

Child Safeguarding Policy

...from the street, to the scholar's seat and beyond

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Approved by: The Board of Trustees

Next review: 12 months from adoption



1. Our Commitment

Street2Scholar Foundation CIO ("S2S") exists to serve street-connected, vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people. The safety and welfare of every child S2S works with in the UK, Nigeria, or through an approved overseas delivery arrangement is the organisation's priority. Safeguarding overrides educational, financial or reputational considerations.

S2S believes every child has an equal right to protection from harm regardless of age, gender, disability, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or background, whether harm occurs within family or community settings, an S2S-supported programme, or online.

S2S has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse, neglect and exploitation and will respond promptly to allegations and concerns wherever they arise.

This policy applies to trustees, staff, volunteers, mentors, trainers, contractors, interns, NYSC members where applicable, consultants and partner organisations acting on behalf of S2S, including S2S Foundation Nigeria. For this policy, a child is anyone under 18.

2. Legal and Policy Framework

This policy is informed by the UK Children Act 1989/2004, Working Together to Safeguard Children, Keeping Children Safe in Education where relevant to education-adjacent activities, and Charity Commission safeguarding guidance.

For Nigeria programmes it is also informed by the Nigerian Child Rights Act 2003, Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), applicable State child protection legislation, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and safeguarding standards of the National Human Rights Commission.

Where S2S or an approved partner supports a physical school or learning centre in Nigeria, including the Kaduna North pilot, S2S aligns with the Federal Ministry of Education's National Policy on Safety, Security, and Violence-Free Schools and accompanying Minimum Standards for Safe Schools.

Where S2S operates across jurisdictions, personnel and partners must follow whichever applicable standard provides the higher level of protection to the child, subject to mandatory local law.

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3. Types of Abuse and Harm

Type	What it can look like
Physical abuse	Hitting, shaking, burning or otherwise causing physical injury or suffering.
Corporal punishment	Any physical or humiliating punishment used as discipline; strictly prohibited in all S2S-supported environments.
Emotional abuse	Persistent emotional ill-treatment, humiliation,

	isolation, exposure to domestic abuse or exploitation.
Sexual abuse	Sexual activity with a child, including exploitation, online grooming, FGM and forced/child marriage.
Neglect	Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional, educational or medical needs.
Exploitation	Child labour, trafficking, criminal or sexual exploitation, and exploitation linked to street life.
Peer-on-peer abuse and bullying	Bullying, cyberbullying, sexual harassment/abuse or exploitation by other children or young people.

Given S2S's beneficiary group, personnel should be particularly alert to child labour, trafficking, harmful traditional practices, exploitation linked to street life, family breakdown and homelessness.

4. Safeguarding Principles

- The child's welfare is paramount in every decision.
- All children have an equal right to protection; some children, including street-connected, disabled and unaccompanied children, may need additional support.
- All staff, volunteers and trustees share responsibility for safeguarding.
- S2S works with children, families, communities and statutory agencies to achieve safer outcomes.
- A child's right to safety extends beyond programme time, including routes to and from S2S-supported sites.
- Every concern is taken seriously, recorded and acted upon promptly.
- Safeguarding action must avoid re-victimising or re-traumatising a child.
- Consent is sought wherever possible, balanced against best interests and mandatory safeguarding duties.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
UK Board of Trustees	Ultimate responsibility for safeguarding standards; appoints the UK Designated Safeguarding Lead(s); reviews this policy at least annually; ensures adequate resourcing and oversight.
UK Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Day-to-day safeguarding decision-maker for the UK CIO; receives and manages concerns and referrals, liaises with statutory agencies, maintains the safeguarding log and reports to the Board.
Deputy DSL - Nigeria coordination	Supports the DSL and coordinates safeguarding escalation with Nigeria-based focal officers. This role does not replace the responsibilities of the separate Nigeria organisation or local statutory authorities.

Local Safeguarding Focal Officer (Nigeria)	Appointed at each Nigeria location where S2S or an approved partner operates; first local point of contact and immediate escalation route to the UK DSL.
Learning Centre Safety Focal Point	Appointed at each S2S-supported school/learning centre; day-to-day site safeguarding and safety contact, working with the local focal officer and DSL.
Site Safety & Safeguarding Committee	Supports risk identification, safe-infrastructure planning and community awareness at each S2S-supported learning centre.
All staff, volunteers, trainers and mentors	Follow the Behaviour Code, complete required safeguarding training, recognise and report concerns promptly and never investigate independently.
Partner organisations, including S2S Foundation Nigeria	Maintain safeguarding standards at least equivalent to this policy as required by the applicable partnership/grant agreement and report concerns to S2S without delay.

6. Code of Conduct

- Children must be allowed to express their views on decisions affecting them in an age-appropriate way.
- No staff member, volunteer or contractor may employ a minor as domestic help.
- Respectful language and behaviour must be maintained at all times.
- Children must never be exposed to drugs, alcohol, harmful substances or pornographic material.
- Appropriate dress and culturally sensitive behaviour are required.
- A child's identity, image or identifying information must not be shared publicly without documented informed consent and compliance with applicable data-protection law.
- No staff member, volunteer or contractor should be alone with a child except in a genuine emergency; wherever practicable, at least two authorised adults should be present.
- No one should be left alone with a child in a secluded or enclosed space.
- One-to-one supervision across genders should be avoided unless unavoidable and appropriately risk-assessed.
- Physical punishment and harsh or humiliating discipline are strictly prohibited.
- Weapons, dangerous items, drugs and alcohol are prohibited on S2S premises and learning centres.
- Bullying, including cyberbullying, is not tolerated and must be recorded and addressed.
- Breaches may lead to disciplinary action, termination of engagement/partnership and/or referral to statutory authorities.

6.1 Code of Conduct for Learners

Each S2S-supported learning centre will develop an age-appropriate learner code with input from children and young people, display it prominently and explain it at induction and regular sessions. It will address respectful behaviour, bullying, cyberbullying, dangerous play and simple ways to raise concerns.

7. Safer Recruitment

- Safer recruitment applies to every role involving contact with children, whether paid or voluntary.
- Prospective trustees, advisers, staff, volunteers, interns and relevant partners complete an application including relevant criminal-conviction declarations.
- An enhanced UK DBS check, or appropriate Nigeria police character/conduct clearance where obtainable and lawful, is required before unsupervised contact.
- At least two references are obtained and verified for roles involving contact with children, with specific questions about prior work with children.
- Identity is verified; Nigeria-based volunteers/interns should also provide appropriate community or institutional attestation where used by S2S.
- New starters receive this policy and the Behaviour Code and confirm they understand and will comply before child contact.
- Local focal officers monitor Nigeria-based interns and volunteers and support confidentiality compliance.

8. Safe Learning Environments and Physical Sites

- A Learning Centre Safety Focal Point and Site Safety & Safeguarding Committee are established before a centre opens.
- Staff/volunteer and learner Codes of Conduct are displayed and communicated.
- Corporal punishment and harsh or humiliating discipline are prohibited.
- An emergency response and evacuation plan covers natural hazards, security incidents, fire, flood and disease outbreaks.
- A confidential, accessible concern-reporting channel is provided on site, alongside the formal reporting routes.
- Links are established with an appropriate local health facility for medical, welfare or counselling referrals.
- Community awareness addresses safe routes to and from the learning centre and safe transport where needed.
- The centre conducts periodic self-assessment against the relevant Nigerian Safe Schools standard/questionnaire or an equivalent S2S checklist and shares results with the DSL and Board.

9. Training and Awareness

- All personnel with child-contact responsibilities receive safeguarding induction before starting and refresher training at least every two years, or sooner where required.
- The DSL, Deputy DSL, local focal officers and Learning Centre Safety Focal Points receive role-specific advanced training.
- Volunteers, contractors, interns and regular visitors are briefed before child contact.
- Parents/guardians and children are informed in accessible, age-appropriate ways about safeguarding and reporting routes.
- Learners may receive age-appropriate personal-safety and life-skills sessions delivered by trained personnel or partners.
- Training content is reviewed to reflect evolving online and street-connected risks.

10. Responding to a Disclosure

- Stay calm and listen without showing shock or disbelief.

- Reassure the child they were right to tell, without promising confidentiality; explain that information may need to be shared to keep them safe.
- Do not ask leading questions or investigate; use only open, clarifying questions where necessary.
- Use age-appropriate language and involve appropriately qualified support where follow-up is required.
- Record what was said as soon as possible, using the child's own words where practicable, with date, time and who was present.
- Report immediately to the UK DSL, Deputy DSL, or Nigeria local safeguarding focal officer/Learning Centre Safety Focal Point for immediate escalation. Immediate-risk cases must be escalated without delay.
- Do not discuss the disclosure except with those who need to know.

11. Reporting, Referral and Investigation

S2S provides child-friendly reporting channels, including anonymous options where practicable. At Nigeria learning centres this includes an on-site confidential channel such as a suggestion box. Concerns are taken seriously regardless of who is involved or how much time has passed.

Where an allegation concerns a staff member, volunteer, intern or contractor, the person may be separated from the child or temporarily removed from child-facing duties pending appropriate review, proportionate to the concern.

The UK DSL will coordinate or commission an appropriate response and, where necessary, refer the matter to relevant statutory authorities, including the police or child-protection authorities in the jurisdiction concerned. Any Charity Commission serious-incident reporting will be handled by the trustees in accordance with applicable guidance.

12. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Safeguarding information is shared only on a need-to-know basis, in line with S2S's Data Protection and Confidentiality arrangements and applicable law. Where there is a risk of harm, the duty to protect the child takes precedence over confidentiality and information may be shared with statutory agencies without consent where legally justified and necessary for safety.

13. Working with Partners and Overseas Delivery

The UK CIO primarily raises and oversees charitable resources, approves programmes and grants, and retains overall trustee accountability. S2S Foundation Nigeria is a separate Nigerian organisation and the initial local delivery organisation. Other overseas partners may be engaged where approved and subject to due diligence and a written agreement.

- Before partnership/funding, the Board completes the relevant Partner Due Diligence Checklist.
- Partners must have, or formally adopt, safeguarding practices at least equivalent to this policy where required by the agreement.
- For physical learning centres, the site checklist and Overseas Partner Monitoring Template are used.
- Each Nigeria-based partner/site designates a local safeguarding focal officer.
- Safeguarding concerns connected with funded activities must be reported to S2S without delay.

- Grant and partnership agreements must cross-reference this policy by its correct title and reference: Child Safeguarding Policy.

14. Review and Document Control

This policy is reviewed at least annually and immediately following a significant safeguarding incident, near miss, or relevant change in UK or Nigerian law or statutory guidance.

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