeguarding Officer. Please put in sealed envelope marked *confidential* or write *confidential* in the message subject line if e-mail.

### 1. Child's Details

Full Name and known or "nicknames":

Age:                      Gender:                      Any Disability:

Address or location:

Family/household members:

School:

Religion:

Does the child appear to be in situation of immediate danger or harm? Does the child appear to have immediate medical needs?

### 2. Informant's Details:

If this concern has arisen from information told to you by another person (i.e. not the child) then please give details of that person here.

Name:

Contact details:

In what context do they know the child? E.g. family member, worker, community member etc:

### 3. Nature of Concern/Abuse

Please write clearly what you have seen or been told that has given you cause for concern. If this information came from the child please use their words where possible.

Dates and places where incidents took place: e.g. date of your visit to a project or a date/place told to you by the child or person telling you of the abuse.

What people were present and what were they doing?

### 4. Alleged perpetrator's details:

Name:

Relationship to child:

Organisation & Job Title/Role:

Any other identifying information:

Are there any physical signs of abuse seen or reported to you?

What did you observe about the child's behaviour, or changes in the child's behaviour if you have met them more than once?

What actions have been taken already (e.g. medical treatment, contact with police)? Advice or

Actions Taken:

What did you say would happen next to the child or person reporting this to you? Who else

knows about this situation? Who else have you discussed it with?

### 5. Name and Details of Person making this report

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

E-mail:

Job title (if staff):

Role or connection to ARBAN :

Date of this report:

Signature:

For Child Safeguarding Officer (CSO):

Date Report Received:

Comments and recommendation:

#### **Annex 6: ARBAN's Child Protection Reporting Procedure**

1. A concern or disclosure of child protection or welfare issue?
2. Discuss with ARBAN manager for immediate actions for child medical attention, referral to police, arrangements for place of safety.
3. Report to the designated Child Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours
4. If concern / allegation relates to ARBAN staff, volunteer, representative, consultant or contractor then the Child Protection Recording Form should be sent to ARBAN 's HR Manager (or person with responsibility for HR)
5. ARBAN CSO, ED and HR Manager (if relevant) meet and agree course of action
  - further investigation required
  - referral to police / statutory authorities
  - HR misconduct process

#### **Child Safeguarding Case Record Form**

- ☐ This form should be used by Child Safeguarding Officers to record the details of any reported child protection concerns or disclosures.
- ☐ The form should be sent (with the original paperwork of any report) within 24 hours to ARBAN 's Child Safeguarding Officer, Chief Executive, the Executive Committee's Child Safeguarding Representative and (if relevant) HR Manager. *Sending this information should NOT be delayed over 24 hours by trying to gather answer to each question, this form should simply to record what information is known and available to help quick decision making.*



- ☐ After receiving this case record ARBAN's Child Safeguarding Officer, ED, Child Safeguarding Representative and (if relevant) HR manager (or person responsible for HR) will agree actions to be taken.

1. Child's Details <i>(please use one form for one child)</i>		
Full Name:		
Age:	Date of Birth:	Nationality:
Address/Location:		
Name of parent or guardian:		Contact details:
Other known family/household members		
Does this case involve more than one child? If yes, provide the name the other child/ren here.		

2. Connection to ARBAN's work
<p>How is the child linked to ARBAN?</p> <p>a) A project directly run &amp; managed by ARBAN? If yes, please name the project.</p> <p>b) Linked to a project network partner organisation. Please name organisation.</p> <p>c) Organisation not formally linked to ARBAN. Please give details of organisation and ARBAN connection.</p> <p>d) Other. Please explain (e.g. child in the community but not formally involved in any projects or partner organisations)</p>

### 3. Details of the Case

Please provide as much information as possible about the concern or disclosure: what has been said, seen or reported.

- Use full names, include dates and times and identify places.
- Where possible use the exact words of the person who has reported or that a child has used.

Who has reported this to you?

Are there any physical signs of harm? What is

the child's behaviour or mood like?

#### 4. Child's Current Situation

Does the child appear to need medical attention? If so has this been organised?

Does the child face immediate harm where they are living / staying? If yes what has been done about this so far?

#### 5. Details of the Person of Concern

Does the concern, incident or allegation relate to?

- a) A member of ARBAN staff, volunteer, Executive Committee member? Please give name & job title
- b) Another person linked to ARBAN (e.g. visitor)? Please explain the connection.
- c) A member of staff from the partner organisation? Please give name & job title
- d) Another individual (e.g. family member or community member). Please give name and explain.

Address/Location or contact details of the person:

Any other information to identify or locate the person?

## 6. External Agencies Contacted &amp; Actions Taken

Police                      Yes/ No Date & Time:	Name & location of police station: Name of police officer/s: Contact telephone numbers: What response or actions did they take? What did they say they will happen next?  What needs to be followed-up with them?
Local Government/ Administration Yes/ No Date & Time:	Name and Job title:  Office contact details:  What response or actions did they take? What did they say they will happen next?  What needs to be followed-up with them?
Health/Medical Services Yes / NO Date & Time:	Name and location:  Contact person and contact details:  What response or actions did they take? What did they say they will happen next?  What needs to be followed-up with them?
Other Agencies/Services	Which:  Name and Contact Number:  Details of Advice Received:

7. Case Tracking			
Report prepared by:			Date:
Report sent to:	Child Safeguarding Officer		Date:
	ARBAN Executive Director		Date:
	Executive Committee's Child Safeguarding Representative		Date:
	ARBAN 's HR Manager (or person responsible for HR)		Date

Decisions and Actions Agreed
Date of discussion
Decisions made and actions agreed

### Annex 7: Statement of commitment

To ARBAN for Children's Child Safeguarding Policy

#### 1) FOR INDIVIDUALS (ARBAN staff, volunteers, representatives and consultants and contractors)

"I [*name of individual*] have read and understood ARBAN's Child Safeguarding Policy including ARBAN's Code of Conduct and the guidelines contained within it. I agree with the principles contained in the Policy and undertake to comply fully with its requirements while working/associated with ARBAN for Children. I accept that I am subject to policies and procedures outlined in the policy document and shall be bound by them.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Job title / role at ARBAN)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

#### 2) FOR INDIVIDUALS (ARBAN supporters or visitors to projects)

"I [*name of individual*] have read and understood ARBAN's "*A Guide to ARBAN's Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct for Supporters and Visitors*". I agree with the principles contained in the Policy and undertake to comply fully with its requirements while working/associated with ARBAN for Children. I accept that I am subject to policies and procedures outlined in the policy document and shall be bound by them.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(organisation or connection to ARBAN)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

#### 3) FOR ORGANISATIONS

"I, [*name of individual*] on behalf of [*name of organisation*] have read and understood the

ARBAN's Child Safeguarding Policy.

*[name of organisation]* agrees with the principles contained therein and accepts the importance of implementing Child Safeguarding Policies and Practice in its work. *[name of organisation]*, commits to: (\* delete as applicable)

- \* submitting its existing Child Protection Policy to ARBAN for assessment (or)
- \* developing its own Child Protection Policy for implementation within 3 months of this statement.

The designated contact person within *[name of organisation]* , responsible for communication with ARBAN on child protection issues is *[name of individual]* and their contact details are *[contact details]*.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Job title /role)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)