



Self Help Africa

CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

About

Self Help Africa (SHA) is an international NGO dedicated to the vision of an economically thriving and resilient rural Africa. Our projects in Africa work with smallholder farmers, farmer associations, cooperatives and agribusinesses across Africa to help farmers grow and sell more food, improve diets, diversify incomes and make their livelihoods more sustainable and resilient to external shocks. We also work to build awareness of issues affecting smallholders and represent their interests at policy and institutional level, both across Africa and in Ireland through our development education work.

Efforts to tackle the injustice of poverty and inequality requires partnerships for development at local, national and international levels that cross Africa, Europe and beyond. SHA runs a Global Citizenship Education (GCE) programme, which produces resources, delivers workshops, arranges seminars and undertakes a series of other activities, primarily within post-primary schools and third level, colleges in Ireland. This programme has been running successfully for more than 15 years, and in that time has reached upwards of 350 schools across Ireland.

Through our GCE work we aim to engage students and support teachers by increasing their understanding of development issues to support an improved enabling environment for smallholder farmers and strengthened public engagement in development work. In GCE we seek to raise awareness and understanding among school communities of the rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world in which we live. We encourage young people to think critically, reflect and take action in a manner that can transform the social, cultural, political and economic structures which affect their lives and the lives of others.

In this context, Self Help Africa aims to create a safe, creative and fun environment where children can engage with Self Help Africa staff, where their welfare is paramount. Self Help Africa is committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of children while they are participating in events run by or on behalf of Self Help Africa. Self Help Africa adheres to the requirements of the Children First Act 2015 (“**CFA**”) and the National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017 (“Children First Guidance, 2017”) developed by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and also requires those who run events on its behalf to do so.

Some of the services which Self Help Africa provides fall within the meaning of the term ‘relevant service’ under the CFA. Schedule 1, paragraph 5 of the CFA describes relevant services. Self Help Africa has specific legal responsibilities under the CFA, including to prepare a risk assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of their services, to prepare a ‘child safeguarding statement’ and to appoint a person to be a first point of contact in respect of SELF HELP AFRICA’s

child safeguarding statement (a 'relevant person'). Self Help Africa has appointed a Designated Liaison Person for child safeguarding in accordance with the Children First Guidance, 2017 who is also the relevant person for the purposes of the CFA.

List of services being provided:

Self Help Africa provides a range of directly managed programmes that engage children. Self Help Africa also delivers activities engaging families at a range of public events organised by third parties, such as the National Ploughing Championship and Africa Day in Farmleigh. To deliver the list of services outlined below, Self Help Africa engages the Self Help Africa Development Education team, engages volunteer consultants, other Self Help Africa Staff as volunteers and a range of volunteers who are not directly employed by Self Help Africa. The list of relevant services is detailed below:

List of Relevant Services being provided:

1, Development Education

Self Help Africa has extensive expertise and a proven record of work in the delivery of effective development education in Irish schools. SHA's GCE programme is aligned with Ireland's policy framework on global development and grounded in the programmes delivered in nine countries across sub-Saharan Africa. Thematic focus areas for our GCE programme draw directly from our development work, namely sustainable agriculture and food security, including Fair Trade and value chains; gender and equity; and climate change.

As an established Development Education provider in Ireland, SHA is part of the management committee of developmenteducation.ie, is an active member of the Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) and of the Dochas Development Education Working Group. SHA is an active member of both the post-primary and adult and community working groups at IDEA and contributed to the development of the Good Practice Guidelines for Development Education in Schools (2013), Guidelines for Producing Resources for Schools (2014), Development Education Guidelines in Adult and Community Settings (2014). Formerly, SHA was represented on the Development Education advisory group to the Irish Minister for International Development and Trade.

2. World Wise Global Schools

SHA leads a consortium including Concern Worldwide and the City of Dublin Education and Training Board Curriculum Development Unit implementing World Wise Global Schools: Ireland's national development education programme for post-primary schools, funded by Irish Aid. The aim of World Wise Global Schools is to increase the number of post-primary schools engaging in quality development education through a range of support, including grants to fund quality Global Citizenship Education initiatives, teaching resources and advice. As the lead partner in delivering World Wise Global Schools, SHA has provided a range of back office support services to the programme including accounting and finance, ICT, database management, marketing and communications. SHA's communications team has produced all of the teaching resources and other collateral for WWGS, has built and services its website and social media channels.

3. School workshops

Self Help Africa works with a network of GCE facilitators who visit Irish post-primary schools and deliver a series of interactive workshops and undertake other school-based development education activities in the classroom through team teaching methodologies. Workshops are delivered in schools across Ireland on a range of topics that relate to Self Help Africa's core programme activities, including: Why small-scale farming is so important; Conservation farming and sustainability; The role of women in agriculture; Africa – coping with climate change; Gender equality and the role of women in African development; The ethics of trade; The Sustainable Development Goals. SHA's workshops aim to educate, inspire, encourage and facilitate the students of today to be informed global citizens of tomorrow.

4. Transition Year and Student Work Experience Placements

Transition Year and Student Work Experience Placements, internal to Self Help Africa. Self Help Africa supports developing the potential of children and young people. In this context Self Help Africa facilitates the placement of post primary students, particularly those in Transition Year (TY). These students are under 18 and fall within the definition of a child, but must be over 16.

4. Adult and Community Development Education

SHA's engagement with Adult and Community and non-formal development education programmes to date has been based on a partnership model that works with both statutory and non-statutory organisations to develop community networks that have the potential to be replicated across Ireland. We work with Education Training Boards, Community Development companies and County Councils to increase capacity through developing and delivering training programmes aimed at professional and voluntary community leaders, educators and facilitators to promote the integration of Development Education into local communities in a sustainable way. These include nationally-accredited courses in Global Development for Community Leaders and Local and Global Development Awareness. SHA's Development Education department is also centrally involved in running publicly focused development education-based activities as a part of SHA's participation in public events as diverse as the Electric Picnic music festival and Ireland's 'Africa Day' celebrations.

5. Changemakers

SHA's GCE team, while focused primarily on the Irish post primary schools' sector has also supported the creation and development of the award-winning 'Changemakers' community development education programme in Ireland. Together with Changemakers, SHA was involved in supporting the delivery of Development Education workshops to staff of a local County Council and Education Training Board and in the delivery of workshops to arts and literacy groups and other community-based organisations within the county. SHA's Development Education team has also supported Changemakers through community groups in non-formal workshops and public events and by integrating development education into national programmes such as Fair Trade towns.

6. Science for Development Award

Self Help Africa founded the special category 'Science for Development' award in collaboration with Irish Aid at the BT Young Scientists event in 2004. For over a decade. The prize encourages students across a broad range of science subjects to consider the challenges affecting people in the Global South, and present potential scientific solutions to these issues. The 'Science for Development' award presents a €5,000 travel bursary at the annual BT Young Scientists Exhibition to the winning student project. Funded by Irish Aid and implemented by Self Help Africa, the award is adjudicated entirely independently by the judges at the annual BT Young Scientists Exhibition. The travel bursary

is used to facilitate students' and teachers' participation in a school study visit to one of SHA's programme countries.

7. Study Visits

For 15 years, SHA's staff teams have hosted a number of study visits by Irish post-primary students and teachers on field visits to Africa. Our annual schools study visit is an opportunity for young people and their teachers to deepen their understanding, and engage in cross-cultural exchanges in Africa. During the week-long visit, participants take part in a range of field visits and activities that allow them to interact with their peers in schools, universities and the communities we work with, and gain an appreciation of the diversity of cultural traditions and innovations in the country they visit. Schools are required to fundraise to cover the cost of this trip, and students are chosen based on an application process. Prior to and during the visit, we ask students to keep a record of their experiences, and support them with presentations to classmates, community groups and others upon their return home.

8. Public Events and Festivals

Self Help Africa participates in a range of public events throughout the year. These include Africa Day in Farmleigh, the National Ploughing Championships, the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition and a range of events. This is not an exhaustive list. At these events Self Help Africa recruits and coordinates the attendance of a mix of Self Help Africa staff, Self Help Africa non-employee volunteers, Self Help Africa volunteer consultants. The events and festivals require volunteers to assist in hosting a stand. This involves directing people around the stand and speaking to children and their guardians about Self Help Africa and the work we do. It can involve guiding children through workshop activities where they design or handle farming inputs such as seed.

Relevant Activities Funded by Self Help Africa, as a funding organisation:

9. Commissioned work/sub-contractors

A Development Education event that is managed by Self Help Africa can require the engagement of sub-contractors. Self Help Africa requires parties/subcontractors commissioned in this context to comply with the provisions of the CFA, if applicable. This is reflected in the request for tender for any such work.

Risk assessment

Section 11 of the CFA mandates that providers of relevant services must prepare a risk assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of such services.

Section 2 of the Act defines harm as follows:

“harm means in relation to a child –

(a) Assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child’s health, development or welfare, or

(b) Sexual abuse of the child, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omission or circumstances or otherwise.”

Under Section 2 of the Childcare Act 1991 a “child” means a person under the age of 18, other than a person who is or has been married.

No.	Risk Identified	Procedure in place to mitigate risk identified
1.	Recruitment	<p>Self Help Africa ensures that appropriate steps are taken during recruitment and selection of employees and representatives, to ensure that issues relating to safeguarding children are considered and addressed. The following have special considerations with reference to child safeguarding: ^[1]_[SEP]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Description: Child protection is referenced in all job descriptions and applies to all employees and representatives. ^[1]_[SEP] • Interview: questions in relation to child protection must be included in all interviews. It is not expected that all new recruits would have an in-depth knowledge of child protection, unless it is a specific requirement of the role. However, it is important that all candidates are aware of Self Help Africa’s commitment to safeguarding children and the expectation that all employees recognise, report and respond to incidents of child exploitation and abuse. ^[1]_[SEP] • Reference Checks A thorough check of employment references is carried out and includes a question in relation to safeguarding, e.g. “Self Help Africa aims to protect all children involved in our work against risks of exploitation and abuse - do you have any reason to deem this person unsuitable to work with children or adults who may be vulnerable?”. ^[1]_[SEP]

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Declaration: When a role involves direct access to children (Development Education and WWGS roles for example) successful candidates are asked to declare any prosecutions pending against them, convictions of criminal offences, official cautions or other legally binding orders. This should be completed before contracts are signed. ^{[[SEP]]} • Contract: Safeguarding policies - Code of Conduct, Child Protection Policy, to be signed by all new employees before commencing work with Self Help Africa. ^{[[SEP]]} • Police Clearance/Garda Vetting: This relates to staff working in Ireland and Irish staff travelling to or working overseas, where the person has access to children. Some guidance on 'access to children' is in a role that puts them in a position to build a relationship of trust with a child or vulnerable adult (including via electronic means)? This involves either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contact with the same child on three or more occasions - Overnight events / activities - Other whereby a relationship come be created <p>The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 provides a statutory basis for the vetting of persons carrying out relevant work with children or vulnerable persons.</p> <p>There is an exemption in the Act for occasional contact (i.e. once or twice).</p> <p>In Northern Ireland, clearance (AccessNI check) is sought through nidirect government services.</p>
2.	Failure to report allegation of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service.	Self Help Africa responds to allegations abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service in Ireland in accordance with the Children First Act 2015 and Tusla Guidelines.
3	Child is harmed by a Self Help Africa staff member, Self Help Africa consultant volunteer or other person, while availing of our services or	Self Help Africa ensures that appropriate steps are taken during recruitment and selection of employees and representatives, to ensure that issues relating to safeguarding children are considered and addressed. See 1 above. <i>Specific to in-classroom events</i>

	<p>services supported by Self Help Africa.</p>	<p>(a) All Self Help Africa staff and Self Help Africa consultant volunteers attending a school must be accompanied by a teacher or other person assigned by the school to supervise the class at all times and should not allow themselves to be left unattended with children;</p> <p>(b) All Self Help Africa staff and Self Help Africa volunteers are asked to consider Self Help Africa’s Child Safeguarding Statement when reviewing and selecting material for an in-classroom event appropriate for the intended audience.</p> <p><i>TY and Student Work Experience Placements</i></p> <p>(c) TY students will be given an induction briefing which will incorporate training on SHA’s Child Safeguarding Statement, Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct and they will be requested to confirm their understanding of these policies by signing them. The signed policies will be maintained by HR;</p> <p>(d) HR will refresh the staff member supervising the student on SHA’s child safeguarding policies;</p> <p>(e) students working within SHA will be reminded of the acceptable usage and social media policies;</p> <p>(f) SHA will assign work that is deemed appropriate for the student;</p> <p><i>Specific to public events</i></p> <p>(g) All Self Help Africa staff and Self Help Africa volunteers are given a verbal or electronic refresher briefing on Self Help Africa’s Child Safeguarding Statement, Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct in advance of a Self Help Africa managed event;</p> <p>(h) At events directly managed by Self Help Africa, Self Help Africa will have oversight of the content to ensure it is appropriate;</p>
4.	<p>Storage or publication of photos of children</p>	<p>All information and images are held securely and access to information is given on the basis of role.</p> <p>We will only use children’s images or personal information in our marketing, advocacy, fundraising, communication and programme work in ways that will safeguard their dignity and protect their rights. Permission is always obtained for these images and information.</p> <p>Self Help Africa is a signatory of the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages which provides a set of guiding principles on communicating programmes and values in a coherent and balanced way.</p>
5	<p>Data Protection</p>	<p>Self Help Africa ensures that it:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtains and processes information fairly; 2. Keeps it only for one or more specified and lawful purposes; 3. Process it only in ways compatible with the purposes for which it was acquired initially or for which it was

		<p>subsequently approved;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Keeps it safe and secure; 5. Keeps it accurate and where necessary, up to date; 6. Give a copy of his/her personal data to any individual on request. <p>Self Help Africa will obtain and process information fairly by ensuring at the time when we collect information about individuals that they made aware of the uses for that information for contacting them and keeping them informed of our work.</p> <p>Self Help Africa will not disclose personal details to third parties unless required to do so by legislation.</p> <p>Any computer containing personal information will be password protected and encrypted.</p> <p>A periodic review and audit of the information we hold will be carried out to ensure that the information is accurate, relevant, and not excessive.</p>
6	Accidents and injuries on site	<p>Accidents and injuries that occur on the premises shall be managed in accordance with the Accident and Injury Policy.</p> <p>This policy will be discussed with all staff at induction and at any other point required.</p>

Self Help Africa considers the likelihood of any of the risks set out above occurring to be low in light of the policies and procedures it has in place.

PROCEDURES

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, the *Children First: National Guidance*, and Tusla's *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

1. Procedure for reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to the Designated Liaison Person and Tusla as outlined in our Child Protection Policy.
 - 1.1. The DLP shall act as a resource to the Mandated Person to ensure the reporting procedures are followed correctly and promptly. On completion, a report shall be forwarded to the relevant Duty Social Worker by the DLP, Mandated Person.
 - 1.2. In the event the report is forwarded by the DLP, the Mandated Person shall be informed in writing that the report has been forwarded.
 - 1.3. In the event that the report is forwarded by a mandated person without the assistance of the DLP the DLP shall be informed and any copies provided to be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet.
2. Procedure for raising a complaint as outlined in our Complaints and Response to Complaints Policy and our Whistleblowing Policy.
3. Procedure for the management of allegations of harm to a child availing of our services as outlined in our Child Protection Policy.
4. Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of Self Help Africa staff members or Self Help Africa consultant volunteers to work with children.
5. Procedure for induction at which staff are introduced to our Child Protection Policy, Safeguarding statement and the Designated Liaison person is identified to them.
6. Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm.
7. Procedure for maintaining a list of persons (if any) in the relevant service who are Mandated Persons.
8. Procedure for appointing a relevant person under the CFA (in Self Help Africa the relevant person is also the Designated Liaison Person and Child Protection Focal Point as referred to in our Child Protection Policy Ireland UK 2018).

Self Help Africa's Designated Liaison Person/Safeguarding Focal Point/relevant person under the CFA is: Mary Sweeney

Self Help Africa
Kingsbridge House
17-22 Parkgate Street
Dublin 8. D08 NRP2
IRELAND
Tel. ++ 353 (0)1 677 8880
Tel.++353 (0)1 661 5522
Email: children.first@selfhelpafrica.org

All procedures listed above are available upon request.

Implementation:

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service. This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on the 1 June 2020, or as soon as practicable after any legislative changes which arise in the area of child protection, any changes to Self Help Africa's services or any material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed:

David Dalton

David Dalton, Executive Director Self Help Africa
(Provider under the Children First Act 2015)
Kingsbridge House
17 – 22 Parkgate Street
Dublin 8
D08 NRP2
Phone: + 353 1 677 8880

For queries please contact: Mary.sweeney@selfhelpafrica.org
(Relevant Person as defined by the Children First Act 2015)

APPENDIX 1 – Self Help Africa Child Protection Policy Ireland and NI 2018

POLICY STATEMENT

Self Help Africa recognises the rights of all children with whose families we work, to be protected from harm in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Self Help Africa takes seriously its duty of care, and undertakes that our organisation is safe for children, where all efforts are made to prevent abuse. Self Help Africa does not employ persons under 18 years of age. Self Help Africa sees the best interests of the child as paramount. We do this by:

- Preventing abuse where possible by setting in place and implementing procedures to protect children through best recruitment practices, staff induction and training, creating an open and aware culture, assigning clear management responsibilities and involving children appropriately in their own protection.
- In the event of disclosure or discovery of abuse following clear guidelines and procedures for reporting and reacting, dealing promptly and properly with incidents, supporting victims and holding perpetrators to account.
- By appointing a Child Protection Focal Person at Head Office to oversee training and deal with child protection concerns.

The global responsibility for managing this policy lies with the Executive Director with the support of the Child Protection Focal Person. The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that a Child Protection Focal Person is nominated in both Ireland and the United Kingdom.

For the purpose of this policy Self Help Africa defines children as those under the age of 18.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

According to the World Health Organisation, “Child abuse” or “maltreatment” constitutes ‘all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.’ The NSPCC similarly specifies “cruelty to children” or “child abuse” as ‘behaviour that causes significant harm to a child. It also includes when someone knowingly fails to prevent serious harm to a child. All forms of cruelty are damaging – it can be harder to recover from the emotional impact than from the physical effects.’

There are 4 categories of abuse generally defined:

Physical abuse: Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child.

Sexual abuse: Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others. It includes the inappropriate use of technology and social

media; e.g., the storage or dissemination of pornography, the recording or sharing abusive images using technology such as via mobile phone texting, audio, video, images, podcasts, social networking websites and other multimedia or communications platforms.

Emotional abuse: Emotional abuse includes humiliation, blaming, frightening, threatening, terrorising, discrimination, ridiculing, and other non-physical forms of rejection or hostile treatment.

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and physiological needs. Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where a child's health safety, development or welfare is being avoidably impaired.

IDENTIFYING ABUSE AND TAKING ACTION

It is everyone's responsibility to report any potential or actual abuse to a child's wellbeing and safety. Any abuse, attempted abuse or suspected abuse of a child must be passed to the Executive Director, or his/her delegate, in this case the Child Protection Focal Person. The Executive Director has the authority to invoke the Serious Wrongdoing Investigation Plan in Self Help Africa in response to a report of abuse.

TRAINING

- 1) Relevant Self Help Africa staff must undergo child protection training.
- 2) Awareness and update training will be arranged and provided as necessary.
- 3) All staff members have a responsibility to consider and help minimise child protection risks within their own areas of responsibility.

WORKING DIRECTLY WITH CHILDREN

Staff members, who work directly with children must obtain police clearance as a condition of employment.

RECORDING IMAGES

Self Help Africa applies the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages (<http://www.dochas.ie/images-and-messages>) regarding the use of images (photographic/film or other). The following guidelines must be adhered to: i) Ask the child(ren)'s parent's/guardian's permission to take the photograph/image; ii) Individuals must be appropriately dressed according to their choice and country of origin; iii) Any complaints or concerns about inappropriate or intrusive images must be reported and recorded; iv) The recorded images should focus on an activity and, where possible, feature groups of children rather than individuals; v) Make sure that photographers and film makers are not allowed to spend time with or have access to children without supervision.

GUIDING LAWS, DOCUMENTS AND PRINCIPLES

Republic of Ireland law, policy and guidance

- Children First Act, 2015
- Better Outcomes Brighter Futures, DCYA, 2014
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons Act), 2012
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act, 2012
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, DYCA 2017
- Criminal Justice Act, 2006
- Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998
- Child Care Act, 1991
- The Constitution of Ireland

Northern Ireland law, policy and guidance

Safeguarding Board Act (NI), 2011

Our Duty to Care (Volunteer Now), 2011

Our Children and Young People: Our Pledge, 2006

Cooperating to Safeguard Children, 2003

Children (NI) Order, 1995

Criminal Law Act (NI), 1967)

COMMUNICATING THE “KEEP CHILDREN SAFE” MESSAGE

Self Help Africa believes that the effectiveness of its policy and procedures on child safeguarding and protection will best be realised if its stakeholders are aware of them, can contribute to their implementation and provide feedback. Therefore we commit to the following:

- Information about our commitment to keeping children safe is openly displayed and available to the public.
- Where we are working with children, they are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse
- Information and advice for children/parents/guardians, in understandable format, about where to go for help in relation to child abuse is available in our offices and shops.
- Employees know who has responsibility for child safeguarding and how to contact them.

PREVENTION OF EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

In order to ensure that this policy is implemented and that steps are taken to protect children, a number of procedures are in place to encourage a culture of safety and to prevent harm to children in the course of carrying out our work.

Safe recruitment

Self Help Africa ensures that appropriate steps are taken during recruitment and selection of employees and representatives, to ensure that issues relating to safeguarding children are considered and addressed. The following have special considerations with reference to child safeguarding:

- **Job Description:** Child protection is referenced in all job descriptions and applies to all employees and representatives.
- **Interview:** questions in relation to child protection must be included in all interviews. It is not expected that all new recruits would have an in-depth knowledge of child protection, unless it is a specific requirement of the role. However, it is important that all candidates are aware of Self Help Africa's commitment to safeguarding children and the expectation that all employees recognise, report and respond to incidents of child exploitation and abuse.
- **Reference Checks** A thorough check of employment references is carried out and includes a question in relation to safeguarding, e.g. "Self Help Africa aims to protect all children involved in our work against risks of exploitation and abuse - do you have any reason to deem this person unsuitable to work with children or adults who may be vulnerable?".
- **Self-Declaration:** successful candidates are asked to declare any prosecutions pending against them, convictions of criminal offences, official cautions or other legally binding orders. This should be completed before contracts are signed.
- **Contract:** Safeguarding policies - Code of Conduct, etc., to be signed by all new employees before commencing work with Self Help Africa.
- **Police Clearance/Vetting:** All employees and third parties with direct access to children through their work must be police vetted.

RISK ASSESSMENT AND SAFE ACTIVITIES

Child safeguarding considerations such as exploitation and abuse should be included in all risk assessments to ensure that all activities are conducted in a safe and dignified manner. Where it has been identified that activities involve children then a Safe Activities checklist must be completed and relevant safeguards implemented.

REPORTING, RESPONDING AND MONITORING

All Self Help Africa employees have a responsibility to report any concerns about the exploitation and abuse of children.

Responding to Reports or Allegations

In Ireland and the United Kingdom, Self Help Africa recognises that when specific reports or allegations of abuse are made, this will always be referred as soon as possible to the appropriate authorities for investigation. Any information offered in confidence will be received on the basis that

it will be shared with relevant people in authority: this would include members of the senior management team if appropriate, child protection personnel in civil authorities.

When the allegation/complaint relates to a Self Help Africa employee, they will be informed at the appropriate time of the allegation/complaint/suspicion and the external reporting requirements that must be followed by the organisation. The employee will also be informed of any decision to remove or suspend them from any or all duties or duties that involve working with children. This decision will be made using the guiding principle that the safety of the child is always the most important consideration.

Procedures will be conducted in accordance with national guidelines. If necessary Self Help Africa will conduct its own internal investigation to assess whether a breach of organisation policy has occurred. If founded, a breach of policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Guidance for staff who receive a complaint

Self Help Africa employees must report any suspected incident of exploitation or abuse (both current and historical) of an individual(s) immediately. Reports may relate to, but not be limited to: physical abuse, emotional abuse, exploitation, sexual exploitation and abuse or neglect. However, it is not the role of the individual staff member to investigate beyond the need to ensure that any report of an incident is accurate and is sufficiently detailed to be the basis for a decision regarding next steps to be taken.

Actions to be taken when a concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of child abuse is received:

- Respond immediately to any concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of child abuse.
- As soon as possible refer all information to the Child Protection Focal Person.
- CFPF will assess the information and will follow up the matter with the civil authorities.

IRELAND SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

Obligations under Irish Law are encompassed by the term Children First. Children First deals with the recognition of child abuse and neglect, the reporting of same to Tusla – the Child and Family Agency, and the best practice which organisations should adhere to, to keep children safe while availing of their services. Non statutory obligations for all persons coming into contact with children are set out in the Children First Guidance, and the Children First Act 2015 sets out additional statutory obligations for defined categories of persons and for organisations providing relevant services to children.

Organisations working with children and young people

Children First: National Guidance outlines that all organisations working with children and young people should create a culture of safety that promotes the welfare of children and young people availing of their services. Self Help Africa is a 'relevant services' provider as defined in the Children First Act 2015 and therefore has specific statutory obligations under the Act. Set out below are statutory obligations of relevant services and [Safeguarding Best Practice Procedures](#).

Statutory obligations of relevant services

As per statutory requirements under The Children First Act 2015, Self Help Africa commits to:

- Keep children **safe from harm** while they are using the service.
- Carry out a **risk assessment** to identify whether a child or young person could be harmed while availing of the service.
- Develop a **Child Safeguarding Statement** that outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks that have been identified.
- Appoint a **relevant person** to be the first point of contact in respect of the organisation's Child Safeguarding Statement..

Training on Children First is available at: <https://childrenfirstuniversal.hseland.ie/>