

THE SEDOO INITIATIVE FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS-SECHILD



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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1. Introduction

The Sedoo Initiative for Children with Special Needs-SECHILD believes that all forms of abuse and exploitation suffered by children are unacceptable. SECHILD aims to ensure that all children who come in contact with SECHILD Center/activities/programmes and staff are safe from all forms of abuse and exploitation. The organization is committed to protecting children and seeks to ensure that children the organization works with are not harmed or abused as a result of SECHILD's actions. The possibility of staff, Donors or partners abusing children is one which the organization takes seriously and is committed to working to prevent.

The child safeguarding policy is vital to SECHILD and it is expected that all staff and representatives understand why it is important and how to implement it. Child protection is a corporate and an individual responsibility. This policy extends beyond professional role in the workplace to conduct on one's personal life.

SECHILD has zero tolerance to child abuse and staff. All staff should be made familiar with the need for a child protection concern in all that they do. Associations with **anyone** found to be engaging in abusive and exploitative relationships with children should be broken.

Vision

Improved well-being of vulnerable children and their caregivers in the society

Mission

To collaborate with partners in addressing the needs of vulnerable children while promoting their rights

Definitions

2. Child

For the purposes of this policy, a “child” is defined as anyone under the age of 18, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Child Right Act of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

2.1 Child abuse: Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospect of a safe and healthy development into adulthood

Commission of Inquiry into the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (UK) 1996, later the Children's Act 2004 Protection, Policy, Procedures and Guidance

The definition point to five types of abuse

2.2 Physical abuse: This is actual physical harm and may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child including fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health to a child.

2.3 Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development, such as failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

2.4 Emotional abuse: persistent or emotional ill treatment of a child that adversely affects their development. May involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, and inadequate, there only to meet the needs of another; or where inappropriate expectations are imposed upon them. In addition it includes children who are regularly frightened, exploited or corrupted.

2.5 Sexual abuse: is the involvement of a child in sexual activity. It may involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. This may also include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

2.6 Exploitation: trafficking, sex trade, child labour, drugs smuggling, child soldiers, exchanging sex for other favours.

3. Recruitment & Training

Trustee members, staff, interns and volunteers should be carefully and properly screened during their recruitment period. This will include:

- asking the candidate to sign a declaration of criminal convictions as part of the application process
- obtaining a police check where possible.
- obtaining a reliable character and professional reference, with particular attention given to any area of concern relating to child protection
- During the interview, questions bordering on child protection and the candidates attitudes, perceptions and knowledge about keeping children safe should be asked

3.1 Prospective Employees: All prospective employees, interns, volunteers, partners and board members should undertake induction and training on the organization's Child Safeguarding policy which is relevant and appropriate to their position. Staff should sign the Child safeguarding Policy at the time they are given their induction or at the same time they sign their contract, agreeing to uphold its principles and values, and to comply with its rules.

3.2 Independent Hired Individuals: Individuals who are hired as independent contractors should be briefed and given a copy of the

organization's Child Safeguarding Policy and should sign a declaration that they have received and understood it.

3.3 Volunteers: Volunteers with SECHILD should be monitored by the Team Leaders to whom they are assigned to ensure that confidential information concerning children is not misused. Where there are concerns, managers should inform the (Center Manager/Head Human Resource Dept.), who will investigate further.

4. Behavior Protocols

Behavior protocols are rules of appropriate and proper behavior, which are designed to protect children but are also intended to protect adults from false accusations of inappropriate behavior or abuse. These protocols apply to employees, volunteers, Trustees, contractors, sponsors and any visitors to SECHILD's projects.

4.1 SECHILD Center personnel and visitors: SECHILD personnel and visitors should not spend unnecessary time alone with the children, including in the following situations: in the playground, in their care rooms, or the relaxation area, therapy rooms, in the reception, at advocacy and other activity sites etc. or sleep at the center without prior approval by the President. Such approval should only be given if there is concern that not doing so might put the children at risk of abuse or exploitation and if there are no other suitable options

4.2 Hiring of House Maids: SECHILD personnel and visitors should not hire children as "house help" or promote any form of exploitative child labor

4.3 Touching of Children: SECHILD personnel and visitors should not fondle or kiss children. They should also not hold, hug or touch children in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way.

4.5 Two- Adult Rule: Where possible and practical, the "two-adult" rule, wherein the Center Manager and two or more Care Givers supervise all therapies/ activities where children are involved and are present at all times, should be followed. If this is not possible, SECHILD field staff members are encouraged to look for alternatives such as

being accompanied by community members on visits to children. In addition, gender should be considered in the “two-adult” rule, for example an adolescent girl should never be in a situation where she is alone with 2 male

4.6 Hitting: SECHILD staff or representatives should never hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children

4.7 Sexual Relationship: SECHILD staff or representatives should not develop physical/sexual relationships with children or develop any form of relationship with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive

4.8 Reporting: SECHILD staff or representatives should not be aware of these and not do anything about it.

4.9 Exploitation: SECHILD staff or representatives should not exploit their own position vis-à-vis the beneficiaries by making them run errands, do domestic work or carry out other forms of economic exploitation

4.10 Shaming: SECHILD staff or representatives should not act in ways intended to shame, humiliate or degrade children, or otherwise perpetuate any form of emotional abuse

5. Inappropriate behavior

SECHILD personnel need to be aware that they may work with children who, because of the circumstances and abuses they have experienced, may use a relationship to obtain “special attention”. The adult is always considered responsible even if a child behaves seductively. Adults should avoid being placed in a compromising or vulnerable position.

SECHILD is committed to creating a child friendly environment and to ensure that how the organization’s personnel work is safe and doesn’t put children at risk of harm. Inappropriate behavior towards children is grounds for discipline.

6. Procedures for Reporting Suspected or Actual Abuse of Children

Should a member of SECHILD receive any information about, or observe actual or suspected child abuse by a staff, volunteer, visitor or any other representative he or she should immediately inform the designate Child Protection focal person/Center Manager. If the concern involves the CP focal person, the concern should be reported to the organization's Administrative Manager. If the concern involves the Administrative Manager, the concern should be reported to the Executive Director/ Vice President/President and when the concern involves this person, it should be reported to the Board of Trustees.

Note: The reporter is not required to investigate or try to find “more proof” before making the report. They should just make the report, and the process of investigation will be handled confidentially by trained senior staff member.

6.1 Reporting: Reporting of child abuse is a requirement of the organization and should be undertaken by staff, volunteers and other representatives. Non-reporting is considered to be a breach of the Child Safeguarding Policy.

7. Risk Assessment

All SECHILD's staff, volunteers and interns should conduct and document a risk assessment when planning a new activity or event that would involve the participation of children. Taking children out of SECHILD Center e.g. for medical check-ups, swimming, visits, excursions, state level activity etc. in particular is considered to be a high risk activity.

7.1 Risk Assessment Matrix: A Risk Assessment Matrix is provided and should be completed well in advance of the activity or event. **(Refer to Appendix I – Risk Assessment Matrix)**

Use this Matrix to identify any risk to the safety and well-being of children, assess the level of risk, and develop strategies to reduce this risk.

7.2 Drawing a Risk Assessment Matrix: To draw a risk assessment matrix, you should:

1. Consider any risk factors in the program or activity taking into account:
 - The age, race, social background, gender, skin color, disability, religion, beliefs or citizenship of the children
 - The setting or environment (e.g. is it outdoors, in a Shelter Home, one-on-one, at night, etc.)
 - What is involved in the program or activity (e.g. workshops)
 - The level of supervision and ratio of Care Giver to children
 - Any other risk factor you can identify
2. Evaluate the level of risk of each of the identified factors as **HIGH, MEDIUM or LOW.**
3. Prioritise the factors according to their level of risk.
4. Develop strategies to minimise the risk in order to reduce the likelihood of harm or abuse occurring.

8. Principles of Risk Assessment

There are many different types of risk assessment but the core principles are the same. SECHILD requires that you speak to the

designated Health and Safety Lead or the Center Manager responsible for risk assessment in the first instance, prior to creating new ones. The process should be onerous but risk assessment should be based on these following:

- Identify hazards
- Assess the risks
- Control the risks
- Record your findings
- Review the controls

Others are:

- What are the hazards
- Who might be harmed and how
- What are you already doing to control the risks
- What further action do you need to take to control the risks
- Who needs to carry out the action and
- When is the action needed by

If a child will be physically present at an activity the President of SECHILD should approve based on the risk assessment submitted.

Appendix 1-Risk Assessment Matrix

Risk Rating Matrix

	Nil	Slight	Moderate	High	Very High
	Very Minor Injuries	Requires 1 st Aid Treatment	Significant Injury	Serious Injury/Permanent Disability/Death	Multiple Deaths
Remote	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Unlikely	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Possible	Acceptable	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High
Highly Likely	Acceptable	Moderate	High	Unacceptable	Unacceptable

An example of a hazard and the control measures in place to mitigate impact of the risk to Care Givers and Children

Hazard Observed	Who May Be Harmed	Possible Outcome	Risk Rating Before Control	Control Measures	Risk Rating After Current Control	Further Controls Required	Risk Rating After Additional Controls
Infection from Pool	Care Givers and Children	Allergic Reaction to Soil Bacteria	Low	Change of Water in the Pool	Low	N/A	N/A

Assessment carried out by: _____

Date assessment was carried out: _____

Reviewed by: _____

Date of next review: _____

Authorized by: _____

Statement of Commitment to SECHILD's Child Safeguarding Policy

1. I, _____ have read, have been given a briefing or induction and **understand** the standards and guidelines outlined in this Child Safeguarding Policy.
2. I agree with the principles contained herein and accept to conduct myself, and my work, in line with the standards and rules laid out in the Child Safeguarding Policy. I agree to do so both in my professional and private life. I understand that these rules include a mandatory requirement for staff to report all concerns.
3. I have not been accused or convicted of any offence involving any form of abuse or exploitation of children.
4. I understand that if a complaint is brought against me regarding a breach of the Child Safeguarding Policy while engaged by SECHILD Center, the allegation will be thoroughly investigated in cooperation with the appropriate authorities;
5. I agree to co-operate with any investigation that involves an allegation of a breach of the Child Safeguarding Policy, whether that allegation has been made against me or against another representative of the organization.

Job Title/Role: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witnessed by: _____

Signature: _____

Please return this copy to the Head Human Resources

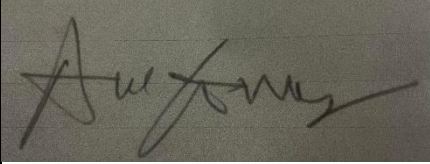
The Child Safeguarding Policy shall be reviewed and updated annually

Version	Date	Author	Summary
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1.0	June 5 th 2022	The Sedoo Initiative for Children with Special Needs- SECHILD	<p>The Sedoo Initiative for Children with Special Needs-SECHILD believes that all forms of abuse and exploitation suffered by children are unacceptable. SECHILD aims to ensure that all children who come in contact with SECHILD Center/activities/programmes and staff are safe from all forms of abuse and exploitation. The organization is committed to protecting children and seeks to ensure that children the organization works with are not harmed or abused as a result of SECHILD's actions. The possibility of staff, Donors or partners abusing children is one which the organization takes seriously and is committed to working to prevent.</p> <p>The child safeguarding policy is vital to SECHILD and it is expected that all staff and representatives understand why it is important and how to implement it. Child protection is a corporate and an individual responsibility. This policy extends beyond professional role in the workplace to conduct on one's personal life.</p> <p>SECHILD has zero tolerance to child abuse and staff. All staff should be made familiar with the need for a child protection concern in all that they do. Associations with anyone found to be engaging in abusive and exploitative relationships with children should be broken.</p>
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Document Approval

Version	Date	Approved by SECHILD Board of Trustees
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1.0	June 5 th 2022	The Sedoo Initiative for Children with Special Needs-SECHILD
		
		Barr. Aver Gavar-Chairperson

