

**SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENT:**  
**SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR VULNERABLE ADULTS**

**Revision History – Safeguarding Policy for Vulnerable Adults**

Date	Remarks
21 December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Draft – Creation</li></ul>

This document must be read alongside the **Child Protection Policy** of Penang Science Cluster.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENT:** **SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR VULNERABLE ADULTS**

### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1. Purpose**

PSC is committed to the safety and well-being of all, particularly vulnerable adults.

This supplementary policy extends the Child Protection Policy of PSC to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults. It underscores our commitment to protecting all individuals, especially those who are most at risk, from harm, abuse, and neglect within our programs and activities.

#### **1.2. Scope**

This policy covers all vulnerable adults involved with PSC programs.

This policy applies to all participants in PSC programs, including PSC staff, interns, volunteers, consultants, third-party suppliers, guest speakers, and programming facilitators, irrespective of whether they have a contractual agreement, and regardless of their remuneration status. These individuals will be referred to as "participants" hereafter.

#### **1.3. Definitions**

**Vulnerable Adult:** An individual 18 years or older who is in need of additional support due to disability, age, illness, or other factors and is at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

**Types of Abuse:** Includes physical, emotional, sexual, financial, and neglect, as well as any other actions that undermine the dignity and rights of the individual.

#### **1.4. Key Contacts**

Refer to the Child Protection Policy

## **2. Preventative Measures**

### **2.1. Acceptable Behaviour**

PSC shall:

- Ensure all participants are aware of the Safeguarding Policy for Vulnerable Adults
- Ensure that through training and awareness, participants will be equipped to minimize risks to vulnerable adults

Participants shall:

- Raise awareness of the rights and needs of vulnerable adults within the PSC community and beyond
- Be vigilant in identifying situations that could endanger vulnerable adults and actively work to mitigate these risks
- Create an environment where vulnerable adults feel safe to voice concerns and discuss their rights and how to respond to risks or abuse
- Motivate vulnerable adults to discuss their interactions with participants and to report any concerns or abuses
- Adhere to PSC's reporting procedures for any risks or abuse identified.

### **2.2. Unacceptable Behaviour**

Participants must not engage in any behaviour that could harm vulnerable adults, including but not limited to:

- Physical, emotional, financial, or sexual abuse
- Developing exploitative or inappropriate relationships
- Using offensive language or providing inappropriate advice
- Behaviours that embarrass, shame, or degrade
- Discrimination based on race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality, or other factors
- Inappropriate or sexually suggestive behaviour
- Unsupervised or unauthorized outings
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Providing unsolicited care that the individual can perform independently

This list will be regularly reviewed and updated as necessary. Violations may lead to serious consequences, including termination of employment and legal action.

### **2.3. Online Safeguarding Guidelines**

For digital communications, in addition to the guidelines covered in the Child Protection Policy, participants should:

- Contact vulnerable adults only for professional reasons

- Not share or request personal information unless it is relevant to their professional role or in an emergency

## **2.4. Confidentiality**

Penang Science Cluster (PSC) recognizes the critical importance of handling sensitive information related to vulnerable adults with the utmost professionalism and in strict compliance with applicable laws and ethical standards. Only staff directly involved in managing the identified risk to the vulnerable adult should have access to this information. Notwithstanding the duty of confidentiality, any PSC staff member who has reason to believe that a vulnerable adult is at risk of harm must immediately report this information to a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

## **3. Reactive Measures**

### **3.1. Breach of Policy and Consequences**

If, at any point during their tenure at Penang Science Cluster (PSC), a participant is deemed unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults due to a complaint or any other valid reason, they may be prevented from commencing work or subjected to disciplinary actions, including potential dismissal.

### **3.2. Reporting Abuse**

Refer to the Child Protection Policy.

### **3.3. Intervention**

#### **Action to be Taken When Abuse is Suspected**

##### **In an Emergency Situation**

- This includes situations where a vulnerable adult is in immediate danger.
- Immediately contact the Designated Safeguarding Leader (DSL) and the necessary authorities.

##### **In a Non-Emergency Situation**

- Contact the DSL

#### **Action to be Taken When a Vulnerable Adult Discloses Abuse**

1. Clearly communicate that you cannot promise complete confidentiality, explaining that you may need to share the information with someone who can help, like the DSL.
2. Assure the individual that the information will be shared only with those who need to know for their protection and support, such as the DSL.

3. Maintain composure and avoid showing panic or anger. It's vital to provide a supportive and calm response to their disclosure.
4. Reassure the individual that they did the right thing by speaking up. Avoid any physical contact unless it is to ensure their immediate safety or comfort.
5. If the disclosure occurs in a group setting, acknowledge their courage for sharing and continue the activity without drawing further attention to the disclosure. Arrange to speak privately with the individual afterward and inform the DSL.
6. Take notes as soon as possible after the disclosure. Focus on recording key facts and avoid including personal opinions or assumptions.
7. If needed, ask questions for clarification but avoid leading or suggestive inquiries.
8. Do not make promises about specific actions that will be taken as a result of the disclosure.
9. Do not confront or engage with the alleged perpetrator about the disclosure.
10. Ensure that the disclosure is reported to the DSL within 24 hours of receiving the information.