

BANDAMA CHARITY FOUNDATION SIERRA LEONE**CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

Protecting Children and Vulnerable Persons in All BCF-SL Activities

BCF-SL | Save Lives | Empowering Communities Through Service/ Policy Number: BCF-SP-001

Document Type:

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy — Mandatory

Legislative Basis:

Sierra Leone Child Rights Act 2007 | UNCRC | PSEAH Standards | BCF-SL Code of Conduct

Policy Status:

Zero-Tolerance | non-negotiable | All Staff Must Obey



**BANDAMA
CHARITY
FOUNDATION**

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Bandama Charity Foundation Sierra Leone (BCF) is committed to creating and maintaining a safe environment for all individuals who come into contact with the organization, particularly children, women, persons with disabilities, vulnerable adults, beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, consultants, contractors, and community members.

BCF has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of abuse, exploitation, neglect, harassment, discrimination, bullying, and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). Every person associated with BCF has the right to be protected from harm and to be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse, exploitation, neglect, and harm.
- Prevent sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (PSEAH).
- Promote a culture of safety, accountability, and respect.
- Establish procedures for reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure compliance with national laws, donor requirements, and international safeguarding standards.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- Board Members
- Staff
- Volunteers
- Consultants
- Interns
- Contractors
- Suppliers
- Community Mobilizers
- Partner Organizations
- Beneficiaries
- Visitors
- Donors and Representatives acting on behalf of BCF

The policy applies in:

- Offices
- Project sites
- Training venues
- Community activities
- Field visits
- Vehicles
- Accommodation facilities
- Online and digital platforms
- Social media engagements
- and all activities conducted under the name of BCF.

4. DEFINITIONS

a. Safeguarding

Safeguarding means protecting people from harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation, and misconduct arising from contact with BCF personnel, programs, or activities.

b. Child

Any person below the age of eighteen (18) years.

c. Vulnerable Adult

Any person aged eighteen years or above who may be at increased risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation due to disability, illness, age, dependency, displacement, poverty, or other circumstances.

d. Abuse

Any act or failure to act that results in physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, financial, or social harm.

e. Sexual Exploitation

Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, power, or trust for sexual purposes.

f. Sexual Abuse

Actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature.

h. Harassment

Any unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.

5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

BCF shall be guided by the following principles:

a. Zero Tolerance

All forms of abuse, exploitation, harassment, and neglect are prohibited and subject to disciplinary action.

b. Do No Harm

All BCF activities shall be designed and implemented to avoid causing harm.

c. Best Interests of the Child

The welfare and safety of children shall always be the primary consideration.

d. Survivor-Centered Approach

The rights, dignity, safety, and wishes of survivors shall guide all safeguarding responses.

e. Confidentiality

Information shall only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

f. Inclusiveness and Non-Discrimination

Safeguarding protections shall apply equally to all individuals regardless of age, sex, disability, religion, ethnicity, or social status.

g. Accountability

Everyone associated with BCF is responsible for safeguarding.

6. PROHIBITED CONDUCT

No BCF representative shall:

a. Child Protection

- Engage in sexual activity with a child.
- Physically abuse a child.
- Emotionally abuse or humiliate a child.
- Neglect a child.
- Use child labor.
- Facilitate child trafficking.
- Engage in any exploitative relationship with a child.

b. Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

- Exchange money, gifts, employment, services, or assistance for sexual favors.
- Engage in exploitative sexual relationships with beneficiaries.
- Use their position of power for sexual gain.
- Commit any form of sexual abuse or harassment.

c. General Misconduct

- Bullying
- Discrimination
- Intimidation
- Physical violence
- Emotional abuse
- Financial exploitation
- Online abuse
- Retaliation against whistleblowers

7. SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES

Board of Directors

The Board shall:

- Approve safeguarding policies.
- Ensure adequate safeguarding resources.
- Monitor safeguarding compliance.
- Review safeguarding reports.

Executive Director

The Executive Director shall:

- Ensure implementation of this policy.
- Appoint a Safeguarding Focal Person.
- Ensure safeguarding investigations are conducted.

Managers

Managers shall:

- Promote safeguarding awareness.
- Monitor compliance.
- Report concerns promptly.

Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers shall:

- Read and comply with this policy.
- Attend safeguarding training.
- Report safeguarding concerns immediately.
- Maintain professional boundaries.

8. SAFER RECRUITMENT

BCF shall implement safe recruitment procedures by:

- Verifying identity documents.
- Conducting reference checks.
- Verifying qualifications.
- Conducting criminal background checks where possible.
- Requiring staff to sign the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Declaration.

9. REPORTING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

Any person may report:

- Abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation
- Harassment
- Misconduct
- Suspicious behavior

Reports may be made through:

a. Internal Channels

- Executive Director
- Safeguarding Focal Person
- Human Resources Unit
- Board Chairperson

b. External Channels

- Sierra Leone Police
- Family Support Unit (FSU)
- Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs
- Relevant regulatory authorities

All safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately or within 24 hours of becoming aware of the concern.

10. RESPONSE PROCEDURES

Upon receiving a safeguarding concern:

Step 1: Ensure immediate safety of the survivor.

Step 2: Record the concern confidentially.

Step 3: Notify the Safeguarding Focal Person.

Step 4: Conduct a risk assessment.

Step 5: Initiate an investigation where appropriate.

Step 6: Refer survivors to medical, psychosocial, legal, or protection services.

Step 7: Take disciplinary action where necessary.

Step 8: Document lessons learned.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

BCF shall:

- Protect personal information.
- Maintain secure safeguarding records.
- Share information only on a need-to-know basis.
- Protect survivors, witnesses, and whistleblowers from retaliation.

12. USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS AND MEDIA

BCF shall:

- Obtain informed consent before taking photographs or videos.
- Protect children's identities where necessary.
- Avoid images that exploit or degrade beneficiaries.
- Store media securely.

13. TRAINING AND AWARENESS

BCF shall:

- Provide mandatory safeguarding induction training.
- Conduct annual refresher training.
- Display safeguarding information at offices and project sites.
- Ensure partners receive safeguarding orientation.

14. BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

Violations of this policy may result in:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Suspension
- Termination of employment
- Termination of partnership agreements
- Referral to law enforcement authorities
- Civil or criminal proceedings

15. MONITORING AND REVIEW

BCF shall:

- Conduct annual safeguarding audits.
- Review safeguarding incidents and trends.
- Update this policy every two years or sooner where necessary.
- Report safeguarding performance to the Board.

16. APPROVAL

This Safeguarding Policy was approved by the Board of Directors of Bandama Charity Foundation Sierra Leone (BCF).

Signature/Date

Chairperson:

Vice Chairperson:

Secretary:

Executive Director:

Safeguarding Focal Person:

Approved Date: Review Date: