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## Child Protection Policy for CESEL

### Purpose

This policy ensures CESEL's commitment to safeguarding children from all forms of abuse, exploitation, and harm. It outlines the guidelines, procedures, and responsibilities for creating a safe environment for children across our activities.

### Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors, and partners engaged in any capacity with CESEL where children are present.

### 1. Commitment to Child Safety

- **Zero Tolerance for Abuse:** CESEL adopts a zero-tolerance policy towards any child abuse or exploitation, including physical, emotional, sexual, or neglectful actions. The safety and well-being of the child are paramount.
- **Legal Compliance:** We adhere to Nigeria's Child Rights Act, 2003, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant international frameworks.
- **Proactive Safeguarding:** Our proactive measures include risk assessments, prompt identification of potential harm, and immediate action to mitigate risks to child safety.

### 2. Child Protection Principles

- **Best Interest of the Child:** All actions taken will prioritize the child's physical and emotional well-being.
- **Non-Discrimination:** Equal protection and respect will be provided to every child, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, or background.
- **Empowerment and Participation:** We encourage children to participate in decisions that affect them and ensure their voices are heard in a safe and inclusive manner.

### 3. Code of Conduct

All employees, volunteers, and third-party service providers must adhere to the following:

- **Respectful Interaction:** Treat children with dignity, respect their privacy, and avoid any behavior that may be deemed harmful or abusive.

- **Two-Adult Rule:** Ensure that activities involving children are supervised by at least two responsible adults to mitigate risks of abuse or misconduct.
- **Appropriate Behavior:** Avoid physical punishment, inappropriate touching, or any behavior that could be misinterpreted as abusive or exploitative.
- **Reporting Obligations:** Staff must report any signs of abuse, neglect, or inappropriate behavior toward children immediately to the designated child protection officer.

#### 4. Recruitment and Screening

- **Comprehensive Screening:** All staff and volunteers working directly with children must undergo background checks, including criminal record vetting and reference verification.
- **Child Protection Training:** Employees, volunteers, and partners will be required to complete child protection training, understanding their role in preventing harm and responding to incidents.

#### 5. Reporting and Response Procedures

- **Clear Reporting Channels:** We maintain transparent reporting systems where staff, volunteers, and children themselves can report concerns regarding abuse or misconduct. All reports are handled confidentially and promptly.
- **Timely Investigations:** Reports will be thoroughly and sensitively investigated by qualified personnel. Appropriate actions, including legal recourse, disciplinary measures, or termination of employment, will be taken as necessary.
- **Support Systems:** Counseling, medical aid, and legal support will be provided to children affected by abuse. We are committed to facilitating the child's recovery and protecting their rights.

#### 6. Training and Awareness

- **Mandatory Training:** All staff, volunteers, and contractors will undergo comprehensive training on child protection policies and procedures.
- **Regular Updates:** Training programs will be updated periodically to address emerging threats or legislative changes, ensuring staff are prepared to handle any situation related to child protection.
- **Community Engagement:** We engage with local communities to raise awareness about child protection, empowering them to recognize, prevent, and report abuse.

#### 7. Monitoring and Review

- **Ongoing Monitoring:** The effectiveness of this policy will be continuously monitored by management through audits, incident reviews, and feedback from children and staff.
- **Annual Review:** The policy will undergo an annual review to ensure it remains relevant and aligned with best practices and legal standards.
- **KPIs:** Specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be developed to measure the policy's effectiveness, including the number of training sessions conducted, reports filed, and cases resolved.

## 8. Responsibility and Accountability

- **Designated Child Protection Officer:** A senior staff member will serve as the Child Protection Officer, responsible for overseeing the implementation and adherence to this policy.
- **Leadership Accountability:** The Board of Directors and senior leadership hold ultimate responsibility for child protection within the organization, ensuring all necessary resources and support are provided to enforce the policy.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Tolani". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

Dr Patrick Tolani

Director/Chief Executive Officer.