



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

To be Approved By: Board of Trustees

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1. Introduction and Purpose

The Kwara State Education Trust Fund (KwaraETF) is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for every child who may benefit from, or be affected by, our programmes and activities. As an organisation dedicated to improving access to quality education in Kwara State, we recognise our moral and legal duty to safeguard all children from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and other forms of harm. This policy sets out the framework through which KwaraETF:

- Promotes the welfare and rights of all children.
- Prevents situations that may lead to harm.
- Responds promptly, fairly, and effectively to concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing.

The policy applies to all interactions with children — whether direct (e.g., scholarship awards, school visits) or indirect (e.g., construction projects in schools, partnerships with NGOs).

2. Scope

This policy covers all settings where KwaraETF operates, including schools, communities, offices, events, field visits, and online or digital platforms. It applies to:

- All KwaraETF employees, Board members, and management staff.
- Volunteers, consultants, contractors, and service providers engaged by KwaraETF.
- Partner organisations and grantees funded or supported by KwaraETF.
- Any individual representing KwaraETF in an official capacity.

3. Guiding Principles

This policy is based on the following core principles, which guide all decisions, actions, and behaviours within KwaraETF and by those representing the organisation:

3.1 Best Interests of the Child

In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by KwaraETF staff, partners, or contractors, the best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration.

3.2 Zero Tolerance for Abuse


KwaraETF has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of abuse, exploitation, neglect, and violence against children.

- Any suspicion, allegation, or confirmed case will be treated seriously and acted upon promptly.
- All staff and partners have a duty to report concerns without delay.

3.3 Equality and Non-Discrimination

Every child has an equal right to protection, regardless of gender, age, religion, ethnicity, disability, social background, or any other status. No child will be excluded from safeguarding measures on any discriminatory basis.

3.4 Shared Responsibility



Safeguarding children is a collective responsibility. All individuals associated with KwaraETF are accountable for ensuring safe environments and reporting concerns.

3.5 Participation and Empowerment of Children

Children have the right to be heard, to express their views freely, and to have those views respected in matters affecting them. KwaraETF will promote child-friendly communication and feedback channels in its programmes.

3.6 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information related to a child protection concern will be handled confidentially and shared only with those who need to know in order to protect the child, in line with Nigerian law and ethical standards.

4. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

4.1 Child: Any person under the age of 18 years, in line with the Child Rights Act 2003, Kwara State Child Rights Law, and international standards.

4.2 Safeguarding: The proactive measures taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation, and any situation that impairs their healthy development. Safeguarding includes:


- Creating safe environments for children.
- Addressing risks before they result in harm.
- Empowering children to understand their rights and speak up.

4.3 Child Protection: A specific component of safeguarding that focuses on responding to actual or potential harm to a child. It involves:

- Identifying children at risk.
- Taking immediate and appropriate action to protect them.
- Following established reporting and referral procedures.

4.4 Abuse: A violation of a child's rights and dignity through intentional or negligent acts or omissions that cause harm or risk of harm. Abuse can be:

- **Physical Abuse** – Causing physical harm to a child through hitting, beating, burning, poisoning, or any act likely to cause injury.
- **Emotional Abuse** – Persistent behaviour that damages a child's emotional development, self-esteem, or mental wellbeing, including threats, humiliation, or isolation.
- **Sexual Abuse** – Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether physical contact (rape, molestation) or non-contact (exposing a child to pornography, sexual comments, online grooming).
- **Neglect** – Persistent failure to meet a child's basic needs (food, shelter, medical care, education, supervision) resulting in harm or risk of harm.
- **Exploitation** – Using a child for personal or commercial gain, including child labour, trafficking, or forcing a child into illegal activities.



4.5 Harmful Traditional Practices: Cultural or religious practices that negatively affect the health, dignity, or rights of a child, such as child marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), or initiation rites involving abuse.

4.6 Online Abuse: Any form of abuse or exploitation of a child that occurs via the internet, mobile devices, or digital platforms — including cyberbullying, online grooming, sextortion, or exposure to harmful content.

5. Legal & Policy Framework

This policy is guided by the following legal instruments and frameworks:

National and State Laws

- **Child Rights Act, 2003** – domesticated in Kwara State, guaranteeing the rights and protection of children under 18 years.
- **Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act** – providing protection against physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.
- **Labour Act, Cap L1, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004** – regulating child labour and prohibiting exploitative practices.
- **Compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education Act, 2004** – ensuring every child’s right to basic education.
- **Kwara State Child Rights Law** and other relevant state-level child protection policies.

International Conventions Ratified by Nigeria

- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).**
- **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.**
- **ILO Conventions 138 and 182** on the minimum age for employment and elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

6. Roles & Responsibilities

Safeguarding children is a **shared duty**. Everyone associated with KwaraETF has a role to play, but specific responsibilities are assigned as follows:

6.1 Board of Trustees


- Approve and review the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.
- Ensure adequate resources are allocated for safeguarding implementation.
- Oversee accountability mechanisms and respond to serious safeguarding concerns.

6.2 Executive Director

- Provide overall leadership and ensure organisational compliance with safeguarding obligations.
- Appoint a **Child Protection Focal Person (CPF)** and ensure they are trained and resourced.
- Report serious safeguarding incidents to the Board and relevant authorities when required.

6.3 Child Protection Focal Person (CPF)

- Serve as the **first point of contact** for safeguarding concerns within KwaraETF.
- Maintain and update safeguarding procedures and records.

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- Provide training and guidance to staff, volunteers, and partners.
 - Coordinate the referral of cases to external agencies when necessary.

6.4 Programme Managers & Supervisors

- Monitor child protection risks within programmes and field activities.
- Ensure all team members are aware of and comply with safeguarding procedures.
- Support staff and volunteers in reporting and managing incidents.

6.5 All Staff, Volunteers, and Contractors

- Understand and follow the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.
- Report any suspicion, allegation, or evidence of abuse immediately.
- Treat all children with dignity, respect, and fairness.
- Avoid behaviours that could be misinterpreted as abusive or exploitative.

6.6 Partner Organisations and Grantees

- Comply with KwaraETF's safeguarding standards as a condition of funding or partnership.
- Maintain their own child protection policies and procedures in line with national law.
- Report safeguarding concerns to KwaraETF promptly.

7. Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct sets clear behavioural expectations for all KwaraETF staff, volunteers, partners, contractors, and representatives when interacting with children. It aims to protect children from harm and also safeguard adults from false allegations.

7.1 Expected Behaviour (DOs)


All KwaraETF representatives must:

- Treat all children with dignity, respect, and fairness.
- Listen to children and take their views seriously.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times.
- Ensure two-adult presence when working directly with children, wherever possible.
- Seek parental or guardian consent for any direct engagement, photos, videos, or interviews involving children.
- Use child-friendly and culturally appropriate language.
- Report any suspicion, allegation, or evidence of abuse immediately.

7.2 Prohibited Behaviour (DON'Ts)

All KwaraETF representatives must not:

- Hit, physically punish, or use any form of physical violence against a child.
- Engage in sexual activity, sexual conversations, or sexualised behaviour with a child.
- Develop relationships with children that could be seen as exploitative or abusive.
- Be alone with a child in an isolated or closed space, unless strictly necessary and approved.
- Use offensive, discriminatory, or abusive language towards a child.
- Take a child's photograph, video, or personal information without proper consent and organisational approval.

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- Give gifts or favors to children in a way that could be seen as grooming or exploitation.
 - Involve children in harmful traditional practices, child labour, or hazardous activities.

7.3 Digital & Online Conduct

When interacting with children through technology, KwaraETF representatives must:

- Use only approved organisational platforms for communication.
- Never send or request inappropriate messages, images, or videos.
- Avoid private, unsupervised online contact with children.
- Protect children's personal data and online privacy.

7.4 Consequences of Breach

Any breach of this Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action, which may include:

- Formal warning.
- Termination of employment or contract.
- Referral to law enforcement or child protection authorities.

8. Recognising, Reporting & Response Procedures

This section provides clear guidance for KwaraETF staff, partners, and representatives on how to identify and appropriately report and respond to child protection concerns.

8.1 Recognising Abuse

Abuse can be obvious or hidden. Staff and partners must be alert to warning signs, including but not limited to:

Physical Signs

- Unexplained bruises, burns, cuts, or fractures.
- Frequent injuries with inconsistent explanations.

Behavioural Signs

- Sudden withdrawal or fearfulness.
- Aggression or extreme compliance.
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge for their age.

Emotional Indicators

- Low self-esteem, depression, or anxiety.
- Reluctance to go home or be with certain individuals.

Neglect Indicators

- Poor hygiene, constant hunger, untreated medical conditions.
- Consistent lack of school attendance.

8.2 If a Child Discloses Abuse



When a child tells you they are being abused, you must:

Do:

1. **Stay calm** – Listen without showing shock or disbelief.
2. **Believe the child** – Take their disclosure seriously.
3. **Reassure them** – Let them know they are right to speak up and it's not their fault.
4. **Use their words** – Write down exactly what the child says, without interpretation.
5. **Act quickly** – Follow the reporting procedure without delay.

Do NOT:

- Promise to keep secrets.
- Ask leading questions or press for unnecessary details.
- Confront the alleged abuser yourself.

8.3 Principles of Reporting

- **Immediate Action** — Concerns must be reported **as soon as possible**, and no later than **24 hours** after becoming aware.
- **Good Faith Protection** — Anyone reporting in good faith will be protected from retaliation.
- **Child-Centred Approach** — The safety and wellbeing of the child are the top priorities in all actions taken.

8.4 Reporting Steps

Step 1 – Ensure Immediate Safety

If the child is in immediate danger, take urgent action to protect them (e.g., call emergency services or move them to a safe location).

Step 2 – Report to the Child Protection Focal Person (CPF)

- Notify the CPF verbally as soon as possible.
- Complete the Incident Reporting Form within 24 hours.

Step 3 – Internal Review

- The CPF will assess the concern, gather initial facts, and determine the appropriate response.
- The CPF will inform the Executive Secretary and, if necessary, the Board of Trustees.

Step 4 – External Referral


Where required by law or in the child's best interest, the matter will be referred to:

- Kwara State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development
- National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP)
- Nigeria Police Force or other relevant law enforcement.

Step 5 – Ongoing Support

- The CPF will arrange for psychosocial support, counselling, or other services for the child, in coordination with relevant agencies.

8.5 What to Include in a Report

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- Name, age, and gender of the child.
 - Description of the concern or incident.
 - Date, time, and location of the incident.
 - Any witnesses or other relevant persons.
 - Actions taken so far.

8.6 Protection for Whistleblowers

Any staff member, volunteer, or partner who reports a child protection concern in good faith will be protected from retaliation under KwaraETF's Whistleblower Policy.

8.7 Confidentiality & Record-Keeping

- All reports will be stored securely by the CPF with restricted access.
- Records will be kept for a minimum of 7 years in line with KwaraETF's data protection standards.

8.8 Flowchart of Reporting

Concern Identified → Ensure Child's Safety → Notify CPF → Complete Report Form → CPF Assessment → Internal/External Action → Ongoing Support → Case Closure

9. Training, Awareness & Capacity Building

KwaraETF is committed to ensuring that all staff, volunteers, partners, and contractors understand and apply this policy effectively. Building safeguarding capacity is essential to preventing harm and ensuring a safe environment for all children we work with.

9.1 Induction & Onboarding


- All new staff, volunteers, and contractors must receive safeguarding training within their first month of engagement.
- Induction must cover:
 - This Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.
 - Signs of abuse and neglect.
 - Reporting and response procedures.
 - Code of Conduct and expected behaviours.

9.2 Ongoing Training

- Annual refresher training will be mandatory for all staff and volunteers.
- Specialised training will be provided for:
 - Child Protection Focal Persons.
 - Programme staff working directly with children.
 - Partners and grantees engaged in child-focused projects.

9.3 Awareness-Raising

- The policy will be made publicly available on KwaraETF's website and displayed in offices and programme locations.
- Child-friendly versions of the policy will be created to help children understand their rights and how to seek help.

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- Awareness sessions will be conducted with parents, guardians, and community members to promote joint responsibility for child safety.

9.4 Partner & Grantee Capacity Building

- All partner organisations must provide evidence of safeguarding training for their staff or participate in KwaraETF-led sessions.
- KwaraETF will offer technical assistance to strengthen partners' safeguarding systems where needed.

9.5 Monitoring Training Effectiveness

- Post-training evaluations will be conducted to assess knowledge gained.
- Safeguarding drills and scenario-based exercises will be carried out periodically to test readiness.

10. Monitoring, Review & Compliance

KwaraETF will ensure this Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy is actively implemented, regularly reviewed, and continually improved to meet evolving needs and standards.

10.1 Monitoring Implementation

- The Child Protection Focal Person (CPF) will conduct quarterly compliance checks on safeguarding practices across programmes.
- Spot checks will be carried out during field visits to assess adherence to the Code of Conduct, reporting procedures, and safe programme design.
- Anonymised safeguarding incident data will be analysed to identify trends and inform preventive measures.

10.2 Compliance Requirements

All staff, volunteers, contractors, and partners must:

- Sign a Safeguarding Commitment Statement confirming they have read, understood, and will follow this policy.
- Cooperate fully with monitoring activities, internal reviews, or external audits.
- Ensure that safeguarding requirements are integrated into all work plans, contracts, and partnership agreements.

10.3 Policy Review

- This policy will be formally reviewed every two years, or sooner if:
 - There are significant changes in child protection legislation or best practices.
 - A serious safeguarding incident highlights a gap in the policy.
- Reviews will involve consultation with staff, partners, children, and relevant stakeholders.

10.4 Reporting to the Board

- The CPF will submit an annual safeguarding report to the Board of Trustees summarising:
 - Number and type of safeguarding concerns reported.
 - Actions taken and outcomes achieved.
 - Training and awareness activities conducted.

- Recommendations for policy or procedural improvements.

11. Policy Approval and Sign-Off

This Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy has been formally reviewed, approved, and adopted by the KwaraETF Board of Trustees. It comes into effect immediately upon the date of signature below and is binding on all staff, volunteers, partners, contractors, and representatives.

Approval Statement

We, the undersigned, commit to upholding and promoting the principles and standards contained in this policy. We recognise our collective responsibility to protect all children we work with from abuse, exploitation, neglect, and any form of harm.

Name & Position	Signature	Date
[Executive Secretary]- Oluwadamilola Amolegbe		11/08/2025
[Chairman, Board of Trustees] - Col Abdulwahab Lawal Rtd		11/08/2025
[Child Protection Focal Person] - Zainab Abdulsalam		11/08/2025

Policy Effective Date

Date Approved:11/08/2025

Next Review Due: 1108/2027 – two years after approval date