

SCHOOL AID UK CIO
Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People Policy
31st August 2018

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A. SAFEGUARDING POLICY

This policy applies to all trustees, staff, interns and trainees, volunteers, students and anyone else working on behalf of School Aid in both the UK and Africa (defined in this policy as 'staff and volunteers').

A.1 The purpose of this policy

School Aid is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children (aged 0–14), young people (aged 14–18) and vulnerable adults in its care.

While School Aid does not engage regularly with children or young people in the UK, there are occasions when this may happen. In Africa work on our literacy programmes brings staff into regular contact with children and young people in our partner countries. This policy has been drawn up in response to an increasing recognition that abuse of children and young people can and does happen in organisations, whether from unintentional acts or deliberate actions.

Our safeguarding policy sets out the broad framework of our expectations of staff and volunteers, while recognising that our teams in Africa may need to identify how to implement the policy in the context of local operating conditions and legal provisions.

Through this policy, we aim:

- To protect children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom School Aid comes into contact in whatever capacity, both in the UK and in Africa.
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection, and to outline the appropriate action to be taken should such abuse occur.

In so doing, we recognise that there are many different ways of thinking and taking care of children and young people and making sure that they are protected, and we seek always to work in ways that are culturally sensitive.

A.2 What is child abuse?

Child abuse includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and sexual abuse, as defined by the World Health Organisation:

‘Child abuse or maltreatment 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.’

A.3 Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up in compliance with guidelines by the UK Charity Commission on the basis of UK law and guidance that seeks to protect children and young people, but it should also be read in conjunction with the relevant legal provision on safeguarding in the countries in which we operate.

As an international organisation we endorse the principles outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, under which all rights must be available to all children and young people without discrimination. Culture must not be used as a reason or excuse for abuse.

This policy should be read alongside our policies and procedures on:

Child Protection
Health and Safety
Disciplinary
Role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

B. PRINCIPLES OF OUR SAFEGUARDING POLICY

We recognise that:

1. The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989.
2. Every child, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, has a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
3. Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
4. Employees, volunteers and others working on behalf of School Aid will be perceived by children and others as trusted representatives of School Aid.
5. An element of risk exists, and while we may never be able to totally remove this, we need to do all we can to reduce it or limit its impact.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

1. Treating them with care, respect and dignity.
2. Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for children and young people and a lead board member for safeguarding.

3. Adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
4. Developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures.
5. Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality-assurance measures.
6. Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
7. Recording and storing information professionally and securely, and sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, their families, staff and volunteers.
8. Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately.
9. Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
10. Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise.
11. Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistle blowing measures in place.
12. Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.

C. SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES AND SYSTEMS

C.1 Overall implementation of this policy

School Aid has a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), Clare Junak, who is the General Manager in the UK. The DSO or, if she is not available, the lead board member, should be consulted as a matter of priority should any concerns or complaints arise both in the UK and in our partner countries in Africa.

In addition, the Africa Programme Manager has responsibility for safeguarding procedures in our partner countries, including:

1. Supporting the DSO in implementing the safeguarding policy
2. Acting as a first point of contact for staff in each country on all safeguarding issues
3. Maintaining a list of local specialist child welfare, health, and law enforcement contacts
4. Providing advice and support to staff concerned about a safeguarding issue and deciding on appropriate action
5. Notifying the DSO of any concerns
6. Referring cases to specialist child welfare and/or law enforcement agencies as appropriate
7. Keeping accurate records that are data protection compliant

School Aid requires that organisations working directly with children and who are acting specifically on behalf of School Aid in the UK should have and implement an appropriate child protection policy. It is also desirable to follow a similar principle for organisations in Africa.

A Memorandum of Understanding between School Aid UK CIO and registered School Aid entities in Africa will contain specific reference to the need for a child protection policy and the implementation of a mutually agreed safeguarding policy

C.2 Implementation of this policy In the UK

Any visit by a child or children to School Aid's premises or to a School Aid organised event must be preceded by a risk assessment. The risk assessment should include establishing health and safety procedures that are consistent with the School Aid Health and Safety Policy and take into account that it is here applied to children and young people with little or no work experience. This will include consideration of:

- the people the children or young person will meet
- the work environment they will be in, eg: vehicle movements in work area, access, fire precautions, heating equipment
- the equipment they will be using, eg: any machinery
- the work/activities they will be doing, eg: lifting, cutting materials, hot surfaces
- the way the work/activities will be organised and carried out
- the pattern and hours of work/activity
- any transport arrangements.

Children and parents will be informed of the policy and procedures as appropriate

C.2.1 In the School Aid warehouse

Children and young people sometimes visit the warehouse either accompanied by a responsible adult or unaccompanied, for example for work experience. School Aid volunteers and staff may be responsible for unaccompanied children when carrying out activities on School Aid's behalf when away from the warehouse.

1. School Aid will not invite or include children under 14 in its activities or events unless they are accompanied by a responsible adult, such as a parent, carer, or teacher, who should supervise them at all times.
2. When an unaccompanied child (aged 14–18) or vulnerable adult is on School Aid premises there must always be at least two School Aid representatives present, one of whom must be a School Aid member of staff. The DSO should be notified in advance.

C.2.2 On external premises

When visiting premises with children, for example schools and youth groups, all School Aid staff and volunteers, including drivers, should carry with them identification provided by School Aid, proving that they represent School Aid. This will normally be in the form of a badge bearing their name and incorporating the School Aid logo, but could also be a business card.

1. All staff and volunteers must be fully aware of School Aid's safeguarding principles and guidelines and know who is the School Aid DSO.
2. School Aid will obtain in advance of the activity the safeguarding policy statement from any organisation that is:
 - a) having **direct** contact with children in the UK, **and**

b) acting directly on behalf of or in a contractual relationship with School Aid.

C.3 Implementation of this policy in Africa

School Aid staff and volunteers in Africa regularly interact with children on external premises, including schools, libraries, reading clubs and holiday clubs.

In all such circumstances, School Aid personnel should endeavour to be accompanied by another adult, either a second member of the School Aid organisation, or an adult such as a teacher or holiday club leader linked to the organisation concerned.

Should circumstances arise that prevent such representation, the School Aid member of staff should normally explain that they cannot proceed with the activity in question.

In exceptional circumstances, however, for instance if a School Aid member of staff finds him/herself to be the only adult on the premises, he/she may need to make a judgement to ensure the safety of the children. No School Aid volunteer should ever be left alone in charge of children or young people.

D. PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS

D.1 Recruitment and employment

School Aid is committed to the principles of 'safe' recruitment, and will take all reasonable measures to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children. This includes ensuring that:

1. All job, contract and service advertisements state that School Aid works to protect children and that those seeking work will be assessed regarding their suitability to work with children.
2. Where staff or volunteers are to work directly with children, additional care is taken to ensure that they are suitable. This should include checking identification and qualifications, obtaining references from previous employers, and police checks such as DBS checks (where available).
3. New and existing members of staff sign a self-declaration statement confirming that they have no convictions for any offence involving any type of harm to a child or children, and that they should declare anything that may affect their suitability to work with children.

If, in exceptional circumstances, it is not possible to obtain background checks and references, a careful assessment should be made as to whether it is appropriate for the person to be put in the position of working alone with a child or children.

Where allegations are made about a member of staff or volunteer, careful consideration must take place about the appropriateness of the person continuing to work with School Aid. This may include suspension during any internal or external investigation and dismissal if the allegation is proved.

D.2 Recruitment and employment in Africa

All policies outlined above are also applicable to recruitment and employment in Africa. However, where it is not possible to obtain a DBS check or similar, it is advisable to apply to the local police force for a 'Certificate of Good Conduct' applicable to the prospective employee.

D.3 Training, guidance, supervision and support

Once staff and volunteers have been recruited, they will have access to supervision, support and training regarding safeguarding and the implementation of our safeguarding policy, via the DSO. All staff and volunteers need to be adequately trained and supervised to ensure that any risks to children are minimised. This will be achieved through ensuring that:

1. All staff and volunteers are informed about our safeguarding policy, and given the opportunity to discuss its implications for them with the DSO as part of their induction/orientation.
2. In general staff and volunteers are not allowed to work alone with a child somewhere that is secluded or where they cannot be observed. It is acceptable for staff to work alone with a child where there are visibility panels, or windows in doors.
3. All activities are supervised by members of staff and/or volunteers. The ratio of staff to children will be determined according to the age and capacity of the children, and should always be sufficient with the necessary skills and qualifications consistent with the scope of work/role expected.
4. No activity or programme is undertaken with children without the express written permission of their parents/guardians.
5. All staff and volunteers sign a code of conduct specific to the protection of children (see following section) before working with any children.
6. Staff and volunteers understand that they must not use technology (eg: computers, mobile phones) for the purpose of accessing, producing or distributing any information or violent or sexual images that are harmful for children. This includes adult pornography.
7. Where staff are contracted by other employers, or when working with partners, School Aid will ask for information on how the organisation works to protect children (such as their safeguarding policy).

D.4 Professional Code of Conduct

All staff are required to sign a code of conduct regarding the protection of children, the behaviour expected of them and their responsibilities in relation to the children they come into contact with as a result of their work with School Aid. School Aid operates a zero-tolerance approach to any misdemeanour arising in the sphere of safeguarding.

D.5 Media, communication & information

Where School Aid publishes information, photographs and videos in any format, including brochures, leaflets, reports, the School Aid website and in social media, we will:

- Ensure that personal information is kept confidential unless we have the agreement of the child and their parent/guardian, except where it is necessary to pass such information to a specialised child welfare or law enforcement agency in relation to a safeguarding incident.

- Reproduce images of UK children only where we have the written permission of their parents/guardians, or, in Africa, the written permission of the school Principal which confirms that the appropriate consent has been given by parents/guardians.
- Make clear to children and their families (directly in the UK and, by virtue of the relevant Memorandum of Understanding with the relevant school in Africa through the relevant school Principal) that agreement to providing information or images is not a condition of involvement in School Aid activities and programmes.
- Not use images of children that are degrading, including images of children naked or partially clothed.

E. RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS, ALLEGATIONS AND CONCERNS

Should any complaints, allegations or concerns arise over matters pertaining to this policy, School Aid's Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) should be notified without delay.

Complaints are generally an oral or written expression of dissatisfaction or concern about facilities or services.

A **concern** may arise from an intuition or suspicion that something inappropriate is happening.

An **allegation** is an oral or written declaration of wrongdoing or assertion of misconduct or criminal behaviour, the validity of which has not yet been established.

All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously by trustees, staff and volunteers and responded to appropriately. This may require a referral to:

- Children's social care services
- The independent Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for allegations against staff, trustees and other volunteers
- In an emergency, the police.

For contact details, see section 6.

E.1 Complaints

Children and their parents or carers who wish to make a complaint to express dissatisfaction or concern about how they have been treated by School Aid regarding the implementation of this policy should in the first instance speak with their main contact point at School Aid, who can then arrange for the appropriate follow-up action to be taken.

E.2 Allegations and concerns

All allegations and concerns of abuse must be taken seriously, irrespective of the identity of the alleged perpetrator and victims, and regardless of how 'unbelievable' the situation may seem.

To ensure that all such situations are handled appropriately and effectively:

1. All staff and volunteers must report any of the following situations in relation to:
 - a) any allegation of or concern about actual or suspected situations of abuse involving a child or children known to School Aid, whether or not they believe that they have sufficient evidence to support their concern.
 - b) any allegation of or concern about actual or suspected staff misconduct and/or criminal activity involving the abuse of a child or children, whether or not they are known to School Aid.
2. Referrals must be made to a specialist child welfare and law enforcement agency when sufficient evidence exists that an allegation or concern is a serious welfare and/or criminal matter, in accordance with the reporting flow chart, available on the website of the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board.
3. A written record of all safeguarding reports, including any decisions made, must be kept up to date by the DSO and logged on a safeguarding reporting form. This should include details of any referrals made to specialist agencies. All such records should be securely stored in compliance with relevant legislation.
4. All sensitive and personal data must be kept confidential (including the names of anyone who makes a report of abuse), and be shared on a strictly 'need to know basis' for the conduct of official duties – eg: child welfare and law enforcement agencies.
5. No member of staff or volunteer may agree to keep information regarding actual or suspected abuse confidential. In general, School Aid will seek to discuss any concern with the child in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding, and with their parents/guardians, and to seek their agreement if making a referral to a specialist agency. However, there may be situations where this may place the child in danger. Any decision to refer to a specialist agency without informing the child and without obtaining the consent of their parents/guardians should always be taken by the DSO or his/her deputy.
6. Names of those who are alleged to be a risk to children will be passed on to law enforcement agencies where it is suspected that a crime may have been committed. This will normally be the local police, although where either the alleged abuser or the child is from another country, a report should also normally be made to the appropriate embassy in country. This is because, for some crimes and in some countries, legalisation exists to prosecute suspected offenders in their home country if the local legislation is not comprehensive or is not implemented.
7. Where a member of staff or volunteer is the subject of an investigation (but not when making a report), an internal investigation panel will be convened by the Safeguarding Lead on Board of Trustees. The panel will work alongside any formal police investigation.
8. Where abuse (such as child pornography images) is sent or received via the internet or other technologies, even if this is received in the form of 'Spam' or passed on to School Aid from another organisation, such images **MUST NOT** be forwarded via the internet to law enforcement agencies or to any other person working for School Aid, because such transmission is illegal under international (and in some cases domestic) law. Instead, contact the agency or person concerned for advice on how to send the information. Links to websites may be sent to law enforcement agencies by email.
9. If a report of abuse is made, or concerns are raised, even if the situation is ultimately found to be untrue, no retaliatory action will be taken against the person making the

report. If, however, the report is found to be malicious, School Aid, may offer advice or support, and will decide on the course of action relating to disciplinary and suspension issues.

10. Each of our project managers in our partner countries should maintain a Safeguarding Briefing Note, to include information about specialised child welfare and law enforcement agencies in their country, and the appropriate mechanism under the national law for reporting concerns, so that this information is readily to hand.
11. It is understood that situations may arise that are not anticipated, and where staff will have to apply their independent judgment. They should do so in a way that is consistent with the principles of the policy and in consultation, when possible, with the DSO and/or an available deputy or trustee. If this is not possible, the DSO should be advised of the situation as soon as possible.

6. CONTACT DETAILS

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

Clare Junak

Tel: 01753 883853; Email: clare.junak@school-aid.org.uk

Safeguarding Lead on Board of Trustees

Janis Mowlam

Tel: 01753 883853; Email: janis.mowlam@school-aid.org

Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board

www.bucks-lscb.org.uk

- Advice; tel: 01296 382912
- First response/children's social care; tel: 01296 383962; email: secure-cypfirstresponse@buckscc.gcsx.gov.uk
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO); tel: 01296 382070, email: secure-LADO@buckscc.gcsx.gov.uk

School Aid is committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed on: (date)

Signed:

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Safeguarding Lead on Board of Trustees