



THE GOOD TREE

**CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING
POLICY**

INTRODUCTION

The Good Tree Ghana abides by the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and is committed to safeguarding practice that reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice requirements.

DEFINITIONS:

Child: This Policy recognises a child as a person below the age of 18. In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the 1992 Fourth Republic Constitution of Ghana (Article 28) and the Children's Act 1998, (Act 560) (section 1). This policy also takes into account how a child is defined in the Ghanaian context in relation to the family and concept of childhood. Thus, a child is one who is still largely dependent on an adult for the necessities of life

Child Protection: Any act that seeks to promote the wellbeing of children, prevent abuse and protect them from harm.

Harm: Any damaging or detrimental effects on a child's physical, socio and emotional wellbeing.

Child Abuse: Any physical, sexual and/or emotional acts of others on the child that cause harm on the child.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Good Tree Ghana believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard all children and young people and promote their welfare, by a commitment to practise which protects them.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of The Good Tree, including but not limited to senior managers and the board, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers. Failure to comply with the policy and related procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks (including CRB checks) are made
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK:

The policy has been drawn up based on existing national legal and policy frameworks, as well as international conventions, treaties, and protocols ratified and signed by the government of Ghana. Specifically, the key principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the 1992 Constitution and the Children's Act of 1998 (Act 560).

The Good Tree strives to put in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people as well as vulnerable adults.

TRAINING AND AWARENESS:

The Good Tree will ensure an appropriate level of safeguarding training is available to its board, Employees, Volunteers, Parents and any relevant persons linked to the organisation who requires it (e.g. contractors).

The Good Tree will ensure that its members are getting age appropriate education that familiarises them with personal safety, social duties, and identifying potential indicators of abuse and acts intended to cause them harm. The Good Tree will ensure that students understand their responsibilities to standing up for their own and others rights, and report any abuse against them.

Staff/Volunteers

The Good Tree will ensure that all members of staff recognize their duty to report concerns of abuse that arises on a child or staff conduct toward a child.

Parents

The Good Tree will alert parents in recognizing signs and symptoms of abuse. The Good Tree will facilitate involvement of parents or caretakers in the work and to make the child

protection policy available to them. Parents must also be educated about potential online dangers, and how to safeguard their children while in the home environment. If an accusation should be made against a parent, they will be notified through a parent meeting to discuss the potential harm being brought onto the child in question.

PROCEDURES AFTER DISCLOSURE

Any member of staff or volunteer who receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that abuse may have occurred must report it immediately to **Nana Yaa Agyeman**. In the absence of Nana Yaa, the matter should be brought to the attention of either **Suhaidatu Dramani** or **Benedicta Yayra Azagloh**.

Similarly, any alleged abuse made against a member of staff or volunteer shall be brought to the attention of Nana Yaa Agyeman. In the absence of Nana Yaa, the matter should be brought to the attention of either Suhaidatu Dramani or Benedicta Yayra Azagloh.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

At The Good Tree Ghana, we prioritise the privacy and confidentiality of our members above all. The management and staff are strictly prohibited from disclosing personal or sensitive information about our members to third parties without their explicit consent. However, exceptions to this confidentiality may occur when there is a legal duty to protect the safety and well-being of a member, such as in cases of:

- Suspected child abuse or neglect
- Court orders requiring the disclosure of information
- Severe threats to life or health, including self-harm or harm to others
- Knowledge of serious criminal activity involving a child

In such situations, information may be shared with the relevant authorities by the law. Any information sharing will be conducted with the utmost respect for the individual's privacy and in compliance with data protection laws.

The Good Tree expects all employees, volunteers, and board members to maintain confidentiality and protect the identity and image of the child.

However, information should be shared with the Local Authority if a child is deemed to be at risk of harm or contact the police if they are in immediate danger or a crime has been committed.

RECORDING AND RECORD KEEPING

Any member of staff or volunteer receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing possible abuse must make an accurate record as soon as possible, noting what was said or seen, putting the event into context, and giving the date, time and location. All documents must be dated and signed.

All hand-written records will be retained, even if they are subsequently typed up in a more formal report.

Written records of concerns about children should be kept, even where there is no need to make a referral immediately.

All records relating to child protection concerns will be kept secure and will remain confidential.

SAFE RECRUITMENT OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

The Good Tree is committed to safe employment and safe recruitment practices that reduce the risk of harm to children from people unsuitable to work with or have contact with them.

WHISTLEBLOWING

People within The Good Tree must have the confidence to come forward to speak or act if they are unhappy with anything. Whistle-blowing occurs when a person raises a concern about dangerous or illegal activity or any wrongdoing within their organisation. This includes concerns about another employee or volunteer. The Good Tree is determined to protect whistleblowers.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated where appropriate.

Code of Behaviour

You must:

- Treat all children and young people with respect
- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow
- Ensure that, whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities which children and young people or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- Encourage young people and adults to be comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned
- Recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- Operate within the organisation's principles and guidance and any specific procedures
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse.

You must not:

- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or young people
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour/ make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- Either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- Show favouritism to any individual
- Rely on your good name or that of the organisation (faith or charity) to protect you

- Take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach