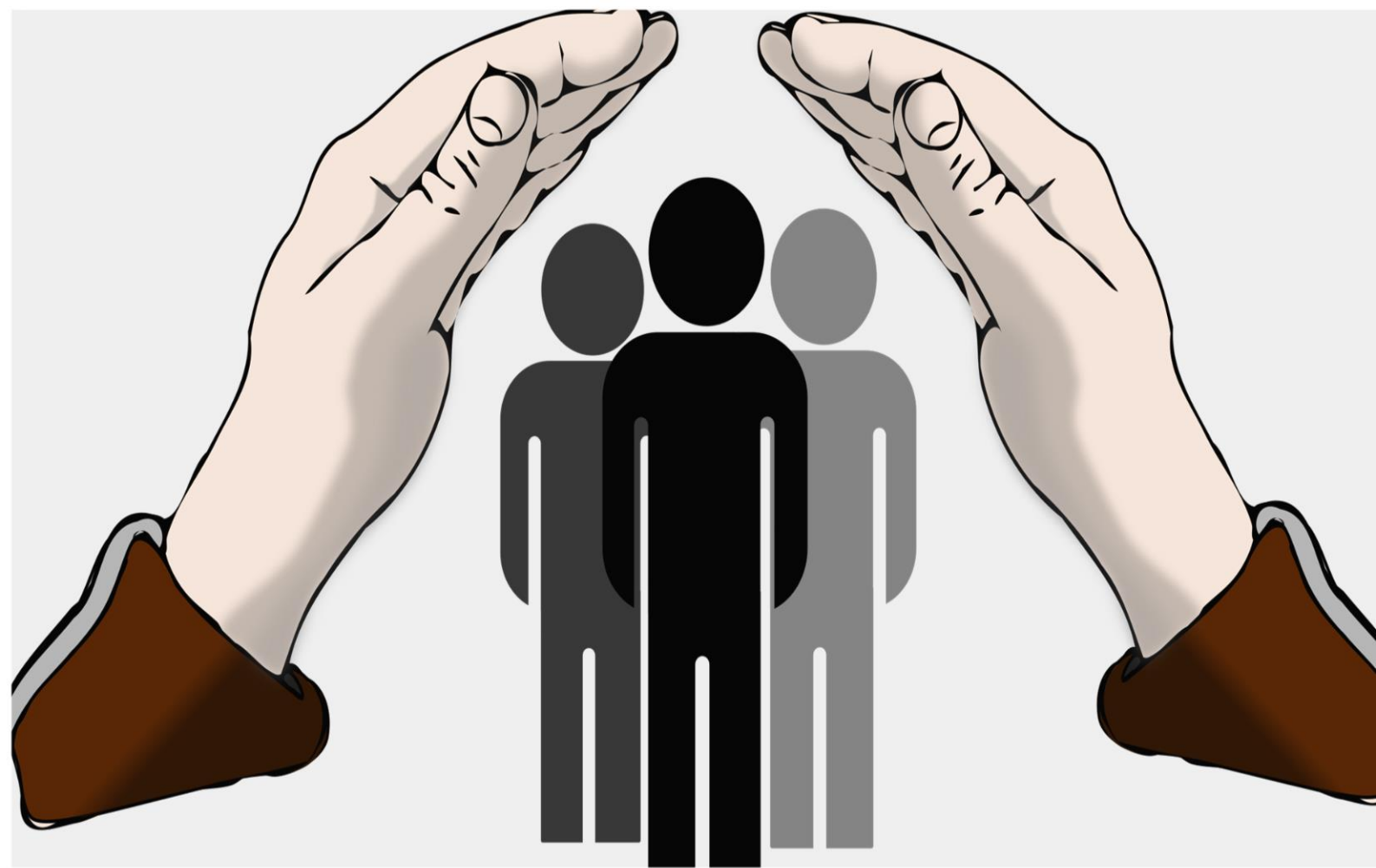




**STUDENT CHRISTIAN
ORGANISATION
OF MALAWI**

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



Approved:

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1.0 BACKGROUND

Student Christian Organisation of Malawi (SCOM) is an indigenous interdenominational Christian Organisation committed to the evangelisation, discipleship and training of students so that they would love and serve the Lord effectively in the Church and the world. SCOM receives all students regardless of their denominational or religious backgrounds provided they subscribe to its aims and basis of faith. SCOM recognizes and accepts partnerships and support from different institutions and individuals in its efforts to effectively address the spiritual, academic, and psychosocial needs of students, and is aware of the potential harm that students and everyone involved with SCOM may be exposed to through their contact with SCOM or its representatives. SCOM will therefore incorporate workable measures that will ensure that risks of harm towards children and vulnerable adults are minimized and that adults working on behalf of SCOM are protected from abuse or false accusations.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This section covers the purpose, definition of key terms and scope of the policy.

2.1 Purpose and Objectives

- 2.1.1 The purpose of this policy is to: ***protect people, particularly children, vulnerable adults and beneficiaries of assistance, from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with the Student Christian Organisation of Malawi (SCOM).*** This includes harm arising from:
- The conduct of staff, or personnel associated with SCOM;
 - The design and implementation of SCOM's programmes and activities.
- 2.1.2 Specifically, the policy seeks to achieve the following objectives:
- Demonstrate SCOM's commitment to keeping children and vulnerable adults safe;
 - Provide all members of staff and Associates or associated personnel with the information required to meet their safeguarding duty and protect children from harm;
 - Provide stakeholders with clear information relating to SCOM's safeguarding and child protection procedures;
 - Ensure that staff, Associates and associated personnel understand, recognise and effectively respond to the indicators of abuse in students and vulnerable adults;
- 2.1.3 This policy is designed to provide guidance to all SCOM staff and associates whether in Malawi or elsewhere to understand the importance of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and their responsibilities to do so within and outside their work environments at all times, by:
- Upholding the dignity and respect of children and vulnerable adults;
 - Taking preventative steps to ensure a safe environment for children and

¹ See 'Scope' for definition of associated personnel

vulnerable adults; and

c. Responding quickly and appropriately to concerns raised.

- 2.1.4 The policy lays out the commitments made by SCOM, and informs staff, Associates and associated personnel of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and protection of children and vulnerable adults under our care.
- 2.1.5 This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding: child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, child protection from exploitation and abuse, and other safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by SCOM (or its staff, Associates and associated personnel), but have been brought to the attention of SCOM during its normal work.
- 2.1.6 This policy does not cover Sexual harassment in the workplace – this is addressed in the Anti Bullying and Harassment policy.

2.2 Definition of Key Terms

- 2.2.1 **Safeguarding:** this means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation.²
In this policy, safeguarding shall mean protecting people, including children and vulnerable adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with SCOM representatives or its programs.
- 2.2.2 **Child:** a person below the age of 18. In this policy, all students in secondary schools will be regarded as children for purposes of simplicity, though there may be some who are above 18 years. For this reason, children and students may be used interchangeably.
- 2.2.3 **Child Protection:** the intervention that occurs when children have been significantly harmed or are at risk of significant harm.

Further definitions relating to safeguarding and child protection are provided in the glossary.

2.3 Scope of the Policy

- 2.3.1 This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of SCOM including senior managers, the board of trustees, National and sectional committees, staff and their spouses, Associates, senior friends, SCOM Patrons, children, and other associated personnel whilst engaged with work or visits related to SCOM, including but not limited to the following: consultants; contractors; volunteers; Guest Speakers, programme visitors including journalists, celebrities and politicians.
- 2.3.2 The policy also applies to teachers, parents and guardians, and religious and community leaders through advocacy and other outreach activities.

² NHS 'What is Safeguarding? Easy Read' 2011

- 2.3.3 SCOM Partners and their staff are bound by the principles in the Partnership Agreement which make Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults mandatory. These Partners must either have their own Safeguarding policy or abide by SCOM's Safeguarding policy for the duration of the Partnership agreement.

3.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 SCOM is committed to ensuring that children and vulnerable adults in contact with its representatives and programs are protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation and able to live a life with dignity, respect and security. All staff and representatives who work for/ with SCOM must ensure that their behavior promotes and encourages everyone to live free from harm and abuse (physical, sexual, emotional and spiritual); exploitation (sexual and physical); neglect; discrimination and human trafficking.
- 3.1.1 **SCOM believes that:**
- a. Everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation;
 - b. All forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation suffered by children and vulnerable adults are unacceptable and that perpetrators deserve stiffer punishment **(Mark 9: 42)**;
 - c. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.
- 3.1.2 **SCOM recognizes that:**
- a. Children are very important in the sight of God and that they must be trained and brought up in a manner that will help them become reliable citizens of God's kingdom and society at large.
 - b. The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we make;
 - c. Working in partnership with children, young people, parents and guardians, carers, religious institutions, government structures and other agencies is essential in promoting children's wellbeing;
 - d. All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief and sex have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse;
 - e. Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues;
 - f. Extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse.

4.0 ADDRESSING SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION VIOLATIONS

SCOM commits to addressing safeguarding and child protection violations throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response:

4.1 Prevention

This section covers procedures and actions which SCOM will follow to ensure safety of children and vulnerable adults in our care and prevent abuse from taking place:

4.1.1 Key responsibilities

4.1.1.1 Organisational responsibilities

SCOM, through appropriate designated offices, will:

- a. Ensure that all staff, Associates and associated personnel have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy;
- b. Design and undertake all its programs and activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with SCOM. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programs is gathered and communicated;
- c. Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying staff and associated personnel;
- d. Ensure staff and Associates receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organization;
- e. Ensure that all partners, alliances and other agencies, working with SCOM, consistently apply good safeguarding practice in all activities involving children and vulnerable adults;
- f. Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process.

4.1.1.2 Individual responsibilities

a. Child safeguarding

SCOM staff, Associates and associated personnel, both within and outside their work environment, **MUST NOT:**

- i. Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18 or any student in secondary school.
- ii. Sexually abuse or exploit children;
- iii. Subject a child to physical, emotional/ psychological and spiritual abuse, or neglect;
- iv. Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking.

b. Adult safeguarding

SCOM staff, Associates and associated personnel, both within and outside their work environment, **MUST NOT:**

- i. Sexually abuse or exploit vulnerable adults or any student aged 18 and above ;
- ii. Subject vulnerable adults to sexual, physical, spiritual, emotional/ psychological abuse, or neglect.

c. Child protection from exploitation and abuse

SCOM staff, Associates and associated personnel, both within and outside their work environment, **MUST NOT:**

- i. Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance;
- ii. Engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics.

Additionally, SCOM staff, Associates and associated personnel are obliged to:

- i. Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- ii. Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by SCOM's member of staff, Associate or associated personnel to the appropriate appointed authority;
- iii. Advocate for the safety of both boys and girls and vulnerable adults.

4.1.2 Procedures for recruitment and selection

- a. SCOM will ensure a fair and transparent recruitment and selection process and that those joining the organisation are safe to work with children and vulnerable adults. To achieve this, SCOM will ensure that a recruitment check list is developed and followed, which includes but not limited to the following:
 - i. All prospective employees, associates, board members are aware of the safeguarding and child protection policy and that signing of a declaration form to serve for the best interests of children and vulnerable adults is a requirement;
 - ii. All new employees will undergo an intensive orientation process during which the contents of the policy will be impressed on them, after which they will be required to sign a declaration form to serve for the best interests of children and vulnerable adults;
 - iii. All applicants for staff positions and consultancy will be subject to police checks for any criminal record;
 - iv. Reliable character references are obtained for all applicants concerning their legitimacy and suitability to work in an organisation that deals with children. Should any traits of child abuse or exploitation be discovered after the employment contract is already signed, the individual's contract will be terminated without notice;
 - v. Individuals who are hired as independent consultants, volunteers and all partners visiting SCOM programs are briefed on the safeguarding and child protection policy and SCOM's expectation of their interaction with children;
 - vi. Individual staff, Associates or associated personnel who are found to be involved in any case of child abuse within and outside their work environment will have their contract/ membership terminated without notice.

4.1.3 Behaviour protocols

Behavior protocols are an outline of proper acceptable attitudes and behavior when working with children designed to protect children from harm and at the same time safeguard those working with children from false accusations. The behavior protocol has two sets of behavior: the acceptable and unacceptable behavior and conduct.

A. Acceptable behaviors

In all its programs, SCOM and its sections must ensure that:

- i. A risk analysis is conducted when organizing activities and programs involving children and plan for ways of mitigating those risks. Conferences/ retreats, joint

- meetings and other gatherings must be free from any risk of physical, sexual and spiritual abuse in terms of security of venue, mode of transport and caliber of invited guests, speakers or facilitators;
- ii. Conference speakers and facilitators respect the rights and privacy of children during counseling and prayer sessions. Where possible male speakers shall provide counseling to male children and vice versa;
 - iii. Children are properly looked after during conferences. Responsible Associates and/or members of staff are assigned to monitor what is happening to the children at all times and provide care and support in case of emergencies that may arise during conferences, both at night and during the day;
 - iv. Speakers and facilitators are briefed on the basis of faith of SCOM and the expected code of conduct so that children are not exposed to teachings/ doctrines and behaviors that are detrimental to their spiritual, academic and moral growth;
 - v. Individuals dealing with children in SCOM's capacity have valid identification and that the school authorities are aware of the requirement;
 - vi. Adults dealing with children in SCOM's capacity are encouraged to behave responsibly in a situation where a student behaves seductively towards them considering that some might have experienced abuse before and may desire to have special attention. SCOM staff and Associates are encouraged, where possible, to travel with their spouses or colleagues to take care of such situations;
 - vii. Staff, Associates and facilitators are encouraged to respond wisely to questions raised by children which concern cultural practices or religious doctrines so as not to impinge on the belief systems or religious freedom of others.

B. Unacceptable behaviors

SCOM and its representatives must always, both within and outside their workplace ensure **NOT TO:**

- i. Place staff and associates in compromising or vulnerable situations that can make them potential perpetrators of abuse, or at risk of being falsely accused of abuse;
- ii. Fondle, kiss, hug, hold or touch children in an inappropriate and culturally insensitive manner;
- iii. Allow speakers and invited guests to use their invitation to advance their own ambitions or lure children to their own denominations and that if they do, corrective measures are taken immediately;
- iv. Show favoritism to any individual children by way of gifts and other enticements;
- v. Act in ways that are abusive or may place children at risk of abuse;
- vi. Spend time alone with a student, away from others behind closed doors or in a secluded place;
- vii. Be involved in sexual relationship with a student regardless of the age of consent;
- viii. Encourage children to conduct particular cultural or denominational practices regardless of their personal beliefs.

4.1.4 General Ministry to Children

As a preventive measure, SCOM will in its regular work, ensure that:

- a. Children are empowered with adequate and relevant information on the types of abuse, recognizing and reporting abuse;
- b. Children are specially equipped with survival skills to enable them take charge of their bodies against sexual harassment, defilement, rape, etc.

- c. Adequate counseling is provided to all children that battle with emotional traumas;
- d. Relevant interventions are taken to reduce or remove causes of abuse and exploitation among children;
- e. Children are taught about how to relate with the opposite sex and adults as God intended; with respect, dignity and honor.

4.1.5 Images and communications about children

SCOM will ensure that communications about children are handled in a manner that will not put them at risk of harm or abuse. SCOM will ensure that:

- a. Sourcing of any information from children through interviews or pictures and videos is carefully undertaken to safeguard the respect, privacy and dignity of each child. SCOM will not disseminate personal information and details of children which may cause more damage or potential risk of harm to children.
- b. All personal information and details of children or vulnerable adults, which may identify them or increase the potential risk of harm or injury to their name, reputation or their families should not be used.
- c. All participants to SCOM activities will be required to fill consent forms authorizing SCOM to publicly use pictures and videos taken during its functions.
- d. Taking of pictures and videos in SCOM functions involving children will be restricted to authorized personnel who must sign an agreement form not to share the pictures to the general public without the authorization of the organizers.
- e. Partners or individuals who want to use student information in their publications have written approval from SCOM on the proper use of such information by signing an agreement with SCOM. SCOM will be at liberty to terminate partnership agreement with any partner who violates the agreed protocols regarding the safety of children.

4.1.6 Partnerships and Networking

- a. SCOM will not enter into partnership with or engage any individual, Church or organization that does not subscribe to its aims and basis of faith to avoid exposing students to contradictory doctrines and practices.
- b. SCOM will ensure that background checks are conducted for all potential partners before engaging them to verify their legitimacy and suitability to work with children and check whether their policies and practices are in line with SCOM aims and basis of faith. A written contract outlining the terms, including protection of children and vulnerable adults, will be sought for every partnership, and that any proven violation of the contractual terms regarding safeguarding and child protection will lead to immediate termination of the contract.

4.2 Reporting: actual and suspected abuse

This section covers procedures to be followed in the case of an allegation or suspicion of abuse reported by students or staff.

- a. SCOM will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff and the communities we work with by ensuring:
 - i. A culture of openness to enable issues and concerns about safeguarding to be raised and discussed freely;
 - ii. A sense of accountability between staff, Associates and associated personnel so that potential poor or abusive behavior can and must be challenged;

- iii. The mandatory reporting of abusive concerns that directly relate to a child or vulnerable person.
- b. Any allegation or concern regarding the abuse of a child or vulnerable adult must be treated seriously.
- c. **Reporting concerns regarding the abuse of children or vulnerable adults is mandatory** and can arise when abusive behavior is observed or suspected; or when an allegation is made or disclosed or there are indicators (signs and symptoms) of suspected abuse on the survivor.
- d. Any staff reporting concerns or complaints through formal whistleblowing channels (or if they request it) will be protected by SCOM's Whistleblowing Policy.
- e. SCOM will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the general public, partners and official regulatory bodies.

4.2.1 Indicators of abuse

- a. SCOM will make sure that staff, Associates and visitors are aware of **indicators of abuse** so that they are able to raise their concerns once they observe one or all of the indicators in children who are associated with SCOM.
- b. It should be known that such indicators should be taken seriously though they may not always mean a child has been abused. A list of indicators of abuse is provided in the appendix.

4.2.2 Procedures for reporting a safeguarding or child protection concern

- a. All allegations or concerns about the abuse of a child or vulnerable adult must be taken seriously at all times and reported to SCOM's Safeguarding Officer or any appointed authority:
- b. All allegations or concerns should be recorded immediately on the **Incident reporting form** and emailed directly to SCOM's Safeguarding and Child Protection Officer and copied to a line manager. If the Safeguarding and Child Officer is absent, then the report must be sent to the Administration Officer. The line manager must be informed if the report relates to their subordinates. This will ensure that the line manager is kept updated with what is going on and able to appropriately support / protect more junior staff.
- c. External partners and stakeholders can report any safeguarding concerns involving SCOM staff or Associates, by sending an email to the General Secretary on the following email address; scommalawi@gmail.com. Alternatively, they can write a letter detailing the incidents, dates, events or place, and names of staff or Associates involved and send it to the following address: SCOM National Secretariat, P.O. Box, 657, Lilongwe.
- d. All concerns involving SCOM senior personnel should be reported in line with the SCOM's Whistleblowing Policy by contacting any appointed higher authority or national regulating body.

- e. In addition to the above contact details, SCOM will establish and publicise a helpline for reporting actual or suspected abuse of children and vulnerable adults.

4.3 Responding to actual and suspected abuse

This section covers procedures to be followed when actual or suspected abuse has been disclosed or reported by anyone.

4.3.1 Following up on safeguarding reports and concerns

SCOM will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory obligations.

- a. If a staff member, Associate or associated personnel is involved in a safeguarding incident, the behaviour protocol under this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be invoked first to investigate the allegations. The SCOM conditions of service or code of conduct will then be used if necessary.
- b. Management must not take any formal action until all the facts related to an allegation are known. Where more information is required, an investigation should be carried out.
- c. SCOM will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to any staff or Associate found in breach of the policy in line with the SCOM's HR Policy and Code of Conduct.

4.3.2 Disclosure and management of abuse from a child or vulnerable adult

- a. SCOM will establish structures that can enable abused children to disclose their experiences freely and without fear of discrimination or risk of further abuse.
- b. Should any member of staff or associate receive information about or observe actual or suspected abuse, he/she shall report to the Safeguarding Officer who will investigate the matter and ensure that necessary measures are taken.
- c. All cases that are criminal in nature and those involving external partners or stakeholders but have been brought to our attention will be reported to relevant government structures like the Ministry of Education, Police, Department of Social Welfare and Health Facilities, for appropriate action or direction.

4.3.3 Procedures for handling disclosure of abuse from a child or vulnerable adult

If a child or vulnerable adult discloses that he or she is being abused by someone or someone they know is being abused, the following measures will be taken:

- a. SCOM staff or Associate should report immediately to the Training Secretary or appropriate member of staff;
- b. SCOM staff must take action immediately by recording the concerns on Incident Reporting Form within 24 hours;
- c. Notes, including dates, time of conversation and any incidents, facts, observations, verbatim speech, if possible, should be written down as soon as is reasonably practicable after the incident or disclosure has occurred. No information should be withheld or undermined;
- d. It is important to ensure that correct information or details are recorded including the child's name and address and name and address of school, parents or guardians.

- e. The child's school authorities, parents or guardians should be informed of the allegation and the action taken to protect the child, unless this may raise the risk to the child;
- f. A confidential file should be opened wherein all notes, conversations will be recorded and kept;
- g. The alleged abusers and all witnesses should be given a chance to present their story and they too shall be expected to cooperate with the investigation team.

4.3.4 Support for survivors of abuse and family

- a. SCOM will offer support to survivors of harm caused by staff, Associates or associated personnel, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.
- b. SCOM will determine the nature of abuse and support required for the survivor. If it is within its capacity to help, SCOM will provide that support, otherwise it will refer all abuse cases beyond its mandate to the relevant structures for appropriate support.

5.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 5.1 It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns.
- 5.2 Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need-to-know basis only, and should be kept secure at all times. However, for all cases that SCOM cannot handle or are criminal in nature, the abused child or adult will be assured of a shared confidentiality.

6.0 STANDARDS

- 6.1 SCOM is committed to ensuring that the child's best interest and well-being are of paramount consideration at all times. In this regard this policy is based on a child-rights framework and principles encapsulated within:
 - a. The Holy Bible.
 - b. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Convention came into Force in the UK in 1992, its Optional Protocols.
 - c. The internationally-accepted safeguarding standards of the Keeping Children Safe Coalition.
 - d. All relevant national laws of Malawi as SCOM is a registered Organisation under the Trustees Incorporation Act section 5.3.
 - e. The UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the UN Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13).
 - f. The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS).

7.0 ASSOCIATED POLICIES

- 7.1 The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be implemented in line with standards and procedures stipulated in other SCOM Policies and documents such as:
 - a. SCOM Code of Conduct

- b. Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy
- c. Whistleblowing policy
- d. Complaints Policy
- e. Human Resource Policy
- f. Staff Conditions of Service
- g. Giving and Receiving of Gifts Policy

8.0 MANAGING THE POLICY

SCOM is committed to support the policy and undertakes the necessary activities to facilitate its understanding and implementation for the benefit of the students it serves and all key stakeholders.

8.1 Management Strategies

SCOM will ensure that provisions for safeguarding and child protection are reflected in all key documents and that all people joining SCOM are oriented on the policy.

8.2 Outreach Programs

As part of its ongoing programs, SCOM shall extend its services to teachers, senior friends, religious and community leaders and parents or guardians through awareness and advocacy campaigns.

9.0 STRUCTURES, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 9.1 It is the responsibility of everybody within SCOM to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and exploitation. However, specific responsibilities will be given to selected individuals or groups in terms of leadership and implementation.
- 9.2 The National Executive Committee (NEC)³ shall from time to time approve appointment of focal persons at national, regional and zonal levels who will be responsible for all safeguarding and child protection issues.
- 9.3 The General Secretary, in liaison with the Board Vice Chairperson, will be responsible for ensuring that the policy is adhered to in all SCOM programs and activities at national level while the Training Secretaries, in liaison with the, Regional Chairpersons will take a leading role in addressing safeguarding and child protection issues at regional level and zonal.

10.0 IMPLEMENATING AND RESOURCING THE POLICY

- 10.1 SCOM will mainstream safeguarding and child protection issues in its normal programs. It will utilize existing structures like morning devotions, weekly fellowship meetings and conferences to discuss and train staff, associates and students on the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- 10.2 SCOM will consider safeguarding and child protection as part of its core activities and hence provide for it in the annual budget.

³ National Executive Committee: This is the board of SCOM which responsible for provision of strategic direction and the day to day operations of the organization.

- 10.3** Where necessary, SCOM will raise funds through proposal development specifically for the implementation of the policy.

11.0 MONITORING AND REPORTING

- 11.1** The secretariat will design simple tools for collecting data on the key indicators of the policy's progress.
- 11.2** Appointed focal persons at zonal, regional and national level will be required to report periodically to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Officer at the secretariat, who will in turn provide timely feedback on the implementation of the policy.

12.0 REVIEWING THE POLICY

- 12.1** The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be reviewed every three to five years unless there is sufficient reason to review it earlier or later than the stipulated period.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Beneficiary of Assistance

Someone who directly receives goods or services from SCOM's program. Note that misuse of power can also apply to the wider community that the NGO serves, and also can include exploitation by giving the perception of being in a position of power.

Parents and guardians

Biological parents and other adults in a parenting role for example adoptive parents, step parents and foster carers.

Staff

Contract staff, interns, volunteers and part time staff working in or on behalf of SCOM.

Associated personnel

All staff of partner organization, consultants and other service providers who have direct contact with students while working for/ with SCOM.

SCOM Associates Fellowship (SCOM_AF)

An interdenominational association/fellowship of ex-members, senior friends, patrons and well-wishers of SCOM who come together for purposes of fellowship and supporting the work of SCOM.

An individual member of SCOM-AF is called an Associate. A group of Associates living in one particular geographical area is called a zone.

Associate

A SCOM Alumni or any mature Christian within and outside the country from where they continue to take an interest in the SCOM to the extent of supporting it morally, financially and materially.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.

This definition draws from our values and principles and shapes our culture. It pays specific attention to preventing and responding to harm from any potential, actual or attempted abuse of power, trust, or vulnerability, especially for sexual purposes.

Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across our programs, partners and staff. It requires proactively identifying, preventing and guarding against all risks of harm, exploitation and abuse and having mature, accountable and transparent systems for response, reporting and learning when risks materialize. Those systems must be survivor-centered and also protect those accused until proven guilty.

Safeguarding puts beneficiaries and affected persons at the center of all we do.

Child abuse and neglect

Child abuse and neglect is defined as all forms of action or inaction resulting in harm (or risk of harm) to children under the age of 18 in the context of a relationship of responsibility, power, or trust.

Physical abuse

The actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power, or trust.

Sexual abuse

The involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Sexual abuse is evidenced by an activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person.

Sexual exploitation

The term ‘sexual exploitation’ means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This definition includes human trafficking and modern slavery.

Emotional Abuse

This takes place when a child is subjected to verbal and other forms of psychological abuses that affect them mentally. These could be in forms of hate or demeaning speeches, threats, insults, mockery or denial of love and care from parents, siblings, teachers and peers. While there may be no physical marks on the body of the abused child, this form of abuse can leave deep wounds, lead to low self-esteem, inferiority complex and resentment and aggression on the part of the abused child. It can also lead to suicidal or vengeful thoughts.

Spiritual Abuse

This occurs when spiritual leader or someone in a position of spiritual power or authority (whether Organisation, institution, church or family) misuses their power or authority and the trust placed in them, with the intention of controlling, coercing, manipulating or dominating a child. It is about the misuse of power within a framework of spiritual belief or practice, in order to meet the needs of the abuser at the expense of the needs of the child which may result to other forms of abuse such as physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Survivor

The person who has been abused or exploited. The term ‘survivor’ is often used in preference to ‘victim’ as it implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual’s choice how they wish to identify themselves.

Vulnerable adult

Sometimes also referred to as adult at risk. A person who is or may be in need of care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

APPENDICES

1. Incident Reporting Form
2. Indicators of abuse