

First Year Africa Safeguarding Policy

Version Control

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 - **Author:** Gregor O'Gorman
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 - **Approved By:** First Year Africa Board of Trustees
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Purpose

This policy is designed to protect all individuals, particularly children and at-risk adults, from harm caused by First Year Africa's staff, associates, programmes, or operations. It reinforces First Year Africa's commitment to creating a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment for everyone we interact with.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff, permanent and temporary
- Volunteers and interns
- Consultants, contractors, and agency staff
- Trustees and board members
- Donors, media personnel, project visitors, and any third parties associated with First Year Africa
- Partners, vendors, and other third parties, when referenced in contracts, agreements, or MoUs

It does not apply to external organisations unless explicitly agreed upon.

Guiding Principles

First Year Africa commits to:

1. **Do No Harm:** Uphold the safety and dignity of all individuals.
 2. **Zero Tolerance:** No abuse, exploitation, or harassment will be tolerated.
 3. **Inclusivity:** Protect individuals irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, or sexual orientation.
 4. **Transparency:** Ensure clear reporting and accountability mechanisms.
 5. **Survivor-Centred Approach:** Prioritise the needs, rights, and safety of survivors.
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Approach

First Year Africa will address safeguarding through four pillars:

1. **Prevention**
 - Embed safeguarding into programme design and operations.
 - Conduct thorough staff and partner vetting.
 - Provide mandatory safeguarding training.
 2. **Reporting**
 - Maintain accessible, confidential reporting channels.
 - Require all staff and associates to report concerns promptly.
 3. **Response**
 - Investigate and address all reports swiftly and fairly.
 - Support survivors through a survivor-centred approach.
 4. **Learning**
 - Regularly review safeguarding practices to improve case management.
 - Share lessons across teams and partners.
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Policy Statement

First Year Africa is committed to protecting the rights of children and at-risk adults by:

- Ensuring all individuals have equal protection from harm.
 - Prohibiting sexual activity with individuals under 18 years old, irrespective of the local age of consent.
 - Addressing any imbalance of power between staff, associates, and beneficiaries.
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Staff Responsibilities

All staff and associates are required to:

- Report safeguarding concerns within 24 hours.
- Respect boundaries and avoid situations where abuse of power could occur.
- Uphold confidentiality except when reporting concerns through appropriate channels.

Prohibited behaviours include:

- Engaging in discriminatory or exploitative actions.
 - Developing inappropriate relationships with beneficiaries.
 - Neglecting to report safeguarding breaches.
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Reporting Mechanisms

Reports can be made to:

1. **Safeguarding Focal Person:** Gregor O’Gorman
2. **Contact:** gregor@firstyearafrica.uk.

Urgent reports involving immediate danger should be directed to local authorities or emergency services.

Consequences of Breach

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, termination of contracts, and legal referrals.
