



Child Protection Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy statement formally expresses Safer Hands Health Initiative(SHI) belief in and commitment to the principle contained in Article 19 of the UN convention on the rights of the child that all children , wherever they may live and whatever may be their circumstances , have the right to be protected , nurtured and to be free from all forms of violence , maltreatment and exploitation .

Safer Hands Health initiative takes its responsibility to protect children seriously and will aim at all times to provide the safest possible programs , intervention and environments for children ;appropriately identify and manage risks , and ; appropriately respond to incidents that are in breach of this policy . Whilst not explicitly a child focused organisation , Safer Hands Health Initiative team members and volunteers will at times come in contact with children and our programs and intervention may have an unintentional harm ; all team members and volunteers should therefore have an understanding for safeguarding children .

In this policy statement, the term “**abuse**” is used for ease of expression and has the same meaning as is given to it in the UN Convention on The Rights of The Child and includes all forms of physical and mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.

Child: A child is regarded to be any person under the age of 18 years.

2. PURPOSE

The objectives of this policy are to –

- affirm that all children in all circumstances have the right to feel and to be safe and to live free from harm, exploitation and abuse;
- ensure that all people associated with Safer Hands Health Initiative , including its Directors, Team members, volunteers and partners understand and share our commitment to this principle;
- ensure that Safer Hands Health Initiative has procedures in place, which will protect both the children with whom its representatives may come into contact, from any adverse consequences of that contact and the representatives themselves from being placed in a vulnerable position as a consequence of that contact;
- Ensure that Safer Hands Health initiative is aware of and adheres to the Nigeria Child Rights Act 2003.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Zero tolerance of child harm, abuse or exploitation: Child exploitation and abuse will attract criminal and disciplinary action; and/or punitive measures. Safer Hands Health Initiative will not knowingly employ, contract or partner with – directly or indirectly – anyone who poses a risk to children.
2. Recognition of unintentional harm: Safer Hands Health Initiative recognises that unintentional harm or physical injury to a child may occur during the provision of our programs and intervention . Safer Hands Health initiative will work to support safe practise by our partner services and train personnel to recognise and respond appropriately to unintentional harm.
- 3.. Recognition of the needs of children to feel safe: Safer Hands Health Initiative recognises in working and potentially coming into contact with children that our personnel and partner organisations are placing themselves in a position of trust and that we have a shared responsibility to effectively manage risks.

4. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Safer Hands Health Initiative Directors , Team members and its representatives including volunteers.

Safer Hands Health Initiative has an obligation to ensure to the extent reasonably possible that our partner organisation meet minimum child protection standards and will exercise due diligence to ensure the protection of children associated with our joint projects and activities within the Country . .

5. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Safer Hands Health Initiative implements this policy statement in the following ways:

6.1 Engaging Staff, Volunteers and Board Directors

Safer Hands Health Initiative's signup Volunteer Form will contain reference to this policy and acceptance of its provisions forms part of the acceptance of the terms and conditions of volunteer engagement.

Safer Hands Board of directors has approved and adopted this policy statement for incorporation into the Policies & Procedures Manual. In doing so, they have acknowledged and accepted its application to themselves.

All Safer Hands Health Initiative team members and representatives are required to adhere to the Safer Hands Health Initiative Child Safe Code of Conduct which provides clear behavioural guidelines and expectations for all Safer Hands Health Initiative Team members and representatives.

All Safer Hands Health Initiative team members and volunteers will receive training on child protection issues and on their obligations under the policy, including mandatory reporting of concerns or allegations of child abuse in accordance with the provisions of this procedure.

6.2 Communications and Use of children's images for work related purposes

Safer Hands Health Initiative will undertake all reasonable precautions to protect and limit paper and electronic information about children.. Safer Hands Health initiative does not know and does not need or seek to know any personal details about the children who are helped by or otherwise benefit from our interventions and programs.

In the event of taking photographic or video images, the following should be considered .

- Before photographing or filming a child, obtain consent from the child or a parent or guardian of the child. As part of this, explain how the photograph or film will be used;
- Ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive;
- Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts;
- Ensure file labels do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically.

6.3 Risk Management

While it is not possible to eliminate risk entirely, every effort must be carried out to reduce opportunities for child abuse and to minimise the risks of unintentional harm.

6.4 Breach of this Policy and Reporting

The organization will investigate any actual or suspected breach of this policy by any of its director , Team members or representatives and, where grounds are found to exist, will report the matter to the relevant authorities for possible action being taken against the offender. .

Safer Hands Health Initiative Child Safe Code of Conduct

Safer Hands Health Initiative team members, Board and representatives are responsible for maintaining a professional role with children, which means establishing and maintaining clear professional boundaries that serve to protect everyone from misunderstandings or a violation of the professional relationship. All Team members, Board and representatives of Safer Hands Health Initiative should conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their role as the organizations representatives and a positive role model for children.

Safer Hands Health Initiative has developed this Child Safe Code of Conduct to protect children, staff, Board and our representatives by providing clear behavioural guidelines and expectations. This serves as a guide to make ethical decisions in their professional and private lives. All Safer Hands Health Initiative representatives must read, sign and abide by this Child Safe Code of Conduct. Failure to comply with this Code may result in disciplinary procedures, restriction of duties or relationships with Safer Hands Health Initiative.

As a representative of Safer Hands Health Initiative, I will:

- ✓ Conduct myself in a manner that is consistent with the values of the organization.
- ✓ Treat all children and young people in our programs equally and with respect.
- ✓ Encourage open communication between all children, young people, parents and personnel and have children and young people participate in the decisions that affect them.
- ✓ Immediately report any concerns of child exploitation, abuse and/or policy non-compliance.
- ✓ Take responsibility for ensuring I am accountable and will not place myself in positions where there is a risk of allegations being made.
- ✓ Self-assess my behaviours, actions, language and relationships with children.
- ✓ Comply with Safer Hands Health Initiatives Child Protection Policy.
- ✓ Photograph or video children in accordance with the organization policy on the Use of Photos and Stories, for example:
 - Before photographing or filming a child I obtain informed consent from the child and their guardian or parent, ensuring that they understand how the images will be used
 - Images of children depict them in a dignified and respectful manner, taking care that the way they are dressed and their body position is appropriate, and does not represent them in a vulnerable or submissive manner.

• Images and associated information collected is strictly relevant to the work of Safer Hands Health Initiative in that community.

As a representative of Safer Hands Health Initiative , I will not:

- Engage in behaviour that is intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children.
- Use inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory language when speaking with a child or young person.
- Develop sexual relationships with children or relationships with children that may be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Ever make sexually suggestive comments about children and vulnerable adults even if this is between colleagues and in jest.
- Behave provocatively or inappropriately with a child.
- Act in a way that shows unfair and differential treatment of children.
- Photograph or video a child without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians.
- Hire minors for domestic or other labour.

I have read the Safer Hands Health Initiatives Child Protection Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct and understand my personal responsibility to abide by these guidelines at all times to protect myself and the children I may come in contact with through my work for or with Safer Hands Health Initiative .

Signature _____

Print Name _____

Date _____

The Board will review this Policy every 3 years or earlier if need be

Policy number: 001

Drafted by: Research Team ; Safer Hands Health Initiative

Board approval date: 5 April 2019

Scheduled Review date: 5 April 2022

Contact details for child protection agencies

24-hour Child Abuse Report Line:

112, 2348137960048

info@dsvrtlagos.org

Head office – Lagos State Domestic and sexual violence Response Team (DSVRT)

Secretariat ,

Alausa, Ikeja.