



# The Africa Children's Summit

'Seen, Heard and Engaged'



VERSION 1  
**2025**

# CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



This policy covers all children (persons under the age of 18) the Africa Children's Summit interacts with directly and indirectly through affiliates and stakeholders including but not limited to partners, staff, volunteers, consultants, government representatives and others.

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# Child Safeguarding Policy

## 1. Preamble

The Africa Children's Summit is a continental forum that provides a platform for children's participation, ensuring their voices are heard on issues affecting them. The Summit brings together children from across Africa and beyond to share their experiences on children's rights, the challenges they face, government interventions, and their own recommendations for change. As a child-led initiative, the Summit empowers African children to engage with their peers, policymakers, and communities in shaping a better future. This is only possible if all individuals involved in the Summit—including staff, volunteers, partners, and affiliates—exercise their responsibility to keep children safe and protected.

This policy reflects the Summit's commitment to promoting safe environments for children throughout their participation in Summit activities, related programs, and interactions with Summit organizers, staff, and partners. The Summit has zero tolerance for child abuse in any form and takes all necessary actions to protect the children it engages with.

The Africa Children's Summit defines child safeguarding as respecting and protecting children (persons under the age of 18) by implementing policies, procedures, and practices that ensure their safety and well-being, allowing them to thrive free from harm while participating in the Summit and its associated activities.

This policy aligns with, endorses, and upholds the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, as well as relevant laws protecting children and their rights in a country hosting and in all participating countries of the Summit.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

- I. To protect children that the Africa Children's Summit, its stakeholders and affiliates interact with from harm.
- II. To prevent, respond to, and resolve child safety risks and safeguarding concerns during children's participation in the Africa Children's Summit.
- III. To enable staff and others who work on behalf of the Africa Children's Summit to respond confidently and adequately to child protection issues.
- IV. To enable children participating in the Africa Children's Summit to report all safeguarding risks and concerns confidently and confidentially to child protection response and prevention mechanisms/systems available at the summit and in a hosting country.

## 3. Scope of Application

This policy covers all children (persons under the age of 18) the Africa Children's Summit interacts with directly and indirectly through affiliates and stakeholders including but not limited to partners, staff, volunteers, consultants, government representatives and others. It applies to any person working on behalf of the Africa Children's Summit, including the Board of Trustees, Senior Managers, Paid Staff, Volunteers, Consultants and Interns.

## 4. Policy Statement

The Africa Children's Summit believes that all children (persons under the age of 18), regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, economic status, race or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, violence, discrimination, abuse, neglect and exploitation. The Summit will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by anyone working on its behalf or by its affiliates.

The Africa Children's Summit commits to:

- I. Caring for the wellbeing of children who it engages with during Summit activities,
- II. Promoting and upholding child rights,
- III. Communicating and enforcing a zero-tolerance policy for all forms of child abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence. This includes zero tolerance to all forms of corporal punishment and humiliating actions, zero tolerance to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment of a child (person under the age of 18) regardless of the legal age of consent, and whether or not the child has consented to the sexual activity.

- IV. Responding appropriately and promptly to suspicions, concerns, knowledge and allegations of child safety and protection risks or violations,
- V. Implementing adequate safeguarding measures particularly in situations where children, due to adverse experiences, levels of dependency and communication constraints, may be more vulnerable to abuse, neglect and exploitation,
- VI. Gathering and communicating information about children it engages with in a manner that protects them and maintains their dignity,
- VII. Implementing stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying staff, volunteers, interns and trustees. Safe recruitment assesses potential staff, volunteer, intern and trustee suitability to work with children. It includes obtaining police clearance and submitting inquiries to the Department of Social Development to confirm that applicants' names do not appear on the National Child Protection Register where applicable.
- VIII. Ensuring that journalists, celebrities and others that may be engaged to promote and make visible the Africa Children's Summit and its work, are appropriately vetted, oriented on this policy and related code of conduct and are actively supervised when engaging with children or representing the work, opinions and images of children.
- IX. Ensuring visibility of all child protection and safeguarding concerns reporting mechanisms in place at the Africa Children's Summit and throughout all IEC materials online and offline.

Any violations of this policy will be treated as a serious infringement and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination and any other available legal recourse.

## 4.1 Safeguarding Risks & Mitigating Actions

Children participating in the Africa Children's Summit may be exposed to various safeguarding risks, ranging from physical safety concerns to emotional well-being and online security. Recognizing these risks is essential to ensuring that all children are protected and can fully participate in a safe and supportive environment. The Risk Matrix outlines the key safeguarding risks that may arise before, during, and after the Summit. It also specifies the likelihood and potential impact of each risk, along with clear mitigation measures to prevent harm and respond effectively if incidents occur.

This Matrix serves as a foundation for the broader safeguarding framework outlined in this Policy. The Code of Conduct, safeguarding protocols, and response mechanisms detailed in subsequent sections are designed to address and mitigate these risks, ensuring that all children, staff, volunteers, and partners uphold the highest standards of child protection.



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Child Safeguarding Risk	Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Risk Level	Mitigation Actions
Lost or missing children	Medium	High	Moderate to High	Implement a robust system to identify children; set up designated lost child points and ensure event staff are trained to handle such situations.
Physical injuries	Medium	High	Moderate to High	Conduct a thorough risk assessment of the planned activities, venue, ensure first-aid stations are strategically placed, and have trained medical personnel on-site.
Inappropriate behaviour or abuse	Medium	High	Moderate to High	Enforce a strict code of conduct for all attendees, implement background checks, provide training on recognizing and reporting inappropriate behaviour, provide child safeguarding training for children, signed declaration form for all attendees; and have regular supervision and monitoring.
Access to restricted areas	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Use secure barriers, clearly mark restricted areas, and employ security personnel to monitor these zones.
Overcrowding	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Control the number of attendees through ticketing, monitor crowd density, and have emergency plans in place.





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Child Safeguarding Risk	Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Risk Level	Mitigation Actions
Food and water safety	Low	High	Moderate	Ensure all food and beverage suppliers comply with health and safety regulations, take note of participants' dietary needs/allergies, advise service providers in advance, and have trained medical personnel on-site.
Environmental and safety hazards	Medium	High	Moderate to High	Pre-inspect the venue for potential hazards (during event as well), emergency plan in place, and have contingency plans for extreme weather conditions.
Transportation safety	Medium	High	Moderate to High	Include travel guidelines in the policy, consider how the child delegates will get to and from the event, coordinate with local authorities for safe transportation routes, provide clear signage, and ensure proper supervision during arrivals and departures.
Media and Communications	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Signed consent forms for children and other delegates; safeguarding guidelines include rules around the taking and usage of pictures/videos; Develop child-friendly, inclusive communication material; safeguarding

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Child Safeguarding Risk	Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Risk Level	Mitigation Actions
				training for all media personnel.
Reporting	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Establish safe, accessible and inclusive child-friendly reporting mechanisms; appoint enough child safeguarding focal points; establish a process to record incidents
Online safety	Medium	High	Moderate to High	Include online safety rules in the child safeguarding policy.
Supply chain/Procurement	Low	Medium	Low to Moderate	Vetting of all service providers; provide child safeguarding training and signed child safeguarding declaration forms
Accountability	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Signed consent forms and child safeguarding declaration forms
Awareness	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Conduct safeguarding awareness training, display awareness material, ensure that the daily programme includes a child safeguarding briefing and debrief.



## 4.2 Prevention

The Africa Children's Summit employs measures to address the above risk factors, and prevent child abuse, neglect and exploitation.

All parties involved in Summit activities and bearing responsibility for carrying out these activities should be knowledgeable of the Summit Child Safeguarding policy and comply with it. Training on this policy will be provided to partners, staff, consultants and other stakeholders and they are required to sign a commitment to complying with this policy and its related code of conduct:

### 4.2.1. The Africa Children's Summit Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct

The Africa Children's Summit is committed to upholding the highest standards of child safety and well-being, ensuring that all interactions with children are conducted with care, respect, and accountability. To this end, all individuals and stakeholders participating in the Africa Children's Summit must:

- Ensure that physical environments used for activities with children are secure, clean, safe, culturally responsive, age-appropriate, and cater to diverse intellectual and physical abilities.
- Nurture equality, respect, and dignity, and protects children from discrimination, harm, abuse, and exploitation.
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times by adults at a ratio of at least one adult to four children.

### Prohibited Conduct

- **Sexual Misconduct:** All Summit stakeholders, including volunteers, interns, consultants, and staff of implementing partners are prohibited from engaging in sexual activity or having a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 years, regardless of the age of consent in local laws.
- **Abusive or Unsafe Behaviour:** It is strictly forbidden to condone or participate in illegal, unsafe, or abusive and humiliating behaviour that involves children.
- **Physical and Emotional Harm:** The use of physical force, corporal punishment, emotional shaming, degradation, and offensive language against children is prohibited.
- **Exposure to Harmful Content:** Children must not be exposed to inappropriate images, films, or websites portraying pornography, extreme violence, or inciting unsafe ideas.
- **Unauthorised Contact:** No private communication including personal messaging, phone calls, physical or social media interaction should take place between Summit

stakeholders and children outside of formal Summit activities, except with parental or guardian consent and for official purposes.

- Favouritism and Gift Giving: Summit stakeholders should not demonstrate preferential treatment to any child including through provision of gifts, personal favours or special privileges that could create an inappropriate dynamic or relationship.
- Child to child abuse: No child is allowed to abuse the other, therefore, all the above conducts are prohibited among and between children participating in the Africa Child Summit

### **Responsible Child Participation & Data Protection**

All Summit stakeholders and affiliates must:

- Obtain informed parental consent and child assent for child participation in Summit activities, essential travel, and the capture and use of children's images, videos and voice recordings.
- Ensure children's personal data and information is kept confidential and is only shared when required by applicable hosting Country's law, the law of the child's country of citizenship, or with the informed consent of the child and their parent or guardian.
- Report child protection risks and any suspicions or knowledge of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation immediately to the designated Child Safeguarding Focal Points as per the Incident Reporting and Response Protocol.

### **Accountability and Consequences**

Failure to comply with this Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct will result in appropriate action, which may include suspension from Summit activities; verbal and written warnings; suspension or termination of contract or employment and legal action if criminal behaviour is involved.

All partners, affiliates and other stakeholders working with and on the Africa Children's Summit must sign and adhere to this Code.

## 4.3 Safeguarding during Travel

The Africa Children's Summit and its partners supports children's travel to the Summit within or outside their country. In such cases, parents, caregivers, or other legally required entities or individuals must provide informed consent before travel. The child's health, safety, well-being, and meaningful participation are the top priorities during any travel supported by the Africa Children's Summit.

Children are expected to be heard and involved in decisions regarding their travel, including the selection of appropriate Adult Chaperones. The Adult Chaperone is responsible for mitigating and managing potential risks and ensuring the child's care and custody for the duration of the travel. These guidelines ensure that each child is valued, respected, and understood within the context of their culture, religion, and ethnicity.

### Planning

The Africa Children's Summit will conduct a Risk Assessment for all activities held at the Summit.

The Summit team will clearly outline in writing the purpose of the trip and propose an itinerary to be agreed upon by:

- The child
- Parents, caregivers, or other legally required entities/individuals including partners supporting the child's travel

For international travel, the following checklist outlines essential arrangements to be made before departure:

- Adequate notice to coordinate logistics, ideally two months.
- Selection of Adult Chaperone(s) who meet the minimum safeguarding requirements.
- Completion of a Risk Assessment, including proper briefing of children and their parents/caregivers and obtaining informed consent.
- Travel insurance secured in advance by the Summit delegates and/or their organisational representatives.
- Medical coverage secured in advance by the Summit delegates and/or their organisational representatives. Children should not travel internationally without adequate insurance or a reasonable alternative plan for potential medical expenses.
- Written permission from the child's parents/guardians to act on their behalf in case of medical emergencies (included in informed consent)



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- If required for travel, vaccinations must be fully completed in adequate time before departure.
- Both the child and the Adult Chaperone must carry emergency contacts for individuals in their home country and at the travel destination. Each must have access to a phone, phone card, and calling instructions for both transit and destination locations.
- Confirm that the minimum safeguarding assurances for children (outlined below) are met.

For domestic and international travel, the following checklist outlines arrangements that must be made prior to departure:

- Sufficient prior notice to conduct a child participation risk assessment as per section 4.1 of this Policy. Inform children and their parents/caregivers and obtain informed consent as required and communicated through registration procedures.
- Selection of Adult Chaperone(s) who adhere to the minimum safeguarding requirements.
- The Africa Children's Summit cannot assume responsibility for necessary medical expenses but will ensure that children who need medical care are referred to appropriate care.
- The Africa Children's Summit must have an emergency contact for each child and ensure access to a phone for communication.
- Confirm that the minimum safeguarding assurances for children outlined below are met:
  - Children must receive information about safeguarding behaviour protocols in a format they can understand, so they are aware of what is and isn't appropriate conduct toward them.
  - Children must have an opportunity to provide input regarding their Adult Chaperone, though the Africa Children's Summit will make the final decision based on the child's best interests.
  - Children must be given time to learn about the region, country, and culture they will visit before departure.
  - Adequate time must be allowed for children to adjust and rest upon arrival at the destination before participating in any Summit or public commitments.
  - As far as possible, recreation time must be scheduled during travel.
  - Child-friendly, culturally appropriate reporting mechanisms must be in place for children to report abuse, inappropriate conduct, or other concerns during travel.

For both domestic and international travel, the Summit will ensure that transport provisions made meet the following minimum standards:

- Vehicles used in transporting the children and young people are roadworthy and insured;
- The transport drivers have valid licenses and professional permits;
- In instances where transport is hired from a third party, that such party takes the necessary safety measures and provide passenger liability insurance, roadworthy certificates and the relevant insurances of the transport;
- If there is any suspicion that the vehicles are not roadworthy or that the drivers are not competent, intoxicated or under the influence of any intoxicants, the Summit representative will not allow its participants to be transported in that vehicle.

### **Minimum Safeguarding Requirements for Adult Chaperones**

Adult Chaperones must:

- Be over 21 years old and of the same gender as the child, except in exceptional circumstances. If the Adult Chaperone is under 21 or of the opposite gender, this must be discussed and approved as part of the agreed plan with parents, guardians and the Child Safeguarding Committee.
- Be interviewed and receive an orientation on their role and expectations for the trip and the Summit as a whole.
- Be familiar with, read, and sign the Africa Children's Summit's Child Safeguarding Policy, including its Code of Conduct.
- Pass a police background check in their country of origin.
- Treat children with respect and recognise them as individuals with rights.
- Speak the child's language and at least one business language of the travel destination.

The adult-to-child ratio for international travel should be at least 1:4 and age-appropriate. This ratio may be adjusted for in-country travel or otherwise, only when it is absolutely necessary.

### **Safeguarding Responsibilities of the Adult Chaperone**

- Facilitate the child's in-country travel arrangements, which may include transport by car, train, boat, or airplane.



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- Be aware of the child's whereabouts at all times and provide assistance with physical and emotional needs as appropriate.
- Keep the child's medical and emergency information accessible at all times, along with written permission from the child's parents/guardians to act on their behalf in case of medical emergencies.
- Ensure that the child can communicate with others, especially other children through interpreters if needed.
- Ensure that children can relax and actively participate in Summit discussions and activities.
- Inform the Africa Children's Summit Child Safeguarding Focal Points of any challenges or concerns regarding the children under their care in keeping with the Child Safeguarding Policy Incident Reporting and Response Protocol.

#### **Safeguarding Behaviour Protocols for Adult Chaperones**

- Africa Children's Summit employees and affiliates including Adult Chaperones must abide by the Africa Children's Summit Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct.



## 4.4 Incident Reporting and Response Protocol

The Africa Children's Summit is committed to ensuring the highest standards of child protection in all Summit activities. Safe, accessible, and appropriate reporting mechanisms for safeguarding concerns will be available to all staff, volunteers, implementing partners, children, and other stakeholders involved in the Summit.

### 4.4.1. Awareness and Reporting Responsibilities

All individuals involved in the Summit must know how to report safeguarding concerns and to whom. Children, adult chaperones, development partners, volunteers and other stakeholders participating in the Summit will receive an orientation on child safeguarding procedures, including how and where to report concerns.

Reports of suspected or actual child abuse, neglect, or exploitation must be made immediately to the designated reporting personnel or safeguarding focal person.

### 4.4.2 Reporting Channels & Confidentiality

Concerns should be reported immediately to Child Safeguarding Focal Points including designated members of the Summit Child Safeguarding Sub-Committee and the child helpline of a hosting country. If the reporter is uncomfortable reporting to the above individuals due to concerns about bias, conflict of interest, inaction or others they may escalate concerns to:

- The Chair of the Summit Child Safeguarding Sub-Committee. All reports must be treated confidentially, and information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis to protect children and whistleblowers from retaliation.
- Or to the child helpline of the hosting country, which is toll free, safe and confidential.

### 4.4.3 Reporting & Investigation Process

Initial Response within 1 hour: The recipient of the concern must immediately acknowledge receipt of the report and document it using the Child Safeguarding Incident Report Form. The concern should be submitted directly to the Lead Safeguarding Focal Point within the hour.



Designation of a Responsible Officer within 4 hours: The Lead Safeguarding Focal Point will appoint a Responsible Officer to oversee the investigation within 4 hours to take charge of the situation and oversee the investigation.

Investigation & external referral within 12 hours: The Responsible Officer will begin an immediate assessment of the concern and determine the necessary actions, including reporting to the Host Country's social welfare unit, government department, or police service if required. The Responsible Officer will cooperate with external investigation teams and provide necessary documentation within 12 hours of the report.

#### **4.4.4. Protective Measures for Children**

If a child is at immediate risk, appropriate action including removal from the situation and provision of emergency care will be taken without delay. Any person accused of abuse may be suspended or removed from activities pending investigation. The safety and best interests of the child will always be prioritised. The provision of emergency care service will be done in collaboration between the chair of the safeguarding committee of the summit and the hosting country's Child Protection/social welfare Unit.

#### **4.4.5. Support for Affected Children & Whistleblowers**

Psychosocial support, medical care, and legal assistance will be provided to any child affected by abuse. Whistleblowers and complainants will be protected from retaliation and treated with respect and dignity.

#### **4.4.6. Accountability & Disciplinary Action**

Individuals found in breach of this policy and protocol will face disciplinary measures, which may include:

- Prohibition from participation in the Africa Children's Summit.
- Reporting to the Host Country's social welfare unit, government department, or police, and legal action in cases of criminal misconduct.

Summit partners, vendors, and contractors working with children must sign and adhere to this policy before engaging in Summit activities.



#### 4.4.7. Documentation & Incident Register

All safeguarding concerns must be documented and stored securely in the Child Safeguarding Incident Register. Reports should stipulate the date, time, location, individuals involved, nature of concern, and actions taken to address these concerns. Access to this register will be restricted to designated safeguarding personnel to maintain confidentiality.

## 4.5 Promoting Awareness of Child Safeguarding Obligations

All staff of the Africa Children's Summit will receive Child Safeguarding Training prior to commencement of Summit activities.

Other affiliates and stakeholders will be orientated on this policy and be required to sign acknowledgement of, and willingness to comply with, this policy prior to commencing their work with the Africa Children's Summit.

## 4.6 Partnership Agreements

All agreements with partners must include the requirements of this policy, including agreement to comply with this policy. Partner agreements must include language about proper vetting of employees, including criminal background checks and national child protection register inquiries.

All partners are responsible for reporting any suspected or known violations of this Policy.

Partners will also receive training on this policy prior to the commencement date of the Summit activities.

All partners and Summit delegates will be briefed and provided with guidelines of the Summit's Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct.

## 4.7 Social Media and Digital Technology

The Africa Children's Summit acknowledges that social media platforms and digital technology present unique child safety and protection risks which this Policy aims to prevent and mitigate for the children who engage with it. All persons carrying out the work of the Africa Children's Summit or representing it should:

- Communicate any messages they wish to send out to children (all persons under the age of 18) to the designated person responsible for the organisation's online presence and copy the Child Safeguarding Focal Point.
- Seek the advice of the Child Safeguarding Focal Point if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media.
- Not 'friend' or 'follow' children or young people from personal accounts on social media.
- Make sure any content that is posted is accurate and appropriate, as young people may 'follow' them on social media.
- Not communicate with young people via personal accounts or private messages and emails.
- Copy their line manager, and parents/guardians into any emails sent to children.
- Send mass emails in BCC to avoid revealing other participants' personal data.
- Not copy communication to anybody besides parents/guardians and line manager without explicit permission of parties concerned.
- Sign off emails in a professional manner, avoiding the use of emoji's or symbols such as 'kisses' ('X's).
- Deal with abuse disclosed through social media in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure, applying the reporting procedures articulated in this policy.
- Avoid having children's personal mobile numbers. Seek contact through a parent or guardian.<sup>1</sup>
- Ensure that adequate privacy settings are in place either restricting or allowing access to photos, personal information, comments about others, friends and followers on e-pages and groups.

## 5. Budgeting

The cost of implementing this Child Safeguarding Policy must be reflected in operational plans and budgets of the Africa Children's Summit.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from <https://www.teensinai.com/online-safety-and-social-media-policy/>  
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## Annex

### Incident Register

#### Guidelines for Use:

1. All safeguarding concerns must be recorded in this register as soon as possible after the incident occurs.
2. Ensure that each report includes specific details about the time, location, individuals involved (using initials only for confidentiality), and the nature of the concern.
3. Document any immediate actions taken to safeguard the child, including reporting to relevant authorities, medical intervention, or support provided.
4. If follow-up actions are required, specify what steps will be taken and update the register once completed.
5. This register must be stored securely, and access is restricted to designated safeguarding personnel only.



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### Child Safeguarding Incident Register

Case ID	Date & Time	Location	Individuals Involved (Initials Only)	Nature of Concern	Risk Level (Low/Med/High)	Actions Taken	Follow-up Required? (Y/N)	Case (Open/Pending/Resolved)	Status	Safeguarding Officer Assigned



### Reporting & Review:

- Safeguarding personnel should review this register regularly to track trends, identify recurring concerns, and ensure all cases are followed up appropriately.
- Any serious incidents must be escalated to the appropriate authorities immediately.
- This document must be handled in accordance with child protection policies and relevant legal frameworks.

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_





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