

At Laughter Africa, we work with some of the most vulnerable children in Sierra Leone. Anyone who works with us is in a position of trust. A small number of people in the aid sector have used that trust to exploit and abuse. We will not accept this from anyone connected to us, and we will never ignore it, cover it up or mishandle it.

Our full PSEAH policy (protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment) applies to everyone connected to Laughter Africa: staff, volunteers, trustees, consultants and partners, at all times, at work and outside it. This is a short summary. Funders and partners can ask us for the full policy.

OUR SIX RULES

We follow the six core principles set by the UN's Inter-Agency Standing Committee:

1. **Sexual exploitation and abuse is gross misconduct.** Anyone who does it will lose their job or role with us.
2. **No sexual activity with anyone under 18.** This applies whatever the local age of consent. Thinking someone was older is no excuse.
3. **No sex in exchange for anything.** That means no money, jobs, goods, help or favours, ever. Our help is always free.
4. **No abuse of power.** Sexual relationships between our people and the children or families we support are not allowed.
5. **Everyone must report.** If you're worried about anyone's behaviour, in our organisation or another, you must report it.
6. **Everyone keeps it safe.** All of us are responsible for creating a culture where abuse can't happen.

HOW WE PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE

- **Safer recruitment:** we check everyone before they work with us, including references and DBS or police checks, and we're part of the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme, so people with a history of misconduct can't move between charities.
- **Training:** every new member of staff and volunteer is trained on this policy and signs our code of conduct.
- **Listening to the children:** we designed our reporting system with the street children themselves, making sure girls, disabled children and LGBT+ children had their say.
- **Survivor first:** if harm happens, the person affected comes first. We keep things confidential, we try not to make anyone tell their story more than once, and we help them get support.

HOW TO REPORT A CONCERN

If a child or adult is in immediate danger, contact the police or emergency services straight away.

Anyone can report: a child, a parent, a community member, a volunteer, a partner or a member of the public. You don't need proof, and you don't need to be sure. If something worries you, tell us.

- **In Sierra Leone:** talk to any member of our team, use the anonymous suggestion box at our projects, or call our safeguarding focal point (our Head of Administration) on +232 78 202949. You can also call the Don Bosco Fambul child helpline on 525.
- **From anywhere:** email info@laughterafrica.org.uk or call +44 151 645 7322, marked "Confidential: safeguarding".
- **If your concern is about our Head of Administration,** report it to our Director.
- **If your concern is about our Director,** email safeguarding@laughterafrica.org.uk, which goes to our lead safeguarding trustee, who is independent of the Director.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- We take every report seriously and act quickly, usually within 24 hours.
- We keep it confidential and only share it with the people who need to know to keep everyone safe.
- We put the safety and wishes of the person affected first, and help them reach medical, legal and counselling support.
- Where a crime may have happened, we report it to the authorities.
- Nobody will be punished for raising a concern in good faith.

REPORTING OUTSIDE LAUGHTER AFRICA

You can also report concerns about a UK charity to the Charity Commission for England and Wales. In Sierra Leone, you can contact the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs.

OUR OTHER SAFEGUARDING POLICIES

This summary sits alongside our Safeguarding Children Policy (on our website), staff code of conduct, safer recruitment statement, whistleblowing policy and complaints policy. All are available on request.

Laughter Africa is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), registered charity no. 1154712 (England and Wales). Full PSEAH policy reviewed every two years. Summary published October 2026.