

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

**GOOFIRM FOUNDATION (GOOFIRM)
2023**

GLOSSARY

Throughout this document, unless otherwise stated, the words below have the meanings stated opposite them or below them, as the case may be, (and cognate expressions shall bear corresponding meanings):

- Policy: Safeguarding Policy
- GOOFIRM: GOOFIRM FOUNDATION
- Safeguarding: refers to actions taken to promote the Welfare of, and prevent abuse, harm or neglect of, children, vulnerable adults and other persons, including staff or volunteers, who come into contact with GOOFIRM and its work. It includes the following definitions;
- Abuse or harm are used to encompass all types of harm and abuse, including violation of an individual's human rights by any other person or persons. It can take the form of physical, psychological, financial or sexual abuse neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the health, survival, development or dignity of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- Child means anyone under the age of 18 years.
- Safeguarding children means taking reasonable steps in connection with protecting them from maltreatment, preventing impairment of their health or development, ensuring that they grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and acting to enable all children to have the best outcomes. The welfare of the child is paramount, which means no other considerations should be allowed to override the duty to protect children from harm.
- Vulnerable adult means any person aged 18 or over who is or may be in need of care and support (e.g. health care, relevant personal care or social care and is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect and, as a result of this, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk or experience of neglect or abuse.
- Safeguarding vulnerable adults means taking reasonable steps in connection with protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognize that adults, sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unrealistic about their personal circumstances.
- Young people means individuals aged 15 to 35 year.

INTRODUCTION

- This policy sets out GOOFIRM's commitment and approach to safeguarding children, young people, vulnerable adults, Staff and any other person that comes into contact with GOOFIRM's work. It includes a safeguarding code of conduct, which must be signed by all Staff. The policy applies to GOOFIRM and its affiliates, staff and any other engaged by GOOFIRM, whether paid or unpaid and whether full-time or part-time.

OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

- The goal of GOOFIRM's Child Safeguarding Policy is to ensure the protection of children, young people, vulnerable adults and other persons, including staff or volunteers from physical abuse,

sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, exploitation, or any form of abuse in the process of GOOFIRM's work. The objectives of the policy are to ensure that:

- Persons who come in contact with GOOFIRM are protected from any form of abuse;
- GOOFIRM's partners are committed to protection of children and that their policies and behavior reflect this commitment;
- GOOFIRM's staff, volunteers and board members are fully cognisant of protection issues.

POLICY STATEMENT AND PRINCIPLES

- GOOFIRM is committed to the safety and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and others who come into contact with GOOFIRM. It recognizes that children and vulnerable adults may be at risk of harm in a variety of ways, and that all people, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious beliefs, or sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from harm and abuse. GOOFIRM will do all it reasonably to make sure that the children and vulnerable adults who come into contact with it, the staff and volunteers do not, as a result, come to harm.
- All children, young people and vulnerable adults should be empowered and encouraged to fulfil their potential. Decisions made about children, young people and vulnerable adults will be made as far as possible with their participation and in their best interest giving full consideration to how such decisions will affect them.
- All children, young people and vulnerable adults should be encouraged to express their views and this will be given 'due weight' in accordance with their age and level of maturity.
- The human rights of children, young people and vulnerable adults will be respected and applied to all irrespective of age, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, race, language, religious or political beliefs, marital status, disability, physical or mental health, family, socio-economic or cultural background, class, any history of conflict with the law or any other aspect of their background or identity. Inequality, exclusion, and discrimination will be challenged and will not be tolerated.
- GOOFIRM is open and transparent and will hold itself to account for its commitment to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding concerns can be raised and discussed, poor practice and inappropriate behavior challenged and addressed, and the safeguarding measures reviewed every two years and strengthened to ensure accountability to children, young people, vulnerable adults and their families.
- GOOFIRM will act on safeguarding concerns, ensuring that its actions are timely, appropriate and victim-centered around the child, young person or vulnerable adults, taking into account their gender and other specific safeguarding needs and vulnerabilities.
- GOOFIRM's safeguarding approach recognises and responds to the specific safeguarding risks and needs of the differing gender and other identities. It takes appropriate measures to address gender bias and other forms of discrimination and violence which may arise as a result of these. It supports the empowerment and fosters the inclusion of girls and women in the safeguarding process, in a manner that promotes equality, equity and ultimately their increased safety and protection.
- GOOFIRM will ensure its staff are supported to meet their safeguarding responsibilities and requirements, understand the specific risks to children, young people and vulnerable adults of differing gender and other identities and how they can work and engage in ways that increase the safety and protection of children, young people and adults with whom the organization is in contact.

SAFEGUARDING MEASURES

- GOOFIRM will promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults we are in contact with, directly or indirectly, through the following measures:

Safe recruitment: GOOFIRM will carry out appropriate safe recruitment checks, including the highest level of criminal record check (or equivalent) which it is entitled to carry out for that role. This may mean verifying appropriate candidates' identities, qualifications, obtaining references and considering gaps in employment history.

- Code of Conduct:** All GOOFIRM staff, volunteers and affiliates are required to read, understand and sign the Safeguarding policy and Code of Conduct GOOFIRM will ensure all staff are aware of this policy and their duties under it.
- Staff education:** GOOFIRM will provide appropriate training to staff, volunteers and affiliates on this policy and their duties. For new staff, volunteers and affiliates, this will be carried out during their induction trainings. A training has been conducted staff, volunteers and affiliates. This is to ensure that key individuals within GOOFIRM have appropriate training in order to appropriately lead on safeguarding.
- The Policy is available to all staff, volunteers and affiliates of GOOFIRM.

REPORTING

- Concerns in relation to a witnessed, suspected, reported or potential abuse by staff or affiliate must, as soon as possible but within 24 hours of the incident occurring, be reported to GOOFIRM's Executive Director, if for any reason it is not possible or appropriate to inform any of these people due to them being unavailable or in some way implicated in the alleged abuse, the Chairperson of the Board should be contacted. Safeguarding should always be the priority. If urgent action is required for purposes of protection, then this should be given priority over the reporting procedure.

INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

- When there is a suspicion or disclosure of an abuse allegedly committed by GOOFIRM's staff, volunteer or affiliate, or board members, GOOFIRM will consider immediate referral to the relevant legal authorities where it appears an incident of abuse may have been committed. Where the nature or details of the concerns are unclear, GOOFIRM will conduct an internal investigation and, should information on an incident of abuse emerge, will then report the abuse to the relevant authorities. A written record of actions will be made.
- Concerns or allegations of possible breaches of the policy that are not deemed to be a serious incident of abuse will be dealt with by GOOFIRM via an internal investigation and a subsequent disciplinary process should the concerns or allegations prove to be founded by the relevant legal authorities.
- In the event of an allegation of abuse by a GOOFIRM staff or volunteer, an investigative committee will be formed which will consist of the Executive Director, at least one Board Member and an external protection expert; this committee's role is to fully and objectively investigate the case. A written report, including recommendations, will be submitted to GOOFIRM's board. The staff shall not be involved in such an internal investigation.

DECISION-MAKING

- The outcomes and recommendations of any GOOFIRM internal investigation will be reported by the

investigation committee to the GOOFIRM Board which, in turn, will be responsible for deciding on further action.

- All allegations will be handled equitably and transparently with due regard to confidentiality irrespective of whom they are made against, and taking into account the rights of the parties involved.
- GOOFIRM will respond to all allegations of abuse in accordance with national protection laws.

IMPLICATIONS OF NON-COMPLIANCE

- Should any staff, volunteer or affiliate of GOOFIRM's be suspected of abuse, he or she shall be disciplined in accordance with GOOFIRM's Administrative Procedure Manual and Code of Conduct.

SUPPORTING THOSE INVOLVED IN SAFEGUARDING MATTERS

- The welfare of a child, young people or vulnerable adult is of prime importance to GOOFIRM. If any abuse is proven or suspected by a GOOFIRM staff, volunteer or affiliate in connection with GOOFIRM activities, every practicable effort is to be made to assist the child, young Q5 or vulnerable adult in coping with any trauma or guilt he or she may be experiencing. This may include psychological counselling or another form of assistance deemed necessary and appropriate.
- GOOFIRM will ensure that it works with the Department of Social Welfare under the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Children, and Social Welfare to ensure that a social worker is available to support children, young people, vulnerable adults, staff and other relevant persons concerning issues of actual or potential abuse, and disclosure of the same. These relevant authorities will receive appropriate training and support for this role.
- GOOFIRM aims to encourage openness and will support staff, volunteers and affiliates who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken. However, any staff member found to have made false accusations maliciously will face disciplinary action. GOOFIRM or the adverse party may take legal or other appropriate action in the circumstances.

This policy enters into force on June 20, 2023, after validation from the Board of Directors. It formalizes all existing control mechanisms and procedures that have been established so far.

Winchester Nkongho WINYAWOKO
Board Chairman
GOOFIRM

