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## **1. Introduction**

The Sedoo Initiative for Children with Special Needs-SECHILD is an organized institution that not only delivers services but also manages staff personnel, oversees administration and maintains cash funds. As a recipient of grants from various channels and project holders of welfare activities, the organization upholds principles of accountability and transparency. One of the strong indicators of these principles is keeping policies and manuals in place, based on which the day-to-day operations of SECHILD are to be carried out. The management and administrative policies for SECHILD is developed in this regard.

## **2. Purpose**

The purpose of the Personnel Policy is to set down the policies, conditions, rights and obligations of SECHILD employees subject to their performing of the duties and responsibilities in their respective job descriptions. From the time of hiring, each employee should have access to this policy, so that he/she can adhere to it with full knowledge and information. The policies described below may at any time be subject to modification if the Board of Trustees deems it necessary. In such cases, employees should be fully informed of the changes made.

## **3. Personnel**

Employees designate salaried individuals who, after a probationary period, are given ongoing assignments, either part-time or full-time, and are paid on monthly basis. They should be contracted on long-term basis subject to periodic evaluations and performance assessments. The employees should have the responsibility towards the day to day functioning and/or in any one of more ongoing/prospective projects of SECHILD.

#### **4. Categories of Personnel**

All the employees of SECHILD are classified into categories as follows:

##### **A. Management Category**

- ✓ President
- ✓ Executive Director
- ✓ Program Manager
- ✓ Project Manager
- ✓ Financial Manager
- ✓ Administrative Manager
- ✓ Treasurer

##### **Support Category**

- ✓ Administrative Assistant
- ✓ Program/Project Assistant
- ✓ Financial Assistant

##### **C. Implementing Category**

- ✓ Teacher
- ✓ Trainer
- ✓ Community Development Worker
- ✓ Health Educator
- ✓ Health Service Provider
- ✓ T-Shirt Weaving Staff
- ✓ Care Giver
- ✓ Therapists
- ✓ Field Mediators

**4.1 Consultants:** Consultants are professional experts hired by the organization on short-term basis only for the completion of specific tasks and assignments related to SECHILD or one or more of her projects. Separate and limited contracts, defining their job description, timeline, deliverables, reporting procedures and payment details should be issued to consultants. They should be paid on daily/monthly/weekly basis depending upon the nature of their assignment. They should not be considered as full-time or part-time employees of the organization.

**4.2 Volunteers:** Volunteers are individuals who work at the organization out of their own choice or have been deputed at SECHILD by other organizations. They should be assigned tasks from time to time as deemed necessary by SECHILD. The organization should have a limited contract with volunteers and should not provide any compensation except under special conditions. They should not be considered as full-time or part-time employees of SECHILD.

## **5. Personnel Recruitment**

The organization believes in equal employment opportunity to each individual, regardless of race, color, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, disability, marital status, veteran status, or any other occupationally irrelevant condition. This policy applies to recruitment and advertising; hiring and job assignment; promotion, demotion and transfer; layoff or termination; rates of pay and benefits; selection for training; and the provision of any other human resources service.

**5.1 Notice of Vacant/New Position:** It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to fill vacant positions as well as new regular positions and new temporary positions of a duration exceeding more than six months. The Board ensures that the positions can be filled under the organizational budget. For all new positions, a job description should be established and include the following elements:

- Position summary
- Description of duties and responsibilities
- Conditions of work
- Qualifications

Notice of a new or vacant position must be approved by the Board before it is released publicly. Recruitment for a new or vacant position can be opened to internal and external competition. For external recruitment, positions in the professional category can be advertised publicly through newspapers if they are regular positions, or if there is a limited tendering process for consultation.

**5.2 Interview and selection:** As a general rule, a selection committee comprising of, at least three (3) members and a maximum of five (5) should be assembled for filling all positions. The committee should go through the applications received, retaining those that show the best qualifications. It should evaluate each candidate's application with the help of an evaluation form created beforehand, containing well-defined criteria. A list of the candidates chosen to be interviewed should be shortlisted by the Selection Committee. The interviews should serve to make a final choice and also to establish a database of potential future candidates.

## **6. Appointment Letter and Staff Orientation at SECHILD**

Any personnel employed with SECHILD should be issued an appointment letter prior to his/her employment by the organization. The appointment letter should officially announce his/her position within SECHILD, the place of assignment and the effective date of employment. The appointment letter should carry annexes, specifying the employee's job description, terms of reference, salary and benefits and other relevant terms of employment.

**6.1 Probationary Period:** A probation period of six (6) months should apply to all new employees from the date of hire. Exceptionally, the probation period may be extended to twelve (12) months. In case, if a new employee fails to perform in accordance to expectations of SECHILD staff/board, he/she should be given a notice, terminating the contract at the end of the probationary period.

**6.2 Staff orientation:** All new employees should get an orientation about SECHILD's mission and strategies, its structure and the staff within it, the policies and conditions of employment, the internal rules and regulations, etc.

**6.3 Remuneration:** SECHILD believes in attracting and retaining a qualified and effective workforce through a system of payment that is both appealing and fair. Though all employees of the organization are entitled to a basic salary, depending upon their skills, qualification and experience. SECHILD is an equal employer, considers wage or salary increases and would want the best for her staff, however as it is with all non-profit organizations, the organization can only

guarantee the salaries of her staff when the organization has on-going projects or when it has funds to do so.

**6.4 Salary Increment:** SECHILD salary increases and would want the best for her staff, however, the organization can only guarantee salary increment of her staff when there are on-going projects or when it has funds to do so. Therefore, increment should be provided to employees based on projects and availability of funds and after performance evaluation. Salary increment is calculated on the basis of basic salary of the staff. Staff adherence to the organization's policies and procedures and ability to meet or exceed duties per job description and achieve performance goals should be of outmost importance to every employee.

## **7. Employee Salary Benefits**

In the event that the staff succumbs to an accident while working for SECHILD, i.e. during the office hours or during field trips, he/she is entitled to receive compensation to cover the medical expenses.

**7.1 Working Days and Hours:** SECHILD's office is open for business 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for care givers. Other office staff work from 8.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Fridays. The standard working hours a week is 40hours. Employees are allowed a one-hour lunch break. Lunch breaks generally are taken between the hours of 12:00noon and 2:00pm on a schedule that a staff must be in the office at any given period during working hours. If employees have unexpected personal business to take care of, they must notify their direct supervisor to discuss time away from work and make provisions as necessary. Personal business should be conducted on the employee's own time. Time off from scheduled work due to personal emergencies should be unpaid for all employees. However, if employees would like to be paid, they are permitted to use vacation time if it is available to them.

**7.2 Public Holidays:** The organization observes the following holidays per year for all employees: New Year's Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Easter Holidays, Christmas Day and Any other so declared by the government. In the event that a public holiday is declared by the Government on a certain day without prior notice, SECHILD staff cannot consider it a holiday until and unless notified by the President

or the Board. All public holidays are subject to the approval of the President or the Board of Trustees. Employees who are required to work on public holidays are entitled to compensatory day off. SECHILD should keep records of number of hours/days worked by her employees on public holidays. Request for compensatory leave should be substantiated with this record and approved in advance by the President/Executive Director. The Human Resources Department should prepare a calendar of public holidays at the beginning of each fiscal year and circulate it to all staff.

## **8. Travel Rules & Regulations**

Staff members may be asked to travel away from their usual workplaces on authorized missions. The policy on payment of travel allowances adopted applies to all employees regardless of job category or status. It also applies to the consultants, when mentioned in their agreement. After reimbursable expenses are made, the person making an expense claim should use the appropriate forms available. The expenses should not be reimbursed if proper justifying documents (original receipts) are not attached except for per diem. Eligible expenses include:

- **Per diem:** All employees and volunteers are provided per diem of N1, 000 (Breakfast N2,000 lunch N2,000 and dinner N2,000) to cover the cost of food for each night spent outside the office as approved by the organization.
- **Accommodation:** All employees and volunteers are entitled to claim expenses incurred for accommodation for official trips outside their office. Maximum claims for accommodation should not exceed N15, 000 per night. Claim for accommodation should be reimbursed upon submission of bills/receipts.
- **Mode of Transport:** The organization should pay only surface transport as far as possible, i.e. air, bus, taxi car and motor bike. If any individual is using personal vehicle for SECHILD related work, they can be reimbursed the actual fuel cost based upon the kilometers. However, the private transport must be shared by more than one employee/member of the organization.

## 9. Leave and Holidays

Paid vacation is available to full-time employees following their confirmation of employment with the organization depending on the category of staff.

- **Annual Leave:** The number of annual leave days a staff is entitled to is not less than 21 working days and not more than 24 working days.
- **Maternity Leave:** Employees should be entitled to maternity leave days and such leave days should be taken 6 weeks before delivery and 6 weeks after delivery. The employee should be paid half salaries for the period on maternity leave.
- **Paternity Leave:** An employee should be entitled to paternity leave of 14 days without pay effective the date of notification of delivery.
- **Casual Leave:** A maximum of 10 days casual leave should be granted to employees during the year. Employees should be granted not more than 3 days casual leave at a time. However where an employee exceeds the number of casual leave days he/she is entitled to, the applied number of days should be deducted from the annual leave days. Requests for casual leave must be in writing at least three days (3) days prior to the beginning of the requested casual leave period.
- **Sick Leave:** Employees are entitled to 12 working days of sick leave with pay per calendar year. Sick leave is accumulated at the rate of 1 day for every full month worked. Employees have to present a medical certificate to substantiate claims for sick leave with pay for absences exceeding two successive days.
- **Emergency Leave:** Emergency leave is granted to employees for any serious illness of a parent, child or spouse and/or personal emergencies. A total of 7 days per year can be allowed for emergency leave. In case of death of a parent, child or spouse, employees should be given leave of 10 days.
- **Public Holidays:** The organization observes the following holidays per year for all employees: New Year's Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Easter Holidays, Christmas Day and Any other so declared by the government. In the event that a public holiday is declared by the Government on a certain day without prior

notice, the organization staff cannot consider it a holiday until and unless notified by the President or the Board. All public holidays are subject to the approval of the President or the Board of Trustees. Employees who are required to work on public holidays are entitled to compensatory day off. SECHILD should keep records of number of hours/days worked by her employees on public holidays. Request for compensatory leave should be substantiated with this record and approved in advance by the President/Executive Director. The Human Resources Department should prepare a calendar of public holidays at the beginning of each fiscal year and circulate it to all staff.

- **Leave without Pay:** Leave without pay may be granted to employees up to 36 days per year. Leave without pay that is taken for a month or more should not be counted as time worked, hence no benefits should accrue to the employees during such period. Employees on probation are not entitled to leave with or without pay but can accrue such leave during the probationary period. Leave without pay is applicable when the employee has exhausted all his annual and sick leave.
- **Absences:** An employee who is unable to come to the office is required to notify the office of the reason for his/her absence. Unauthorized absences are grounds for disciplinary action. The following procedures should apply:
  - i. An employee that has been absent for two consecutive working days without notice nor explanation should be personally sought of by the Head Human Resources. He/she should be asked to put in writing the reason(s) for his/her absence.
  - ii. If, after five (5) consecutive days of absence, the employee continues to fail to give any explanation of the cause of his/her absence, the employee should be considered to have resigned from his/her position.
  - iii. In cases where the employee cannot give any satisfactory answer to the cause of his/her absences, in the judgment of the Human Resources Manager, the employee may be subjected to disciplinary action.

## **10. Staff Movement**

In order to develop the leadership qualities of all staff as well as create an avenue for skills and knowledge sharing in the workplace, the organization reserves the right to change or re-assign a particular staff to any other branch. This should be according to project needs, any employee can be transferred temporarily or permanently to any location where the organization conducts her activities. The transfer may be the result of a promotion, a change in role due to service requirements or other reasons. A permanent transfer to a new place of work that includes a new job mandate should result in a contract renewal. In addition, the employee concerned should be notified one month in advance of his change in situation.

Assignments and Transfers are according to project needs, any employee can be transferred temporarily or permanently to any location where the organization conducts her activities. The transfer may be the result of a promotion, a change in role due to service requirements or other reasons. A permanent transfer to a new place of work that includes a new job mandate should result in a contract renewal. In addition, the employee concerned should be notified one month in advance of his change in situation.

**10.1 Interim positions and promotions:** An employee may be called on to temporarily perform a job in a higher category. That does not automatically give him/her the right to the salary and benefits of this position. However, after a reasonable amount of time, the organization should reclassify the employee in the category of the new job or return him/her to his/her former duties. An employee who receives a promotion can be required to complete a trial period in the new position. If the trial period is successfully concluded, the employee should be reclassified in the new job category and at a salary scale level higher than his/her former position. If the trial period is not satisfactorily completed, the employee should be reinstated in a position at the same level as his/her former position.

## **11. Conditions of Termination of Employment**

Full-time regular employees of the organization are not allowed or prohibited to undertake outside employment. The conditions for Termination of Employees or lose of their jobs can be under any of the following conditions:

- ✓ Voluntary Resignation
    - Personnel wishing to resign from post may do so by giving a resignation letter to the Human Resources Department stating the reasons for resignation and effective date of the same. One month of prior notice is required for such resignations. The date in which the resignation letter is received is considered the date on which notice of resignation is given. Failure to provide sufficient notice may be ground for forfeiture of all accrued employee benefits.
  - ✓ Redundancy of the Position, depending on the nature and volume of its operation, the organization may declare certain positions redundant. Persons occupying those positions should therefore be forced to be separated from SECHILD with proper notice. While doing so, the organization should give at least 2 months' notice in advance.
  - ✓ Termination with Cause Grounds for employee termination are the following:
    - i. Continuing inefficiency and gross negligence of duty.
    - ii. Fund embezzlement.
    - iii. Misuse of office equipment, and other properties.
    - iv. Repeated unauthorized absences and leaves.
    - v. Intoxication while on official business or within office premises.
    - vi. Unauthorized disclosure of official information.
- (4) Death, when an employee dies, his/her salary and benefits should automatically be paid to his/her legal heirs.

## **12. Procedures for Termination and/or Disciplinary Action**

The organization should ask the employee for a written explanation on the offense deemed committed by the employee concerned, identifying the charges against him/her and the particulars of the facts relied upon to support it.

- ✓ The employee is given 3 working days to submit his/her explanations. iii. Based on the written explanations submitted by the employee concerned and the strength of evidence presented, SECHILD may choose to decide on the charges or pursue further investigation of the case.
- ✓ The organization can, should it feel necessary to, suspend the employee in question from duty during the period of investigation subject to the following conditions:
  - I. Should the employee be in a position to tamper with the evidence against him/her.
  - II. Should the employee's continuing presence in the organization be deemed inimical to the interest of SECHILD

## **13. Conflict Management Policy**

Whenever a dispute arises among the organization staff, it should be resolved in a constructive manner, i.e. the solutions should lead to positive changes. Employees who feel unfairly treated or who have complaints about a situation or about working conditions should notify the Executive Director immediately.

**13.1 Staff Behavior:** SECHILD expects her employees to adopt attitudes and behavior that maintain the good image of the organization. SECHILD employees should display an exemplary level of professionalism and integrity. Furthermore, besides the usual rules every good employee needs to follow (respect, courtesy, punctuality), there are particular procedures of conduct for staff of the organization which must be observed.

**(a) Political Activities:** Since SECHILD is a non-political organization, employees should not participate in activities of a purely political nature on work premises or during working hours. It is also prohibited to use the organization's materials for these purposes.

**(b) Discrimination and Harassment:** Under the principles established by SECHILD, no employee, man or woman, has the right to put pressure on another, make intimate advances, give preferential treatment or show sexual favoritism at work.

**(c) Conflict of Interest:** To avoid putting themselves in a conflict of interest with the objectives and operations pursued by SECHILD, employees should respect the following guidelines:

- It is prohibited to use the organization's property for illegal or unauthorized purposes.
- It is prohibited for any SECHILD employee having confidential information to disclose it without express authorization beforehand
- Employees cannot at any time accept a job from another employer if this job interferes with their work schedule and their duties and responsibilities.
- Employees should avoid putting themselves in situations where they may gain profit or derive direct or indirect interest by influencing a contract award.
- Employees cannot solicit or accept tips, gifts, favors or other forms of gratuities for services rendered or required to be rendered in performing their duties within SECHILD.

#### **14. Settling Grievances**

If an employee feels unfairly treated by circumstances that infringe on his/her rights or change his/her employment conditions, he/she should discuss the situation with his/her immediate supervisor. If, after the matter has been discussed and corrective measures taken, an employee feels it has not been satisfactorily settled, he/she can submit a grievance to the Human Resources Head, who should discuss and provide appropriate solution. All grievances should be handled internally because there is no recourse to external mediation or arbitration.

#### **15. Performance Evaluation and Skill Training**

The performance evaluation system is a means by which the organization can increase its efficiency and that of her employees. The purpose of the system is for SECHILD to fulfill her mission by attaining her set objectives and for employees to grow and feel

fulfilled through proactive performance supervision. The system enables, among other things, the harmonizing of individual employee objectives with those of the organization, the measuring of employee potential and work performance and the support of employee improvement by working with them on their development needs.

The annual performance evaluation seeks specifically to:

- promote communication between employees and their supervisors
- clarify expectations concerning objectives and performance
- improve employee performance through on-going monitoring and feedback
- assess and reward individual performance
- allow employees to express their career aspirations

The performance evaluation focuses on the individual employee in relation to the tasks and responsibilities assigned to him. It is not necessarily a comparison of one employee's performance with that of another. Thus, the employee's work performance is to be assessed in relation to absolute procedures, that is, according to the evaluator's performance criteria and not according to relative procedures. The performance evaluation also allows the organization to assess the quality of human resources in their department or organization, note important information concerning expectations and needs and clarify decisions concerning transfers or work assignments.

**15.1 Performance Evaluation System Policy for SECHILD:** A performance evaluation system is composed of three main stages that generally take place over a period of a year:

**(a) Performance planning:** The performance planning stage enables employees and supervisors to come to an agreement on what is to be accomplished during the year and how it should be carried out. The following procedures and tools are used to facilitate this stage:

**b) Job description or list of duties:** Each employee must have an up-to-date job description defining the purpose of the work and the responsibilities involved

**c) Setting of objectives:** For each key responsibility associated with a position, at least one objective should be established for a particular period. The objectives should be clear and quantifiable, and the assessment criteria should be mentioned.

**15.2 Individual action plan:** The individual action plan is a planning tool used to specify the steps to be taken to achieve the objectives set beforehand. The action plan should be prepared jointly with the immediate supervisor. It may also involve new initiatives facilitating improved productivity or personal capacity development.

**15.3 Performance Monitoring and Management:** Staff performance and productivity should be managed on an on-going basis throughout the year. The following elements, among others, are involved:

**a) On-going Supervision:** This means taking the time to observe, examine sources of difficulty and seek solutions.

**b) Regular Communication:** This involves regular exchanges so that employees can receive feedback about their performance and receive the necessary supervision.

**c) Periodic Evaluation:** This involves formal, scheduled meetings between an employee and supervisor to discuss activities carried out, end results and the adjustment of the action plan and objectives, if necessary. A minimum of one meeting every six months is suggested to ensure satisfactory results.

**15.4 Annual Performance Evaluation:** The annual performance evaluation is the analysis, based on documentation from previous stages of the process, of an employee's work record. The evaluation addresses two fundamental questions. The first relates to the past and involves verifying what was accomplished qualitatively and quantitatively during the year.

The second relates to the future and consists of identifying means to be considered to ensure the employee continues to grow and develop. The performance evaluation form should include all the sections needed for the evaluation. This includes a section relating to performance evaluation in relation to the objectives established at the outset and in relation to the responsibilities of the position, a section that specifies or targets what is needed for the employee's development and finally a section allowing the employee and the evaluator to express their comments and affix their respective signatures. The form should also include a performance level classification and a definition of each of these levels.

The annual performance evaluation does not have any financial impact on salaries. It is first and foremost a tool to evaluate the employee's performance and take remedial action if necessary.

**15.5 Skill Training and Professional Development:** The organization depending on the availability of funds should foster the professional development of her employees in order to be as effective as possible in her activities. The training programs chosen should address the actual needs identified and expressed during performance evaluation sessions.

## **16. Bond**

As part of the staff and organizational development activities, the organization may at times decide to send a designated staff person for trainings and/or further studies both abroad as well as at local level. SECHILD should bear the full/partial costs of the trainings/studies for this. However, the designated staff sponsored for the trainings/studies is required to sign a bond with SECHILD that requires him/her to complete the full tenure of working with the organization.

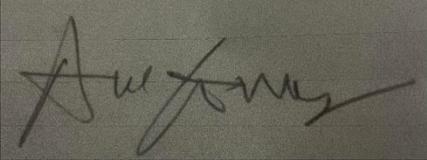
## **17. Communications Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to control and reduce the communication cost in an effective way. Telephones are the most convenient and fastest mode of communication but for long distance communication, they are expensive. There are other modes for fast communication such as courier, fax or e-mail. And out of these, e-mail is fast and more affordable. The organization prefers to use e-mail for out of station correspondence to reduce the communication costs. Telephones can be used for local calls and in emergency for national & international long distance calls. Internet service at the office can be used to download and send email and to conduct work-related research.

**The Management and Administration Policy should be reviewed and updated annually**

Version	Date	Author	Summary
1.0	June 5 <sup>th</sup> 2022	The Sedoo Initiative for Children with Special Needs-SECHILD	The Sedoo Initiative for Children with Special Needs-SECHILD is an organized institution that not only delivers services but also manages staff personnel, oversees administration and maintains cash funds. As a recipient of grants from various channels and project holders of welfare activities, the organization upholds principles of accountability and transparency. One of the strong indicators of these principles is keeping policies and manuals in place, based on which the day-to-day operations of SECHILD are to be carried out. The management and administrative policies for SECHILD is developed in this regard.

**Document Approval**

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

