Kids Club Kampala
Helping kids in East Africa survive and thrive
www.kidsclubkampala.org
UK Charity no. 1152451

Safeguarding Policy

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Introduction

Definitions of Terms

For the purposes of this Safeguarding Policy, all references to:

- **'Child', 'children', 'young person', 'young people', 'adolescent' and 'adolescents'** – whether singular or plural – are used interchangeably and refer to those under the age of 18 years, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- **'Personnel', 'workers', 'staff', 'volunteers'** – are used interchangeably and refer to anyone acting on behalf of, representing, or interacting with children or vulnerable adults for Kids Club Kampala, including paid employees, trustees, interns, donors, visitors, contractors, and international/UK volunteers.
- **'Vulnerable adults' or 'adults at risk'** refer to individuals aged 18 or over who have needs for care and support, are experiencing (or at risk of) abuse or neglect, and as a result of those care and support needs are unable to protect themselves from harm.

Scope and Purpose of this Policy

This policy demonstrates Kids Club Kampala's commitment to keeping safe all children and vulnerable adults with whom it works. Everyone interacting with the organisation shares responsibility for their safety. This policy must be followed by all staff, volunteers, and board members, and actively promoted by those in leadership positions.

The purpose of this policy and its procedures is to help protect children and vulnerable adults, ensure personnel recognise potential harm and understand how to respond, and fulfill Kids Club Kampala's duty to act appropriately on all allegations, reports, or suspicions of abuse.

This policy enables Kids Club Kampala to:

- Promote good practice and work in ways that prevent harm and abuse from occurring.
- Ensure allegations or suspicions are handled appropriately and survivors are fully supported.
- Stop abuse from occurring.

This policy applies to staff, volunteers, and trustees of Kids Club Kampala UK, including those visiting or volunteering with our work in East Africa. Because legal and operational definitions may vary internationally, personnel visiting East Africa must adhere to both this policy and relevant in-country policies (i.e. Kids Club Kampala Uganda, The Mango Tree Kenya, and Organisation of Matumaini Communities Tanzania), which are regularly reviewed as part of our UK due diligence.

This Safeguarding Policy Sets Out:

- **Principles for Protection:** Safeguarding is both an individual and a corporate responsibility.
- **Behaviour Standards:** Clear expectations to build a safe environment through awareness and proactive precautions.
- **Reporting Guidelines:** Practical procedures for handling allegations, disclosures, or suspicions, fostering openness because abuse thrives on secrecy.
- **Safe Recruitment Standards:** Rigorous due diligence to ensure safeguarding is central to hiring all staff and engaging volunteers.

Safeguarding Statement

As members of Kids Club Kampala, we believe:

- Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is both an individual and a corporate responsibility.
- All children and vulnerable adults have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation; inequalities must be challenged.
- All children and vulnerable adults should be encouraged to fulfill their potential.
- The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount.
- Everyone must help create a safe environment by remaining well-informed on safeguarding matters.
- Openness must be encouraged, as abuse thrives on secrecy.
- All staff and volunteers owe a duty of care to meet minimum standards of protection.

Policy Commitment: Kids Club Kampala has **zero tolerance** towards abuse in any form, wherever it occurs and whoever is responsible. We are committed to safeguarding welfare, promoting safe practices, protecting individuals from harm, neglect, and exploitation, and fostering an ethos that respects diversity and rights.

Kids Club Kampala Will:

- Ensure personnel understand legal and moral obligations to protect children and vulnerable adults.
- Maintain best practices in recruitment and ensure compliance with safeguarding standards.
- Require all personnel to report care, protection, or conduct concerns to Designated Safeguarding Officers.
- Implement conduct procedures consistently and equitably.
- Ensure Safeguarding Officers refer relevant concerns to statutory agencies (i.e. Police and Social Services).
- Provide ongoing training and development opportunities regarding safeguarding.
- Empower children and vulnerable adults to express their views and access this policy.
- Encourage parent/carer involvement and provide access to guidelines upon request.
- Publish Safeguarding Officer contact details clearly across the organisation.

Safeguarding Officers and Procedure

Safeguarding Officers

Kids Club Kampala maintains two appointed Safeguarding Officers—one at senior leadership level and one at board level. Details are maintained on the Safeguarding Register, and any changes will be communicated promptly.

- **Central Safeguarding Reporting Inbox:** uksafeguarding@kidsclubkampala.org *(Emails sent to this address automatically forward to both the Senior Leadership Safeguarding Officer and the Board Safeguarding Officer to ensure immediate dual oversight)*
- **Senior Leadership Safeguarding Officer:** Olivia Barker White, CEO; olivia@kidsclubkampala.org / +447523204556
- **Board Safeguarding Officer:** Rachel Lindley, Trustee; rel@kidsclubkampala.org / +447732014181 *(Responsibility falls to the Chair of Trustees if unavailable)*

Safeguarding Concerns

A safeguarding concern arises when anyone is worried about the well-being of a child or adult. Concerns may stem from direct disclosures or observed indicators. Everyone has a duty to recognise and report concerns immediately.

Safeguarding Procedure

All staff and volunteers must follow these steps when a concern arises:

1. **Report Immediately via Central Inbox:** Report the concern immediately by emailing uksafeguarding@kidsclubkampala.org (or contacting either Safeguarding Officer directly by phone in an urgent situation). Because this inbox forwards automatically to both the Senior Leadership Safeguarding Officer and the Board Safeguarding Officer, both leads are notified simultaneously.
2. **Log Record:** The details will be formally logged in the KCK Safeguarding Register.

3. **Immediate Action:** Take any immediate, considered actions required to protect the person at risk.
4. **Statutory Escalation:** If required, the concern will be referred to statutory authorities (Police / Social Services).
5. **Allegations Against Personnel:** Concerns regarding staff or volunteers will be reported to relevant statutory authorities for formal investigation.
6. **Absence or Conflict of Interest:** Because emails to uksafeguarding@kidsclubkampala.org go to both officers, **do not use the shared inbox if the concern involves either Safeguarding Officer**. Instead, report directly and privately to the uninvolved Safeguarding Officer or directly to the Chair of Trustees, who will determine action and notify statutory authorities where abuse is suspected or discovered.

Confidentiality

Referral records will be kept secure and confidential. Information regarding vulnerable adults is shared strictly on a "need-to-know" basis. However, absolute confidentiality can never be promised, as the imperative to protect individuals overrides confidentiality.

Recruitment for Safeguarding

Safer Recruitment

To ensure safe recruitment, all staff and volunteers undergo the following vetting procedures prior to active service:

- **References:** A minimum of two references are collected and checked prior to start.
- **Identity Verification:** Official identification is verified using multiple documentation forms.
- **Interviews:** Standardised interviews incorporate specific safeguarding questions that must be satisfactorily answered.
- **Induction Training:** Personnel must complete induction training covering KCK's Safeguarding Policy and related organisational policies.
- **Policy Agreement:** Personnel must read, sign, and agree to abide by the Safeguarding Policy and future updates.
- **Criminal Record Checks (DBS):** Mandatory DBS checks are required for anyone working directly with children or vulnerable adults. Where a DBS check cannot be completed prior to start, a Safeguarding Self-Declaration Form must be completed.
- **Ongoing Training:** Personnel receive continuous safeguarding refresher training.

Child Protection

Possible Abusers

Abuse can be committed by adults (male or female) or other children. Abusers are usually known and trusted by the child (i.e. parents, relatives, babysitters, friends, or authority figures like teachers, youth workers, and religious leaders). Strangers rarely abuse children, though perpetrators may join voluntary or sports organisations specifically to gain access.

Abuse occurs in homes, institutions, religious settings, or emergency contexts (such as

displaced or refugee communities). All staff and volunteers must be held to the same high due diligence standards without exception.

Definitions of Abuse (Children)

- **Physical Abuse:** Actual or likely physical injury, or failure to prevent physical harm. Includes hitting, beating, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, or suffocating. Can cause fractures, head injuries, internal damage, cuts, or burns. Also includes fabricating or inducing illness in a child, forcing safe/unsafe labor, or withholding food, water, light, or air.
- **Sexual Abuse & Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE):** Actual or likely sexual exploitation forcing or enticing a child into sexual activity they cannot comprehend or consent to. Includes physical contact (touching, penetrative/non-penetrative acts), exposure to pornography, prostitution, or digital sexual abuse (i.e. explicit messaging or images via WhatsApp/text). CSE involves a child receiving items (gifts, money, affection) in exchange for sexual acts.
- **Neglect:** Persistent or severe failure to meet basic physical and psychological needs, impairing health and development. Includes failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or protection from danger.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Persistent emotional ill-treatment causing severe adverse impacts on emotional and behavioral development. Includes conveying worthlessness, belittling, screaming, threats, or isolating a child. Includes **spiritual abuse**, where abuse or harassment is administered under the guise of religion.
- **Organised Abuse & Child Trafficking:** Abuse involving multiple perpetrators acting together, or exploiting institutional authority to access children. Includes human trafficking for forced labor or sexual exploitation.
- **Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief:** Abuse driven by beliefs in witchcraft, spirit possession, ritualistic abuse, or demonic possession. Occurs globally across various faiths and cultures. Involves physical violence, psychological trauma, or severe neglect under religious pretexts.
- **Bullying:** Hostility involving physical, verbal, or emotional intimidation, racist/sexist remarks, or deliberate exclusion.

Recognising Signs of Child Abuse

- **Signs of Physical Abuse:** Injuries inconsistent with explanations; injuries on unexposed body areas; untreated injuries; reluctance to participate in games/swimming; recurring urinary infections or abdominal pain; unexplained bruises, burns, cuts, or fractures; substance abuse.
- **Signs of Sexual Abuse:** Direct allegations; explicit sexual knowledge or age-inappropriate sexual play; sexually provocative behavior; sleep disturbances, night terrors, or eating disorders; inappropriate bed-sharing at home.
- **Signs of Neglect:** Constant hunger, stealing/gorging food; failure to grow; undernourishment; untreated physical conditions; inadequate clothing or personal care.
- **Signs of Emotional Abuse:** Extreme mood or behavioral changes; severe anxiety, depression, aggression, or "frozen watchfulness"; sudden academic drop;

attention-seeking behavior; running away; lying or stealing.
- **Indicators of Abuse Linked to Faith/Belief:** Unexplained scars/burns; statements that the child is "evil" or having "spirits beaten out"; use of terms like *kindoki*, *djin*, *juju*, or *voodoo*; extreme confusion or isolation; rapid deterioration in appearance or school attendance; wearing unusual ritual items or scripts.

Child Protection: Behaviour Protocols

You Should:

- Help build an ethos where everyone is treated with equality, dignity, and respect.
- Put the care, welfare, and safety needs of the child first.
- Respect children's rights to participate in decisions affecting them.
- Listen attentively to children's views and respect their culture and religious beliefs.
- Respect personal space and privacy.
- Report concerns, suspicions, or disclosures immediately to the Safeguarding Officer.
- Ensure all work with children takes place within sight or hearing distance of other adults.
- Take all disclosures seriously; never dismiss statements as lies or exaggeration.
- Only use physical restraint when a child is at imminent risk of harming themselves, others, or causing severe property damage.

You Should Not:

- Exaggerate, trivialise, or ignore safeguarding concerns or allegations.
- Discuss confidential child/family details with anyone outside the Safeguarding Lead.
- Make derogatory remarks in front of children.
- Allow bullying, harassment, swearing, or sexualised language to pass unchallenged.

You Must Never:

- Engage in sexually provocative games, horseplay, or inappropriate touching.
- Make sexually suggestive comments or form inappropriate physical/emotional relationships.
- Discriminate against or harass anyone based on age, race, gender, religion, or disability.
- Invite or allow children to stay at your personal home without explicit consent from KCK and carers.

If Abuse is Disclosed or Discovered:

- **Do not delay.**
- **Do not act alone.**
- **Do not investigate.**
- Consult the Safeguarding Officer immediately. Do not inform family members who may be implicated.

What to Do If a Child Discloses Abuse:

- Look at the child directly and maintain a calm composure.
- Accept what the child says without expressing shock.
- Explain that you cannot promise secret confidentiality because you must get help to

keep them safe.
- Reassure the child that they are not to blame and did the right thing by speaking up.
- Use open **TED** questioning (*Tell, Describe, Explain*)—do **not** ask leading questions or press for details.
- Explain clearly what steps you will take next.
- Make handwritten, signed, and dated notes immediately afterward detailing exact statements, times, dates, and visible injuries. Report immediately to the Safeguarding Officer.

Protection of Vulnerable Adults

Definitions of Abuse (Vulnerable Adults)

Abuse of a vulnerable adult is a violation of civil and human rights, involving physical, psychological, financial, sexual, or emotional maltreatment, or neglect. It may consist of single or repeated acts, or failure to take protective action. Abuse often occurs within relationships where trust exists (i.e. carers, family, staff), but can occur anywhere.

- **Physical Abuse:** Hitting, shaking, burning, scalding, suffocating, or causing physical harm/suffering.
- **Sexual Abuse & Exploitation:** Forcing or enticing involvement in penetrative or non-penetrative sexual acts, forced exposure to pornography, digital sexual harassment, or exploitation.
- **Emotional / Psychological Abuse:** Conveying worthlessness, severe bullying, harassment, verbal assault, isolation, or spiritual abuse.
- **Neglect:** Failing to provide basic physical, medical, or emotional care, impairing health or development.
- **Organised Abuse & Trafficking:** Group-facilitated abuse or institutional authority misuse, including human trafficking.
- **Bullying:** Hostile intimidation, racist/sexist abuse, or deliberate exclusion.

What to Do If a Vulnerable Adult Discloses Abuse

- Listen carefully and give the individual time to give a spontaneous account.
- Use **TED** questions (*Tell, Describe, Explain*); do not ask leading questions.
- Reassure the person that they did the right thing and are not to blame.
- Explain that you cannot promise secrecy, as you must inform the Safeguarding Lead to ensure their safety.
- Do not make the individual repeat their story to others.
- Make accurate, dated notes using the individual's exact words, and report immediately to the Safeguarding Officer.

Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

If any worker is suspected of causing harm, committing a criminal offence, or behaving in a manner showing unsuitability to work with children or vulnerable adults, report the matter **immediately** to the Safeguarding Officer. KCK will consult and refer the case to local authorities and the police.

Safeguarding and Data Protection

For comprehensive guidelines on data retention schedules, Subject Access Requests (SARs), lawful processing bases, and general IT security, please refer to the Kids Club Kampala *Data Protection Policy*.

Child Protection and Data Protection

It is a criminal offence to store, produce, or share data, text, or visual images that are abusive to children (including child sexual abuse material). Any worker who suspects abusive data is being stored on KCK systems must report it immediately to the Safeguarding Officer, who will notify statutory authorities and the police.

Safeguarding Data Handling Principles

- **Access Control:** No external entity may access KCK databases without explicit authorisation, complete induction, and signed policy agreement.
- **Workstation Security:** Databases and printed files must never be left unattended or open on workstations.
- **Prohibited Content:** Downloading or storing abusive media is strictly forbidden and constitutes gross misconduct.
- **Reporting & Search Protocol:** Workers must report any concerns immediately. Upon receiving a report, the Safeguarding Officer and Trustees will review files/computers and notify statutory agencies where illegal material is found.

Dissemination of Data

Data or photos that could compromise a child's safety or make direct personal contact easier must not be shared. Before releasing data, workers must ask:

1. *Will this detail make personal contact with a child easier (i.e. full name + precise location)?*
2. *Is this information restricted to confidential protection processes?*

If the answer is **Yes** or **Maybe**, the request must be denied or escalated to the Safeguarding Officer.

Safeguarding and Social Media

For detailed operational rules on official account management, personal disclaimers, brand guidelines, and political neutrality, please refer to the Kids Club Kampala *Social Media Policy*.

Media, Data and Image Protocols

- **Dignity & Privacy:** Photos must never show children undressed or in inappropriate poses.
- **Anonymity & Tracing: NEVER** publish a beneficiary's real name, full address, or specific location online. Always use pseudonyms (stating the name has been changed), disable geotagging, and avoid showing identifiable landmarks, street signs, or distinctive uniforms.

- **High-Risk Beneficiaries:** Avoid taking identifiable photos of children at risk of stigma or retaliation (i.e. child survivors of trafficking or exploitation).
- **Informed Consent:** Documented, child-friendly, and disability-inclusive consent must be obtained from parents/guardians before publishing media.
- **Copyright & Commercial Use:** KCK retains copyright over all beneficiary media. Profiting from media or using it to promote unauthorised causes is strictly forbidden.

Storytelling Pledge

All personnel commit to prioritising the rights and well-being of children, recognising that consent is dynamic, using positive strength-based language, and ensuring media sharing creates no safety risks.

Strict Beneficiary Contact Boundaries

- **Official Channels Only:** All communication with beneficiaries (adults or children) must occur strictly through official KCK communication channels.
- **Private Contact Ban:** Personnel, donors, sponsors, and volunteers must **NEVER** contact beneficiaries via personal social media, messaging apps, phone, email, or private mail.
- **Contact Information Exchange: NEVER** request personal contact details from a beneficiary, and **NEVER** share personal contact details with them.
- **Reporting Unsolicited Contact:** If contacted by a beneficiary online outside official channels, report it **immediately** to KCK leadership and the Safeguarding Lead.

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