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CAMARA EDUCATION CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY
Updated January 2026
Date of Next Review January 2027

PURPOSE OF POLICY

Within Camara Education, we believe in the inherent rights, freedom, dignity and equality of all people, including children. Children can be extremely vulnerable, especially in situations of poverty, crisis or conflict.

Camara Education is committed to creating and proactively maintaining an organisational culture and operational environments which prevent and deter any actions and omissions, whether deliberate or inadvertent, that place children at risk of any kind of abuse. It is the responsibility of all those working on behalf of Camara Education to raise any concerns they have, or any concerns which are reported to them, in accordance with this policy.

This policy sets out the commitment of Camara Education and our staff to fulfil our statutory duty to ensure the safeguarding, wellbeing and protection of those we come into contact with.

This document will:

- Provide an overview of what constitutes abuse and how we expect our staff to behave both in and out of work
- Outline the duties and obligations of Camara Education as an organisation to ensure staff are aware of and understand their responsibilities regarding the safeguarding and protection of children
- Guide all Camara personnel on what their responsibilities are towards reporting any disclosures or concerns and the process in which to do this

THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (UNCRC)

All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe and protected. Camara Education is committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people accessing our services or coming into contact with any of our personnel.

A child is defined in the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** as a person under the age of 18 years. The UNCRC applies to all children, whatever their race, religion or abilities: It doesn't matter where children live, what language they speak, what their parents do, whether they are boys or girls, what their culture is, whether they have a disability or whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly or put at risk in any instance.

The UNCRC offers a vision of the child as an individual *and* as a member of a family and community, with rights and responsibilities appropriate to his or her age and stage of

development. By recognising children's rights in this way, the Convention firmly sets the focus on the whole child.

The Convention and its acceptance by so many countries has heightened recognition of the fundamental human dignity of all children and the urgency of ensuring their well-being and development. The Convention makes clear the idea that a basic quality of life should be the right of all children, rather than a privilege enjoyed by a few.

As outlined in the Convention:

Best Interests
The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for children. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.

Right to participation
Children are entitled to the freedom to express opinions and to have a say in matters affecting their social, economic,religious, cultural and political life. Participation rights include the right to express opinions and be heard, the right to information and freedom of association.

Right to life, survival and development
Children have the right to the resources, skills and contributions necessary for the survival and full development of the child. This includes the right to adequate food, shelter, clean water, formal education, primary health care, leisure and recreation, cultural activities and information about their rights. These rights require not only the existence of the means to fulfil the rights but also access to them.

Right to protection
All children have the right to protection from all forms of child abuse, neglect, exploitation and cruelty, including the right to special protection in times of war and protection from abuse in the criminal justice system.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The following is a list, but not an exhaustive one, of potential acts that would be considered child abuse & neglect;

- **Physical abuse**
  Physical abuse of children is defined as excessive intentional physical injury to a child or excessive corporal punishment of a child. Torture, beatings, and assault of children are obvious forms of physical abuse.

- **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse constitutes an attack on a child or young person's self-esteem ie: through bullying, harassment, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or by isolating the child.

- **Sexual abuse**
  Sexual abuse constitutes any sexual act or sexual threat imposed on a child or young person. This includes any act undertaken with any child or young person under the age of 18 even if they have agreed or provided consent.

- **Neglect**
  Neglect in any form, when it concerns a child's welfare, is generally considered to be criminal behaviour. Neglecting a child results in the young person being harmed by the failure to provide the basic physical or emotional necessities.

- **Exploitation**
  Exploitation occurs when a child is exploited and completely controlled by someone else, without being able to leave. Examples of this could be human trafficking, forced labour, sexual exploitation.

CAMARA'S COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

All children coming into contact with Camara should be certain that they will be free from harassment and abuse perpetrated by any member of Camara Personnel. All children who come into contact with Camara have a right to feel safe and to be safe. Camara is committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people accessing our services and the welfare of the children in contact with the organisation will always be our number one priority.

Responsibility & Expectations of Camara Staff

It is the responsibility of all Camara staff to have an awareness of matters that can be considered child abuse and also the role they play in the protection and safeguarding of children and young people.

CAMARA'S CODE OF CONDUCT ON CHILD PROTECTION

Camara personnel have a responsibility to the organisation, those they come into contact with and to themselves, to strive for and maintain the highest standards in the day-to-day conduct of their work in accordance with Camara's core values and mission. As such, the following Code of Conduct on Child Protection should be adhered to at all times.

The Code of Conduct describes expected standards of behaviour and promotes good practice. It is the responsibility of all Camara personnel to be aware of and adhere fully to the organisation's Code of Conduct on Child Protection which is based around relevant legislation governing Child Protection.

Sexual Relationships with Children

Sexual activity between any member of Camara staff or volunteer and a child (person under the age of eighteen years) is strictly forbidden. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is no defence.

Any efforts to seduce a minor into a sexual relationship, whether the act is accomplished or not, will likewise be considered a form of child sexual abuse and will result in severe legal consequences. Inappropriate intimacy with children will also be regarded as child sexual abuse.

Harassment, Exploitation, and Abuse

Any proven instance of harassment, exploitation or abuse will be treated as gross misconduct and as such, will result in appropriate disciplinary action being taken, up to and including dismissal or possible criminal prosecution.

Camara personnel must:

- Establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work, i.e. when conducting activities related to the aim and purpose of Camara;
- Treat children and young people with respect, listen to and value their ideas and opinions and do everything in their power to protect their wellbeing;
- Respect the privacy of children and their families and only disclose information to people who have a need to know;
- Operate within the rules of Camara policy guidelines and procedures and comply with specific guidelines on physical contact with children;
- Be professional in their actions through their use of language, presentation, manner, and punctuality;
- Aim to resolve conflicts fairly and promptly by reporting any breaches of Camara's standards of behaviour through the established reporting mechanism;
- Maintain strict impartiality; and
- Notify the Safeguarding Officer (as detailed in this policy) as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable suspicion that a child has been or is being abused or neglected or if they have any concerns that another member of Camara personnel is in breach of any aspect of this policy.

Camara Personnel must not:

- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour, or offensive language with children or allow children to use inappropriate language around them;
- Discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, or sexuality;
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves;
- Develop 'special' relationships with specific children for their own needs;
- Show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention, including spending time alone with a child away from others
- Have any inappropriate contact with children including requesting their contact details for personal reasons
- Accept payment or bribes to stay quiet about an incident they witness or hear about which would cause concern for the safety, care or wellbeing of a child or vulnerable person
- Give alcohol, tobacco or drugs to children
- Take a child/young person into their home
- Subject a child to physical, emotional, or psychological abuse, or neglect – either in person or online.
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking.

Camara personnel should conduct themselves at all times in a manner that avoids even the suspicion of such behaviour.

ADULT SAFEGUARDING

Camara staff and associated personnel will not:

- Sexually abuse or exploit at-risk adults
- Subject an at-risk adult to physical, emotional, or psychological abuse, or neglect – either in person or on-line
- Exchange money, employment, goods, or services for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance
- Engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance

Additionally, Camara staff and associated personnel are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by a Camara staff member or associated personnel to the appropriate staff member

Any breach of Camara's Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal and a possible police complaint.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK A CHILD/ VULNERABLE ADULT IS BEING ABUSED

Duty to Report

Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be experiencing abuse or have been abused in the past. This is an important responsibility for staff and volunteers when working with children and young people. All Camara staff must report concerns, including both specific reports and unconfirmed concerns, regarding child abuse, sexual exploitation, and any other child protection concern, using the reporting procedures detailed below and in the appendices.

The guiding principles in regard to reporting child abuse are summarised as follows:

- The safety and well-being of the child or young person must take priority
- Reports should be made without delay to the Safeguarding Focal Point Person within the school and to the Safeguarding Focal Point Person within Camara; and
- While the basis for concern must be established as comprehensively as possible, children or parents should not be interviewed in detail about the suspected abuse.

It is the duty of all Camara Personnel who become aware of any breaches to this Code to report it immediately to the Safeguarding Focal Point Person, the Camara Country Lead and the Head of Africa Operations, through the established reporting procedure detailed below.

REPORTING PROCEDURE:

The reporting procedure for dealing with disclosures, concerns or allegations of child abuse is outlined in the following steps:

- The employee or volunteer who has received a disclosure of child abuse or who has concerns of abuse, should bring it to the attention of the Safeguarding Focal Point Person (FPP) within the school they are in (if applicable) and to the Safeguarding Focal Point Person within Camara.

- The FPP will assess and review the information that has been provided and may contact the relevant statutory bodies including the Police Service victim support unit or community welfare service for support and guidance.

- After consultation with the required officials, a decision will then be taken on one of following two options:

    - Formally report the allegation, concern or disclosure to Police Service or

    - Not make a formal report to the Police Service but keep a record of the concerns on file. The reasons for not reporting the allegation, concern or disclosure will be clearly recorded. The employee/volunteer who made the initial report will be informed if a formal report is not being made to the Police Service and it is open to him/her to make a formal report themselves, directly to the relevant authority if they feel this is necessary.

In an emergency a report should be made directly to the Police Service Victim Support Unit.

In making a report on suspected or actual child abuse, the individual must ensure that the first priority is always for the safety and welfare of the young person and that no young person is ever left in an unsafe situation.

It is important that any concerns or suspicions, whether major or minor, about a suspected incident of exploitation, harassment or bullying are reported immediately. All incidents must be discussed with a line manager or other senior member of staff. A fuller picture is likely to emerge which might reduce the level of concern or, on the other hand, may lead to the realisation that further action is appropriate.

All such concerns must be recorded and the record held in a secure location.

DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

In the event of a child/young person disclosing an incident of abuse it is essential that this is dealt with sensitively and professionally by the staff member/volunteer involved. The following are guidelines to support the worker/volunteer in this:

- React calmly;
- Listen carefully and attentively; take the young person seriously;
- Reassure the young person that they have taken the right action in talking to you;
- Do not promise to keep anything secret;
- Ask questions for clarification only. Do not ask leading questions;
- Check back with the child/young person that what you have heard is correct and understood;
- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser;
- Record the conversation as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible. Sign and date the Incident Report form (Appendix X)
- Ensure that the child/young person understands the procedures which will follow;
- Pass the information to the appropriate person (Safeguarding Focal Point Person within the school if applicable, FPP within Camara, Head of Africa Operations), do not attempt to deal with the problem alone;
- Treat the information confidentially

CAMARA'S ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

1. Undertake police clearance checks on all new staff coming into the organisation and ensure all personnel receive updated clearance certificates bi-annually. These should be kept within the staff HR file.

2. Provide personnel with required child protection and safeguarding training to ensure they have sufficient knowledge and understanding around types of abuse, signs to be aware of, expectations around their own behaviour and processes to be followed if any concerns or disclosures are raised.

3. Ensure that all personnel review and sign Camara Education's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy on an annual basis. Signed acknowledgement of these reviews and agreement to adhere to the policy should be kept within the staff HR file.

4. Ensure that all concerns or information on disclosures made to or by Camara personnel are followed up and reported to the relevant designated person within the school (if made by a child within the school premises) or to the relevant authority (if the concern is related to a child outside of the school or related to any Camara staff member).

5. If an allegation or concern is reported or raised regarding any Camara staff personnel, the Safeguarding Focal Point Person will take appropriate action to ensure that that member of staff does not prove any further risk while an investigation is ongoing.

LEGISLATION AND POLICY SURROUNDING CHILD PROTECTION

Camara Education aims to comply with legislation in all operating jurisdictions including local and international child welfare and protection legislation. However, our organisational minimum standards regarding Child Protection and safeguarding are based on legislative requirements within the UK and Ireland which means that our policy and procedures may have more rigorous expectations than local laws and requirements. The guidance and information within this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy should therefore be viewed alongside applicable legal requirements within the countries where we operate.

Our guiding policies and legislation to protect the rights, wellbeing and safety of children is governed under various documents including:

-UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
-The Children Act 1989 (UK)
-The Children Act 2001 (Ireland)
-The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC)
-The Children's Code Act 2022 (Zambia)
-National Plan of Action on Ending Child Marriage (Zambia)
-E.D.R.E. constitution Article 36 (Ethiopia)&
-F.D.R.E. Ministry of Women and Social Affairs Safeguarding guidelines (Ethiopia)

Reviewed and revised January 2026

Anita McWilliams — Director of African Operations

Ibolya Nemeth — Camara Education CEO

Staff Acknowledgement:
By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understood the policy and will abide by it in my work as an employee of Camara Education.

Name:_____

Position:_____

Signature: _____

Date:_____

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CHILD PROTECTION INCIDENT REPORT FORM

WHO? (The name of the child this report is about and details of who is involved)

WHEN? Date and time of incident

WHERE? Incident location (attach map / sketch / diagram if necessary)

WHAT HAS HAPPENED? Description of incident

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE ABOUT IT AT THIS POINT?

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS REQUIRED?

ADD ANY OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION HERE?

WHO ARE YOU REPORTING THIS CONCERN TO? (name and contact details)

Name: Signature:
Position: Date: