

Policy #:2.15 Policy name: Child Protection Policy and Procedures	No: IITA/ 2017/2.15
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1. Definitions

- 1.1 “Associate” means anyone involved in carrying out the work of the Institute whether as casual workers, short-term staff, consultants, students on industrial training or individuals on national service (e.g., NYSC), research fellows, or independent contractors.
- 1.2 “Child” is “anyone under the age of 18 years, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.”
- 1.3 “Child abuse” or “maltreatment” according to the World Health Organization constitutes “all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power”.
- 1.4 “Direct contact with children” implies being in the physical presence of a child or children in the context of the Institute’s work.
- 1.5 “Emotional abuse” is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause a severe and persistent adverse effect on the child's emotional development. This can include a pattern of rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting, or terrorizing a child.
- 1.6 “Guardian” is a person who lawfully has the care of a child.
- 1.7 “Indirect contact with children” implies having access to data and information on children (e.g., names, photographs, addresses, etc.) in the context of the Institute’s work (whether in research or research support).
- 1.8 “Physical abuse” is a non-accidental act on a child that results in physical harm. This includes, but is not limited to, beating, hitting, shaking, burning, drowning, suffocating, biting, poisoning, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse also involves the fabrication or inducing of illness.

- 1.9 “Risky” involves any act or acts that can endanger the life of a child either directly or remotely.
- 1.10 “Sexual abuse” involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities as well as non-contact acts such as involving children in the looking at or production of sexual images, sexual activities, and sexual behavior.
- 1.11 “Staff” means all regular nationally recruited staff (NRS) and internationally recruited staff (IRS) including international consultants.

2. Background

- 2.1 Children are increasingly vulnerable and subjected to exploitation and abuse as well as sexual, physical, and psychological violations. Meanwhile, adults playing a formal role in working with or supporting children are placed in a position of trust and authority.
- 2.2 The Institute does not employ children (with an exception to students on industrial attachment) in its work, however agricultural research-for-development activities (whether scientific or socioeconomic) involve people of all genders and ages in all its operational areas. These include men, women, and children in the National Agricultural Research and Extension Systems (NARES) and especially among smallholder farmers. Moreover, in view of the campus life at the Institute’s Headquarters, children present on the campus for any other reason are also sometimes indirectly involved in or are exposed to various business and official social events.
- 2.3 The Institute also maintains on-site crèches for the benefit of its staff and runs an international school at its Headquarters. Therefore, there are activities in which children are directly involved while there are employees who directly interact with children.
- 2.4 The Institute recognizes its responsibility to ensure the protection and safety of children within the context of IITA’s research work and corporate services in support of research.
- 2.5 The Institute believes an important way to protect children is to empower them and will therefore, and where possible, educate them.

3. Purpose

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the Institute’s commitment to creating and maintaining a safe environment for children and their protection from exploitation and abuse of any kind in the course of the Institute’s business and interaction with communities and partners within our host countries.
- 3.2 Furthermore, as a step towards building a child-safe organization, the policy seeks to guide the behaviour of IITA staff and associates in the course of their interaction

with children either directly or indirectly while carrying out their work, whether in Research for Development (R4D), Partnerships for Delivery (P4D), or research support. It also seeks to demonstrate the Institute's stand that child abuse, whether physical or emotional, shall not be tolerated and will attract appropriate disciplinary action.

3.3 The Policy is developed against the backdrop of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that is operational in the countries in which the Institute carries out its activities.

4. Policy Statement

4.1 The Institute is committed to a safe environment including safeguarding children from harm.

4.2 Children should be treated with respect, regardless of race, color, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth, or other status.

5. The Institute's commitments

This policy applies to all staff, associates, partners, and all stakeholders. IITA demands their total respect of, and compliance with, the policy at all times and in all manners of interaction and communication as related to a child.

5.1 The Institute will where possible and in accordance with best practices, ensure that adequate checks are conducted on persons who would be working in close contact with children on the campus for any reason.

5.2 Use of language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, or culturally inappropriate is prohibited.

5.3 Children should not be asked to carry out chores or tasks for any adult in whose care the child is entrusted.

5.4 Children should not be invited into the homes of any adult who works with them without the consent of the parents/ guardian.

5.5 When photographing or filming a child or using children's images for work-related purposes, staff members must adhere to IITA ethics and human subject research requirements and must also:

- assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images before photographing or filming a child;
- obtain informed consent from the child and parent or guardian of the child before photographing or filming a child while explaining how the photograph or film will be used;

- ensure photographs, films, videos, and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as abusive or demeaning;
- ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts;
- ensure file labels, metadata, or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form.

5.6 IITA will respond to suspicions and/or allegations of child abuse, exploitation or maltreatment by a member of staff or an associate of the Institute in a manner which best ensures the immediate and long-term safety of the child or children. As such, the Institute will treat any such cases with confidentiality and any personal information regarding the child will be kept confidential.

5.7 All suspicions or allegations against a staff member will be treated with the same seriousness as suspicions or allegations made against any other person.

5.8 Allegations will be treated in such a way that the rights of the staff member are also taken into consideration; for example, the right to a fair hearing.

5.9 The suspected staff member (or associate) will be prevented from having further unsupervised access to children during any investigation.

5.10 If a child discloses abuse, it must be ensured that the suspected individual does not have any further contact with the child making the allegation. A risk assessment must be undertaken to determine what level of access, if any, that person should have, to other children.

5.11 Where a crime is committed and a criminal investigation is to be undertaken by the police, the member of staff may be suspended, without prejudice, as a precautionary measure. No internal investigation will be undertaken, and no evidence gathered that might prejudice the criminal investigation.

5.12 Where there is insufficient evidence to pursue a criminal prosecution, an internal investigation will still be undertaken if there is "reasonable cause to suspect" that abuse or maltreatment may have occurred. It will be considered that the allegation represents inappropriate behavior or professional misconduct by a member of staff which needs to be considered under internal disciplinary procedures.

5.13 Any individual that is suspected of child abuse or exploitation, or is considered to pose a risk to a child's safety or well-being may be suspended from duty or transferred to other duties during an investigation and, upon conviction, be subject to appropriate sanction.

5.14 Staff involved in the investigation will declare to a senior person any situation where there could be a conflict of interest, and provision made on a case-by-case basis about who will handle the process.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Management, staff, and associates have the responsibility to, uphold and defend the child protection policy at IITA and avoid actions or behaviour that could be construed as child exploitation and abuse.

All staff and associates should be aware of their “duty of care”, which precludes maltreatment and abuse of a child. They should avoid developing a sexual relationship with or grooming a child, as a sexual relationship between an adult and a child will always be wrong, unequal, and unacceptable.

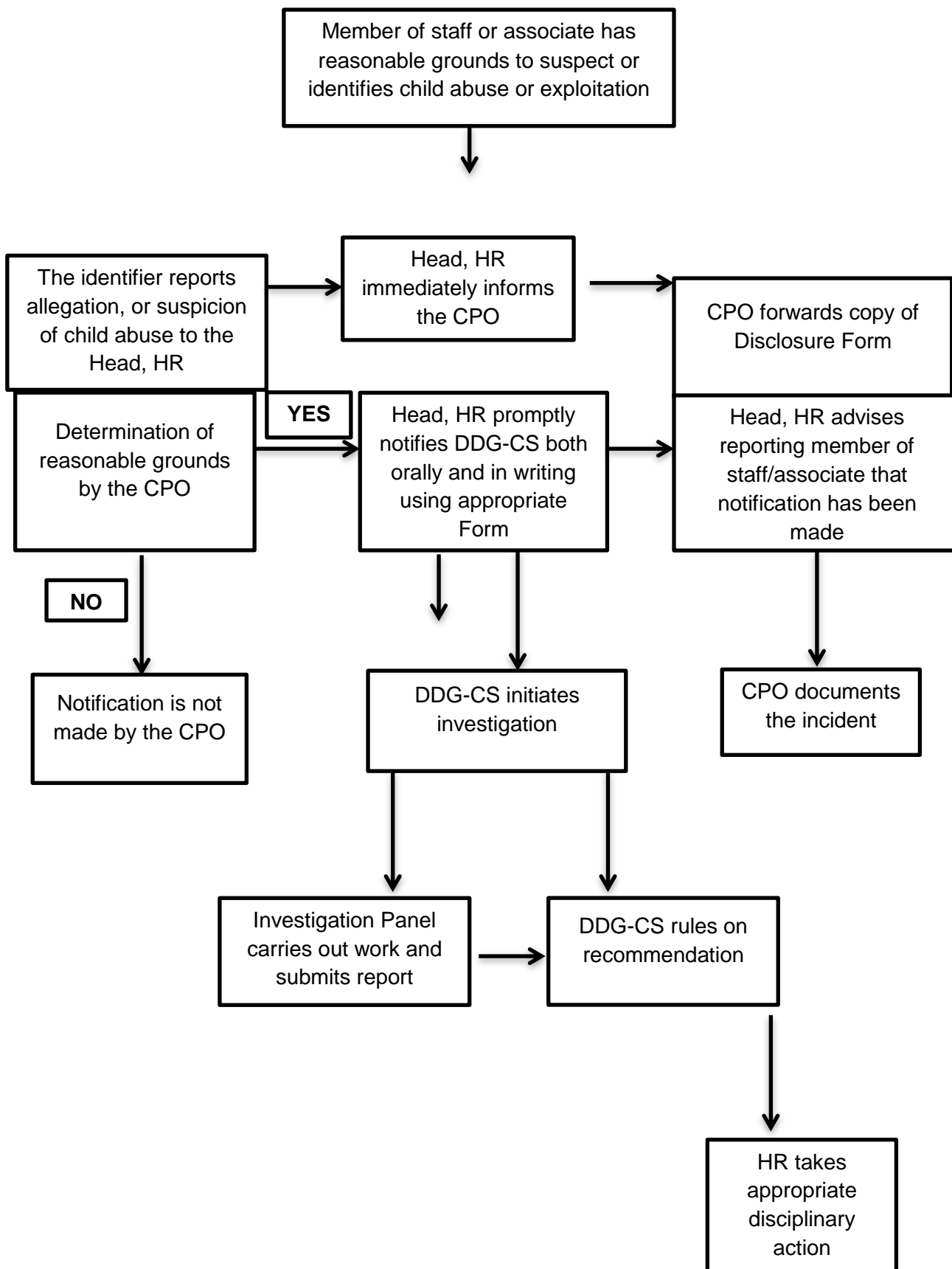
All stakeholders have a duty to challenge and report where they have reasonable grounds to suspect child abuse and/or maltreatment within IITA, or in the course of carrying out Institute business offsite and in the field.

Human Resources and all leaders and managers are required to create awareness on child protection at every opportunity within and outside the Institute.

7. Procedures for responding to and reporting child abuse or exploitation

Any allegation that a member of staff has behaved in an inappropriate or risky way must be taken seriously and handled immediately and in an appropriate manner that ensures the child’s safety and following the procedures spelt out below. If a staff member has concerns about a child but is uncertain whether or not to file a report, he/she should feel free to talk to any of the Dignity Advisors for guidance.

Any suspected child abuse or maltreatment should be promptly reported to Head, HR who forwards it to the Child Protection Officer (CPO) for handling.



8. Contacts

Enquiries and questions about this policy should be directed to these offices.

Responsible office(s)	Office of the DDG, Corporate Services and Human Resources
Contact	DDG, Corporate Services; Head of Human Resources
Endorsed by	