

**SOCIETY FOR EQUAL HEALTH
AND RIGHTS (SEQHER)**



CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING MANUAL

2025–2027



<https://seqher.org/>

Igniting actions that drive change.

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ABOUT US

OUR MISSION

Advancing a better world by closing the gaps of inequality through Education, Economic empowerment, Human rights, Gender and Social justice, health and wellbeing, food security, inclusivity and cultural connections.



OUR VISION

A society where equality thrives.

OUR MOTTO

Igniting actions that drive change.

CORE VALUES

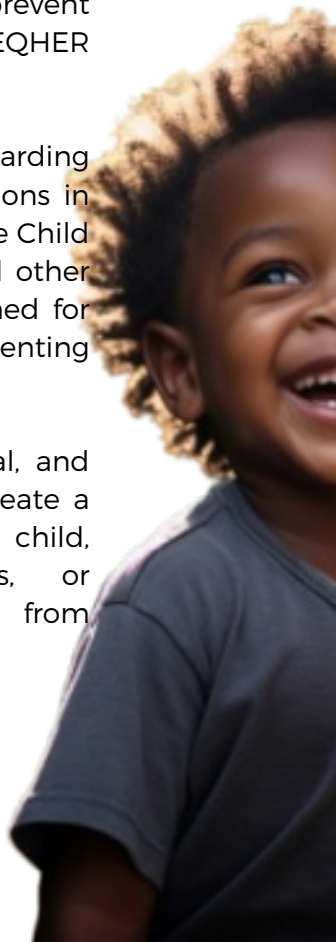
Accountability
Commitment
Integrity
Target Oriented
Trust
Innovation
Excellency
Respect

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

Society for Equal Health and Rights (SEQHER) is committed to upholding the dignity, rights, and safety of all individuals, particularly those from marginalised and vulnerable communities. Recognising that children face intersecting risks of abuse, exploitation, and neglect in Nigeria, this safeguarding manual serves as a proactive institutional measure to prevent harm and ensure child well-being across all SEQHER programs, partnerships, and operations.

This manual outlines SEQHER's safeguarding commitments, procedures, and ethical obligations in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Nigerian Child Rights Act (2003), and other relevant human rights instruments. It is designed for SEQHER staff, volunteers, consultants, implementing partners, and community stakeholders.

By adopting a child-rights-based, intersectional, and survivor-centred approach, SEQHER aims to create a safe and enabling environment where every child, regardless of gender, protected status, or socioeconomic background, can thrive free from violence and discrimination.



KEY DEFINITIONS

- **Child:** According to Article 1 of the UNCRC and the Nigerian Child Rights Act (2003), a child is anyone under the age of 18 years.
- **Safeguarding:** Safeguarding refers to the proactive measures SEQHER takes to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm, abuse, and exploitation before any incident occurs. It includes creating safe environments, policies, and practices.
- **Child Protection:** Child protection is a component of safeguarding and refers to specific activities and interventions to respond to cases of actual or suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children.

Types of Abuse

- **Physical Abuse:** Inflicting physical harm or injury (e.g., hitting, slapping, burning).
- **Emotional Abuse:** Persistent emotional maltreatment that damages a child's self-worth.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Any sexual act or exploitation involving a child, including grooming and online abuse.
- **Neglect:** Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs.
- **Online Abuse:** Harmful behaviours such as cyberbullying, sextortion, or exposure to inappropriate content via digital platforms.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

SEQHER's safeguarding practices are underpinned by the following principles:

1. The Best Interests of the Child

In line with Article 3 of the UNCRC, all actions concerning children must prioritise their best interests, especially in decision-making and interventions.

2. Do No Harm

Rooted in humanitarian ethics, this principle requires SEQHER to avoid actions that may unintentionally cause harm, distress, or re-traumatisation to children.

3. Non-Discrimination and Intersectionality

Children will not be discriminated against on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or socio-economic background. Drawing on Crenshaw's (1991) concept of intersectionality, SEQHER acknowledges the compounded vulnerabilities LGBTQI+ children face.

4. Child Participation

Children have the right to be heard and involved in decisions affecting their lives. SEQHER will ensure meaningful participation mechanisms that are age-appropriate, safe, and respectful of children's evolving capacities.

5. Confidentiality and Privacy

All information relating to children will be handled with strict confidentiality and shared only on a need-to-know basis, following legal and ethical protocols.

LEGAL & POLICY FRAMEWORKS

This manual is informed by a combination of international human rights law, national legislation, and institutional policies:

International Instruments

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – guarantees civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of children.
- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) – affirms the rights of African children, with cultural contextualisation.
- The Yogyakarta Principles +10 – affirms protection of people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, including minors.

National Legal Framework

- Nigerian Child Rights Act (2003) – provides comprehensive rights and protection measures for children, though implementation varies by state.
- Cybercrimes Act (2015) – prohibits online abuse and exploitation, relevant to safeguarding in digital spaces.
- Anti-Trafficking in Persons Prohibition Act (2015) – offers legal protections against child trafficking and exploitation.

SEQHER Internal Commitments

- Adherence to the SEQHER Code of Ethics and Conduct
- Integration of safeguarding into all program designs, partnerships, and evaluations
- Zero tolerance for abuse, harassment, or exploitation of any child under SEQHER's care

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Safeguarding is a collective responsibility. Every individual engaged in SEQHER activities must uphold the highest standards of integrity and accountability when working with or near children.

SEQHER Staff and Volunteers

- Read, understand, and commit to this manual and the SEQHER Code of Conduct.
- Report any concern, suspicion, or disclosure of abuse without delay.
- Maintain professional boundaries and avoid any behaviour that could be misinterpreted as exploitative or abusive.
- Attend mandatory safeguarding training sessions.

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

- Serve as the primary point of contact for all child protection concerns.
- Ensure accurate documentation and secure storage of all incident reports.
- Liaise with relevant authorities (e.g., social welfare agencies, the National Human Rights Commission) when necessary.
- Review safeguarding protocols annually.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Partners and Consultants

- Must sign a safeguarding declaration and abide by SEQHER's standards.
- Are subject to vetting processes, including reference checks.
- Must immediately report safeguarding concerns to SEQHER.

Board of Trustees

- Provide strategic oversight for safeguarding compliance.
- Review and endorse safeguarding reports and risk mitigation plans annually.



RISK ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION

Every child protection concern must be taken seriously and responded to promptly and sensitively.

Reporting Pathway

1. **Observation/Disclosure:** Any person may notice or be told about abuse.
2. **Immediate Safety:** If a child is in danger, prioritise immediate protection and seek emergency assistance if needed.
3. **Notify DSO:** The Designated Safeguarding Officer receives and documents the report.
4. **Initial Review:** Within 24 hours, the DSO assesses the concern and initiates appropriate actions.
5. **Referral:** If necessary, refer to child protection services or law enforcement in line with the Child Rights Act and local context.
6. **Follow-Up** – Maintain contact with the child (if safe to do so), and monitor outcomes.

Principles of Reporting

- **Confidentiality:** Shared only on a need-to-know basis.
- **Survivor-Centred:** The child’s wishes, safety, and dignity guide the response.
- **Non-Retaliation:** No adverse consequences for whistle-blowers or children who report.

Do Not...

- Conduct your own investigation.
- Promise confidentiality beyond your reporting obligation.
- Delay reporting while seeking “proof”.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Creating a culture of safeguarding requires regular, context-specific training and awareness-raising activities.

Staff and Volunteer Training

- **Induction:** All staff receive safeguarding training within one month of joining.
- **Refresher:** Annual updates including new risks (e.g., digital safety, conflict-based trauma).
- **Specialised Modules:** LGBTQI+ youth support, trauma-informed care, and conflict sensitivity.

Community Training

- Engage carers, religious/traditional leaders, and peer educators through:
 - Child safety workshops
 - Safe parenting sessions
 - Rights-based advocacy tools

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Safeguarding audits (annual)
- Exit interviews with children and families
- Incident data analysis to inform policy updates

Uche Success



Chief Executive Officer

Samuel Omeiza Segun



Executive Director

ANNEXES

Annex 1: SEQHER Child Protection and Safeguarding Incident Report Form

SOCIETY FOR EQUAL HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SEQHER)



SEQHER Child Protection and Safeguarding Incident Report Form

CONFIDENTIAL

This form must be completed as soon as possible after any safeguarding concern, disclosure, or incident involving a child or vulnerable person. Please complete all sections to the best of your knowledge.

1. Basic Information

Date of Report: _____

Time of Report: _____

Name of Person Reporting: _____

Role/Position: _____

Contact Details (Phone/Email): _____

2. Details of the Child or Young Person Involved

Full Name: _____

Date of Birth (if known): _____

Gender Identity: _____

Location/Community: _____

Any known vulnerabilities (e.g. disability, orphaned, LGBTQI+):

3. Incident Details

Date of Incident: _____

Time of Incident: _____

Location of Incident: _____

Type of Incident (tick all that apply):

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse/Exploitation
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect
- Exposure to Harmful Content/Environment

ANNEXES

- Other (please specify):

Describe what happened (facts only):

4. Immediate Action Taken

- Provided First Aid
- Contacted Emergency Services
- Notified SEQHER Safeguarding Focal Point
- Ensured child's safety
- Other:

Details of action taken:

5. Persons Involved or Witnesses (if any)

Name: _____ | Role: _____ | Contact: _____

Name: _____ | Role: _____ | Contact: _____

6. Follow-Up Actions Recommended or Taken

7. Signature

Name of Person Completing Form: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

*Please submit this form to the Safeguarding Focal Point or Programme Manager immediately.
All information will be handled in accordance with SEQHER's confidentiality and safeguarding protocols.*

ANNEXES

Annex 2: Code of Conduct (Excerpt)

- Treat all children with respect and dignity
- Avoid inappropriate language or contact
- Never be alone with a child in a closed, unobservable space
- Do not share personal contact information

Annex 4: Key Contacts and Referral Pathways

- Designated Safeguarding Officer: Eglah Sadiq: +2347062265464
- Local Child Welfare Agencies
- Police Family Support Unit
- National Human Rights Commission
- Safe Houses / Shelters (LGBTQI+ inclusive)

CONTACT US



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