



Child Protection Policy

What is child protection?

Child protection is the protection of children from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child provides for the protection of children in and out of the home.

Child protection systems are a set of usually government-run services designed to protect children and young people who are underage and to encourage family stability. UNICEF defines a "child protection system" as:

the set of laws, policies, regulations and services needed across all social sectors – especially social welfare, education, health, security and justice – to support prevention and response to protection-related risks. These systems are part of social protection, and extend beyond it. At the level of prevention, their aim includes supporting and strengthening families to reduce social exclusion, and to lower the risk of separation, violence and exploitation. Responsibilities are often spread across government agencies, with services delivered by local authorities, non-State providers, and community groups, making coordination between sectors and levels, including routine referral systems etc., a necessary component of effective child protection systems.

— United Nations Economic and Social Council (2008), UNICEF Child Protection Strategy, E/ICEF/2008/5/Rev.1, par. 12-13.

Policy Statement

At Armadilla, we believe all children regardless of age, gender, disability or ethnic origin have a right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Armadilla will not tolerate the abuse of children (defined as under the age of 18) in any form.

It is the responsibility of all representatives of Armadilla to raise any concerns you have or any concerns which are reported to you according to this policy. It is not your responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse has occurred.

It is the responsibility of all Armadilla managers to ensure the delivery of this policy and to promote it as relevant in all aspects of their work, to hold themselves and others to account and to help create a safe environment for all.

This policy will automatically be applied in Italy and in all geographies where Armadilla is implementing its programme.

This policy does not form part of an employees' terms and conditions of employment and may be subject to change at the discretion of management.

Armadilla Safeguarding Principles

Armadilla will ensure that:

- a) The welfare of the child is paramount;
- b) Concerns or allegations of child abuse are always taken seriously, investigated and acted on if appropriate;
- c) Armadilla will seek to safeguard children by valuing, listening to and respecting them;

- d) All managers, employees, volunteers and other representatives have access to, and are familiar with this policy, and know their responsibilities within it;
- e) All staff, volunteers and carers have access to information about how to report concerns or allegations of abuse, including children themselves;
- f) All managers are responsible for promoting awareness of this policy within their divisions, individual departments or teams.

Definitions

Safeguarding Children and Child Protection

Safeguarding is the process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, ensuring they are living in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. "Child protection" is an element of Safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or likely to suffer, significant harm.

Child

A child is defined as anyone under 18 years old.

This definition is recognised internationally as identifying a population who are particularly vulnerable and require additional safeguards to protect their rights. The definition of a child for the purposes of Safeguarding and child protection should not be confused with the legal definition of a child or age limits set out in other relevant laws. The fact that a person under the age of 18 may have reached the age of majority, age of sexual consent, voting age or such like does not alter their inherent vulnerability as a child.

Child Abuse

Different forms of harm or mistreatment of children are categorised under the broader term "child abuse". Abuse can happen anywhere and at any time, but research shows that the perpetrators of abuse are likely to be known and trusted by the child. The most commonly defined types are:

- **Physical:** violence towards or deliberate injury of a child.
- **Neglect:** persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs.
- **Sexual:** using a child for sexual stimulation or gratification.
- **Emotional:** behaviour which attacks a child's self-esteem.
- **Child Sexual Exploitation:** Children in exploitative situations and relationships receive something such as gifts, money or affection as a result of performing sexual activities or others performing sexual activities on them.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) requires states to protect children from abuse.

Roles and Responsibilities

Armadilla Managers, and ultimately Directors, hold overall accountability for this Policy and its implementation.

Armadilla Director and Board are responsible for reviewing and updating this Policy annually and in line with legislative and organisational developments and hold overall accountability for Armadilla Safeguarding of Children.

All staff, volunteers and other representatives of Armadilla are required to adhere to this Policy and Armadilla's Code of Conduct at all times.

All Armadilla employees are obliged to report any suspicions of child abuse. Failure to report to a relevant person suspicion of abuse relating to someone else is a breach of Armadilla's policy, and could lead to disciplinary action being taken. For the avoidance of doubt, there is no obligation placed on any individual to report any incident that has happened to her/him.

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility and failure to act on concerns relating to children is not an option.

Support for Survivors and Victims

Support will be offered to survivors and victims, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Support can include specialist psycho-social counselling or access to other specialist and appropriate support as needed. Survivors and victims can choose if and when they would like to take up the support options available to them.

Policy Guidance

Contact with Children

Armadilla Representatives must never:

- Fail to disclose any convictions or child related investigations that they are subject to;
- Seek to make contact or spend time with any child with whom they come into contact as part of their work with Armadilla except as part of the designated activities set out in their role;
- Abuse their position to withhold professional assistance or give preferential treatment, gifts or payment of any kind to a child, or another person in relation to a child, in order to solicit any form of advantage or sexual favour from a child;
- Have sexual intercourse or participate in any form of sexual activity, including paying for sex, with any person under 18 years old or under the local age of sexual consent (where higher). This applies to all Armadilla representatives regardless of the age of consent locally and mistaken belief in the age of the child is not a defence;
- Behave physically in a manner with a child which is inappropriate or sexually provocative;
- Use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive,

sexually provocative or that is intended to shame, humiliate or emotionally abuse;

- Use computers, mobile phones, video and digital cameras to exploit or harass children or to access child pornography through any medium;
- Recruit children for any labour which is inappropriate to their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at risk of injury;
- Do things of a personal nature for a child with whom they come into contact as part of their work for Armadilla that the child can do for themselves (e.g. toileting, bathing, dressing);
- Put a child at risk of harm through inaction (including failure to report a concern);
- Act in any way that may be abusive or put a child at risk of abuse or exploitation.

Armadilla Representatives Must Always:

- Treat all children with respect regardless of their race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, nationality, ethnicity, social origin, property, disability or other status;
- Act professionally towards children they interact with in their role, following relevant laws pertaining to working with children, including those in relation to child labour;
- Consider the risk of harm and whether there is any possibility a child may be abused or exploited when assessing the appropriateness of any physical or verbal contact, including in the design of Armadilla programmes;
- Report any suspicion, allegation or witness of child abuse or other breaches of the Safeguarding Children Policy as per the reporting procedures outlined in this document.