

Alongside Africa

Child Safeguarding & Protection Policy



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This policy applies to:

Alongside Africa (Charity Commission for England & Wales No. 1146752)
Alongside Africa Uganda (NGO Registration No. S.5914/12812)

Approved by: Board of Trustees / Directors

Date approved: [insert]

Next review: [insert – annually]

1. Introduction and purpose

Alongside Africa is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people involved in or affected by our work. This policy sets out how we prevent harm, recognise abuse, and respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns. Although Alongside Africa has limited direct contact with children in the UK, this policy applies fully to:

- all UK-based activity involving children, and
- all activity carried out in Uganda, where we work extensively with vulnerable children and adolescent girls.

The welfare of the child is always our paramount consideration.

2. Legal and policy framework

This policy is informed by and complies with current UK safeguarding legislation and guidance, including:

- **Children Act 1989** – duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- **Children Act 2004** – duty on organisations to safeguard children
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children** (HM Government, **2018**, updated **2023**)
- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**
- **Protection of Freedoms Act 2012** (Disclosure and Barring Service arrangements)
- **Modern Slavery Act 2015**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education** (where relevant)

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The policy also reflects:

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
 - International safeguarding best practice
 - Relevant Ugandan child protection and employment legislation
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3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Trustees and directors
- Employees (UK and Uganda)
- Volunteers and interns
- Contractors and consultants
- Visitors, partners and suppliers

All individuals are expected to comply with this policy at all times.

4. Safeguarding principles

Alongside Africa is guided by the following principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
 - All children have the right to protection from abuse and exploitation
 - Children's views, wishes and feelings will be respected
 - Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
 - We act in the best interests of the child at all times
 - We recognise additional risks faced by children living in poverty or insecurity
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5. Definitions of abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. It may be inflicted by an adult or another child and can occur in any setting.

Physical abuse

Deliberately causing physical harm, including hitting, shaking, burning, poisoning, suffocating or fabricated or induced illness.

Emotional abuse

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Persistent emotional maltreatment that adversely affects a child's emotional development, including humiliation, threats, rejection or exploitation.

Sexual abuse

Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including physical contact or non-contact activities such as exposure to sexual images or behaviour.

Neglect

Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, resulting in harm to health or development.

6. Recognising and responding to concerns

All staff and volunteers must be alert to signs of abuse or neglect.

If a child discloses abuse:

- Listen carefully and calmly
 - Do not ask leading questions
 - Reassure the child they have done the right thing
 - Do not promise confidentiality
 - Record the disclosure accurately using the child's own words
 - Report the concern immediately
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7. Immediate action

If a child is in immediate danger:

- Take urgent steps to ensure safety
 - Seek emergency medical attention if required
 - Contact emergency services or local authorities as appropriate
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8. Reporting and escalation

Safeguarding concerns must be reported without delay to a **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**.

Designated contacts:

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- UK: Monica Titterton / Trustee
- Uganda: Namugenyi Loreen / Child Welfare Officer

If a concern involves a safeguarding lead, it must be reported directly to statutory authorities.

Referrals will be made to:

- UK Children's Social Care or Police (UK-based concerns)
 - Appropriate Ugandan child protection authorities (Uganda-based concerns)
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9. Confidentiality and information sharing

Information will be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis. Safeguarding concerns override confidentiality where a child may be at risk.

Records will be:

- Accurate and factual
 - Stored securely
 - Accessed only by authorised persons
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10. Safer recruitment

Alongside Africa is committed to safer recruitment practices, including:

- Role descriptions with safeguarding responsibilities
 - Identity and reference checks
 - DBS checks in the UK where required
 - Vetting and background checks in Uganda
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11. Training and awareness

We ensure that:

- Trustees understand safeguarding responsibilities
 - Staff and volunteers receive safeguarding training
 - Partners and suppliers understand safeguarding expectations
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12. Breaches of policy

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Any breach of this policy may result in:

- Disciplinary action
- Termination of engagement
- Referral to statutory authorities

13. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually and updated to reflect changes in legislation, guidance or organisational activity.

14. Declaration

I confirm that I have read and understood the Alongside Africa Child Safeguarding & Protection Policy and agree to comply with it.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Role: _____

Date: _____