

# CHILD SAFEGUARDING AND ONLINE PROTECTION POLICY

## 1. Purpose

Encrypt Uganda is committed to ensuring that all children and young people are protected from harm, abuse, exploitation, and neglect in all our programs and activities. This includes both **offline and online environments**, recognizing the increasing role of digital platforms in children's lives.

We are dedicated to creating a safe environment where children can participate, learn, and engage securely and with dignity.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff, volunteers, consultants, and representatives of Encrypt Uganda
- Partner organizations and collaborators
- All programs involving children, including:
  - Trainings and workshops
  - Community outreach initiatives
  - Digital engagements via platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet

## 3. Organizational Details

- **Organization Name:** Encrypt Uganda
- **Location:** Kampala, Uganda
- **Safeguarding Officer:** Team Lead
- **Safeguarding Contact Email:** bryan@encryptuganda.org

## 4. Legal and Ethical Framework

This policy aligns with:

- Child protection laws of Uganda
- International safeguarding standards, including principles from the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**
- Best practices adopted by global organizations such as UNICEF

## 5. Definitions

- **Child:** Any person under the age of 18
- **Safeguarding:** Measures taken to protect children from harm
- **Online exploitation:** Abuse facilitated through digital platforms
- **Cyberbullying:** Harassment through digital means
- **Personal data:** Information that can identify a child

## 6. Core Principles

Encrypt Uganda is guided by the following principles:

- The **best interests of the child** are paramount
- **Zero tolerance** for abuse, exploitation, or neglect
- Children's **privacy, dignity, and rights** must be respected
- Safe and responsible **digital participation** is essential
- All safeguarding concerns are taken seriously and acted upon promptly

## 7. Risk Awareness

Encrypt Uganda recognizes that children may face risks in both physical and digital environments.

### Offline Risks:

- Physical or emotional abuse
- Neglect or exploitation

### Online Risks:

- Cyberbullying and harassment
- Exposure to harmful or inappropriate content
- Online grooming and exploitation
- Data privacy breaches
- Unauthorized sharing of children's images or information

## 8. Code of Conduct

### All staff and representatives **MUST**:

- Treat children with respect, dignity, and fairness
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries
- Obtain informed consent from parents or guardians before engaging with children
- Ensure safe, supervised, and inclusive environments
- Use only approved and secure communication platforms

## All staff and representatives **MUST NOT**:

- Engage in private or secret communication with children
- Share personal contact details with children
- Share or publish children's images without proper consent
- Use inappropriate language or behavior
- Exploit or harm children in any form

## 9. Online Safety Measures

As a digital rights organization, Encrypt Uganda prioritizes children's online protection by:

- Using **secure, moderated platforms** such as Zoom and Google Meet
- Limiting unsupervised direct communication between staff and children
- Protecting children's **personal data and digital identity**
- Educating children on:
  - Safe internet use
  - Recognizing online threats
  - Protecting personal information
- Monitoring digital interactions within programs

## 10. Media, Consent, and Data Protection

Encrypt Uganda may collect and use children's images, videos, and stories for educational and advocacy purposes.

We commit to:

- Obtaining **informed consent from parents or legal guardians** before capturing or using any media
- Ensuring children are represented **respectfully and safely**
- Avoiding disclosure of sensitive personal information
- Storing data securely and limiting access to authorized personnel only

## 11. Reporting and Response Procedures

All safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately.

### Reporting Process:

- Concerns should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer via: **bryan@encryptuganda.org**
- Reports may include suspected abuse, inappropriate behavior, or online safety incidents

### **Response Procedure:**

- All reports are treated confidentially and taken seriously
- Immediate steps will be taken to ensure the child's safety
- Cases will be escalated:
  - Safeguarding Officer → Management → Relevant Authorities (if required)
- All incidents will be documented securely

## **12. Enforcement and Disciplinary Action**

Encrypt Uganda enforces a **zero-tolerance policy** for violations of this safeguarding policy.

Any breach may result in:

- Disciplinary action
- Suspension or termination of engagement
- Reporting to relevant legal authorities where applicable

## **13. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Management:**

- Ensure implementation and enforcement of this policy
- Provide safeguarding resources and oversight

### **Staff and Volunteers:**

- Comply fully with this policy
- Report concerns without delay

### **Safeguarding Officer:**

- Receive and manage safeguarding reports
- Ensure appropriate response and follow-up
- Maintain confidentiality and records

## **14. Training and Awareness**

Encrypt Uganda will:

- Provide safeguarding and digital safety training for staff and volunteers
- Promote awareness of child protection practices
- Equip children with knowledge to stay safe online

## 15. Partnerships

Encrypt Uganda will only collaborate with partners who:

- Demonstrate commitment to safeguarding children
- Align with this policy
- Agree to uphold child protection standards

## 16. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be:

- Reviewed periodically to reflect emerging risks
- Updated in line with legal and technological developments
- Assessed to ensure effectiveness and compliance

## 17. Commitment Statement

Encrypt Uganda is committed to creating a safe, respectful, and empowering environment for all children—both offline and online.

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility, and we hold ourselves and our partners accountable to the highest standards.

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**Effective Date:** 1/1/2026

**Review Date:** 6/10/2025