

The SEDCU Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

SEDCU has been established as a charity which aims to support the education of disadvantaged children in Uganda. SEDCU is regulated by the Charity Commission for England and Wales. The formal position is that SEDCU funds overseas partners who provide education and support to disadvantaged children, SEDCU beneficiaries, who are defined to be a vulnerable group. Accordingly, SEDCU has a legal duty of care and must take the necessary steps to verify that partner organisations are safeguarding children in their care and who could possibly be at risk of harm. This document sets out how SEDCU discharges this legal obligation.

Principles

SEDCU's mission is to broaden and strengthen support to disadvantaged children in Uganda so that they can benefit from good quality education and realise their full potential. SEDCU aims to achieve this mission through partnering with specific schools in South West Uganda to sponsor the education of specific children in greatest need of support, and to fund projects at these schools to enhance their facilities and improve the children's educational experiences. The children are disadvantaged in the sense that they may be blind, deaf, physically disabled, orphaned, have parents who have been physically displaced and rendered homeless, or who live in extreme poverty. SEDCU's sponsors expect to support 'their' children throughout their primary, secondary and – where applicable – tertiary education to give them the best possible start in life. Almost all of these children are, through necessity, boarding at their schools in term time, some also in the holidays.

SEDCU operates on the fundamental premise that every child deserves a decent start in life and should not suffer discrimination on grounds of gender, ethnicity, disability, religion or any other factor. SEDCU believes that all children have the right to grow up in a safe environment and to be protected from abuse of any kind.

Safeguarding Policy

The trustees of SEDCU have recognised their legal obligation to establish and maintain a safeguarding policy. SEDCU achieves its objectives through funding third party organisations – schools and colleges – to educate the sponsored children. SEDCU has no staff or volunteers in Uganda and relies on building strong and trusting relationships with school and college staff as well as key members of the community.

SEDCU trustees verify that partner organisations recognise their responsibilities to safeguard the children and young people in their care. Partner organisations have their own

safeguarding policies and mechanisms with clear lines of responsibility and accountability. These policies recognise that:

- the welfare of children in their care is paramount
- no child should be treated less favourably than others in being able to access relevant services
- all children have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, religion or other factors
- there must be a commitment to safe recruitment of school staff and volunteers with appropriate selection processes, and selected staff being subject to checks of references from previous employers and of police records
- there must be an organisational culture which recognises that safeguarding is everyone's business and that any member of staff or parent can report concerns in the knowledge that these will be treated sensitively and investigated as appropriate
- any concerns or allegations of abuse must be taken seriously and independently investigated according to pre-agreed arrangements.

Seeking Assurance

The Chairman of SEDCU briefs key contacts in partner organisations in Uganda and makes them aware of this Safeguarding Policy. The importance which SEDCU attaches to this matter has been communicated. Whilst recognising that practical arrangements will differ greatly between UK and Uganda, we believe that the above principles are appropriate in any country in the world. The Chairman therefore seeks an assurance from each organisation that they subscribe to the safeguarding principles in this document and that they have effective safeguarding arrangements in place.