

**SOS Sahel International UK**  
**Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy**

**October 2012**

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SOS Sahel International UK is not a direct implementer of programmes, and it is unlikely that any Trustee or employee would be in unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults at any time. However, we encourage our partners, who implement programmes to adopt similar policies to ours and will support them to develop these where necessary.

In line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child SOS Sahel UK considers a child as an individual under 18 years of age.

For the purpose of this policy, SOS Sahel UK defines a vulnerable adult as “anyone over the age of 18 who: ...by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness...is or maybe unable to take care of himself or herself or is unable to protect themselves against significant harm or serious exploitation” (Department of Health, 2000).

SOS Sahel UK recognises that:

- the welfare of the individual is paramount;
- all children and vulnerable adults without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs.

SOS Sahel UK will:

- report any concerns that a child or vulnerable adult is a victim of abuse or sexual exploitation to the required authorities and keep its own record of, and, monitor all incidents of, allegations of abuse and complaints that occur within the organisation;
- co-operate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns or allegations;
- identify, minimise and attempt to avoid potential situations where inappropriate behaviour may occur or which may lead to behaviour being misinterpreted;
- ensure that when using images of children or vulnerable adults (eg for publicity material) that they are respectful and appropriate
- ensure that children and vulnerable adults are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse of any kind.

SOS Sahel UK will not:

- condone any form of physical assault or any other form of abuse of children or vulnerable adults;
- condone the engagement of any sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18, or recognised as a vulnerable adult, by any of its staff or the development of any relationships with children or vulnerable adults that could, in any way, be deemed to be exploitative or abusive;
- condone any participation in behaviour towards children or vulnerable adults which is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
- discriminate against, show unfair or differential treatment to, or favour particular children or vulnerable adults to the exclusion of others.

## Procedures:

- **Process of referral**

If any staff or anyone who comes into contact with the organisation are concerned that any of the aforementioned issues have arisen and are affecting a child or vulnerable adult's safety or welfare the following steps should be taken:

1. Any SOS Sahel employee or representative who receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that abuse may have occurred must report it immediately to the designated SOS Sahel UK staff member and inform the designated SOS Sahel UK trustee that they have done so<sup>1</sup> that they have done so. It is the responsibility of the designated staff member to discuss the concern with the relevant authorities.
2. Confidentiality must be maintained and information relating to individual young people and vulnerable adults/families shared on a strictly need to know basis.

- **Breach of policy**

Any breach of the guidelines for behaviour laid out in this Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy may lead to organisational disciplinary procedures. However if an allegation or complaint is made against a member of SOS Sahel staff or a representative of the organisation, alleging abuse of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, the matter will first be discussed with the appropriate authorities before any internal investigation which may result in disciplinary action.

- **Recruitment**

SOS Sahel is committed to safe recruitment, selection and vetting: references will be taken up for all individuals who secure a job with the organisation and criminal records bureau checks will be requested if a particular role involves work with children. Staff will be made aware of this Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and additional training will be required for any staff member employed to work directly with children.

This policy applies to all trustees, staff and volunteers and will be communicated to them at the commencement of their work with SOS Sahel UK

This policy is approved and endorsed by the board of trustees and will be reviewed every three years, taking account of any changes within legislation and our organisation, and other factors.

We will make this policy available when requested to interested parties including members of the public.

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<sup>1</sup> The details of these designated individuals at SOS Sahel UK will be made available to all staff within the organisation and its partner organisations.