



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 programmes 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 Trustees, 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
- Any partners we work with have safeguarding awareness and policies.

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)

Our designated safeguarding lead and qualified safeguarding champion is Ijeoma Agwu. Please address any safeguarding concerns to her via: 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 safeguarding concerns seriously
2. Act quickly and appropriately
3. Prioritise the child's safety and best interests
4. Refer concerns to the appropriate statutory or emergency services where required
5. Work with:
 - Parents/guardians, where appropriate and where doing so does not increase risk to the child
 - Healthcare providers, where appropriate
 - Schools and trusted community structures, where appropriate
 - Relevant statutory safeguarding, social welfare or law enforcement authorities

FTA uses a proportionate, risk-based approach to responding to safeguarding concerns.

Level 1 – Significant and Urgent Concerns / Immediate Danger

Where a child is in immediate danger, has suffered serious harm, or there is an urgent risk of abuse, sexual violence, exploitation, trafficking or other significant harm:

Contact the Police or appropriate emergency service immediately.

The child's immediate safety takes priority. Appropriate emergency medical assistance should also be sought where required.

Nigeria

Nigeria Police Force – Emergency Contacts:

- 0805 700 0001
- 0805 700 0002
- 0913 333 3785
- 0913 333 3786

Or contact the nearest Police Station.



For concerns involving trafficking or exploitation:

National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP)

- Hotline: 627 (MTN subscribers)
- 0703 000 0203
- Email: info@naptip.gov.ng

Ghana

Ghana Police Service – Emergency: **191**

Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) – **055 100 0900**

FTA's Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed as soon as it is safe and practicable to do so. Contacting FTA must never delay emergency action or place the child at further risk.

Level 2 – Serious Safeguarding Concerns

Where there is a serious concern about abuse, neglect, exploitation, trafficking or a child's welfare, but there is no immediate danger requiring emergency police intervention, the concern should be referred promptly to the relevant statutory child protection, social welfare or law enforcement authority.

Nigeria

Contact the relevant State or FCT authority responsible for child protection, social welfare, women/children's affairs or equivalent services in the location where the child is based.

Where the concern may involve a criminal offence, Police involvement should also be considered.

Ghana

Contact the relevant District or Regional Department of Social Welfare/Social Development.

The Ghana Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection's **Helpline of Hope** may also be used:

- 0800 800 800
- 0800 900 900
- SMS: 8020



The FTA Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed as soon as possible on fittoachieveuk@gmail.com.

Level 3 – Lower-Level or Emerging Safeguarding Concerns

Lower-level or emerging concerns should be reported promptly to the FTA Designated Safeguarding Lead on fittoachieveuk@gmail.com.

Examples include:

- Concerns about professional boundaries or conduct
- Inappropriate communication or contact with children
- Inadequate supervision
- Unsafe programme environments
- Concerns about photography, filming or sharing of children's stories or information
- Behaviour which may not constitute abuse but could place a child at risk

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will assess the concern, ensure it is recorded appropriately, and determine whether further action or escalation is required.

When in Doubt – Report

A person does not need to prove that abuse has occurred before raising a safeguarding concern.

Staff, volunteers, trustees, partners and representatives should not investigate allegations themselves, confront an alleged perpetrator, or attempt to determine whether abuse has occurred.

Where there is a reasonable concern that a child may be at risk of significant harm, the concern should be escalated rather than ignored or minimised.

Where a concern involves the Designated Safeguarding Lead, it should be reported to the FTA Board/Trustee safeguarding lead and, where appropriate, to the relevant statutory authority.

FTA will maintain appropriate records of safeguarding concerns and actions taken, with information shared only where necessary and appropriate to protect the child and manage the concern.



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**.

Reviewed: April 2026

Last Reviewed: September 2026 with Board approval

Next Review: April 2027