



FIT TO ACHIEVE SICKLE CELL FOUNDATION (FTA)

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

1. Our Commitment

Fit To Achieve Sickle Cell Foundation (FTA) is committed to protecting every child and young person we work with from harm.

We recognise that children living with sickle cell disease are medically vulnerable, may face stigma, neglect, or misunderstanding, and therefore require heightened safeguarding attention.

We take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, exploitation, and neglect.

2. Who This Policy Applies To

This policy applies to:

- All staff (paid and unpaid)
- Volunteers and community workers
- Trustees and leadership
- Partner organisations
- Contractors and consultants

It applies across all FTA activities in Nigeria, Ghana and other countries of operation, including:

- Community outreach programmes
- Hospital and clinic engagements
- School-based sessions
- Distribution of medical and wellness support
- Events, campaigns, and media activities
- Partnership-based programs globally.



3. Definition of a Child

A child is defined as any person under the age of 18, in line with:

- Children's Act 1998 (Act 560)
- UK safeguarding standards
- Nigerian Child Rights Act

4. Our Safeguarding Principles

FTA is guided by the following principles:

- Child-first approach
- The best interests of the child are paramount in every decision.
- Do no harm
- All programmes are designed to ensure children are never exposed to additional risk, including physical, emotional, or medical harm.
- Dignity and respect
- Every child is treated with respect, inclusion, and compassion, regardless of health status or background.
- Context-aware safeguarding
- We operate across diverse environments, particularly in Nigeria where systems may vary.
We adapt our approach without ever compromising child safety.

5. Risks We Recognise

FTA acknowledges that children may be at risk of:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse (including stigma related to sickle cell)
- Neglect (including medical neglect)
- Sexual abuse or exploitation
- Financial exploitation
- Health-related risks (e.g. dehydration, infection exposure, fatigue)



6. Safeguarding in Our Work

FTA integrates safeguarding into all programme delivery:

Health & Outreach Activities

- Ensure access to water, rest, and safe environments
- Avoid prolonged exposure to heat, cold, or physical stress
- Monitor children for signs of distress or medical risk

Schools and Community Settings

- Activities take place in safe, open, and supervised environments
- Children are never isolated with a single adult

Distribution Programmes

- Conducted fairly, transparently, and safely
- No child is placed in a vulnerable or pressured situation

Media & Storytelling

- Consent is mandatory from parent/guardian and child (where appropriate)
- Children's dignity is protected at all times
- No sensitive information is shared without permission

7. Code of Conduct

All FTA representatives must:

Always:

- Treat children with respect and dignity
- Work in open and visible settings
- Use appropriate language and behaviour
- Act in the best interests of the child at all times

Never:

- Be alone with a child in a private or isolated setting
- Engage in inappropriate physical or verbal behaviour



- Exchange personal contact details with children
- Take photos or videos without consent
- Give money or gifts directly to children outside formal programmes

8. Recruitment & Training

FTA ensures that:

- All staff and volunteers receive safeguarding briefing or training
- Individuals understand their roles and responsibilities
- Basic background checks are conducted where possible
- Safeguarding awareness is ongoing and reinforced

9. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

FTA takes all safeguarding concerns seriously.

What should be reported:

- Suspected abuse or neglect
- Inappropriate behaviour by staff or volunteers
- Unsafe environments
- Medical neglect or risk

How to report:

All concerns must be reported immediately to the:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Email: fittoachieveuk@gmail.com

If a child is in immediate danger, **urgent action must be taken to ensure their safety**, including contacting appropriate services.

10. Responding to Concerns

FTA will:



1. Take all concerns seriously
2. Act quickly and appropriately
3. Prioritise the child's safety
4. Work with:
 - Parents/guardians (where appropriate)
 - Healthcare providers
 - Schools and trusted community structures

Where formal safeguarding systems are limited, particularly in Nigeria and Ghana, FTA will take **practical, safe, and culturally sensitive action**.

11. Confidentiality

- Safeguarding information is shared on a **need-to-know basis only**
- Children's identities and personal information are **protected at all times**
- All records are handled securely and responsibly

12. Accountability & Governance

FTA leadership and trustees are responsible for:

- Ensuring safeguarding is embedded across all programmes
- Reviewing safeguarding practices regularly
- Maintaining oversight and accountability

13. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually
- Following any safeguarding incident
- In line with organisational growth and best practice



14. Statement of Commitment

Fit To Achieve Sickle Cell Foundation is committed to ensuring that:

Every child we reach is not only supported — but protected, respected, and safe.

Safeguarding is **everyone's responsibility**.

Last Reviewed: April 2026

Next Review: April 2027