HUMAN RESOURCES
POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL

Fair employment | Staff accountability | Safeguarding | Humanitarian integrity

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1. Introduction and Policy Framework

1.1 Purpose

This Manual establishes consistent, fair, transparent and accountable people-management standards for Silent Cry Foundation (SCF). It supports the Foundation's humanitarian and development mandate by setting clear expectations for recruitment, employment, conduct, performance, staff welfare and separation.

1.2 Scope

Unless a specific contract or applicable law provides otherwise, this Manual applies to all SCF employees in all offices and project locations, including permanent, fixed-term, part-time and temporary staff. Relevant provisions—including safeguarding, confidentiality, anti-fraud, health and safety, and conduct—must be incorporated into agreements for consultants, interns, volunteers, secondees and contractors where appropriate. Their contractual status is determined by the applicable agreement and law.

1.3 Policy hierarchy and legal compliance

This Manual must be read together with each employee's contract, SCF's Code of Conduct, safeguarding/PSEA procedures, finance and procurement policies, security procedures, grant agreements and applicable Somali law. Where a provision conflicts with mandatory law, the law prevails. Management must seek qualified local legal advice before implementing any provision whose legality is uncertain.

1.4 Principles

SCF commits to merit-based decisions; dignity and respect; equal opportunity; non-discrimination; safeguarding and do-no-harm; confidentiality; responsible stewardship of donor funds; staff participation; reasonable accommodation where practicable; and fair, documented decision-making.

1.5 Responsibilities

The Board approves this Manual and oversees the Executive Director. The Executive Director implements it and approves actions within delegated authority. HR administers the Manual, maintains personnel records and advises managers. Finance confirms budget availability and payroll controls. Line managers supervise staff and document performance. Every staff member must understand and comply with the Manual.

1.6 Review, access and interpretation

HR will review the Manual at least annually and whenever legal, operational or donor requirements materially change. Proposed amendments are documented, reviewed by management and legal advisers where necessary, and submitted to the Board for approval. Staff receive access to the current version and acknowledge receipt. The English version is the working draft; SCF should provide Somali translations and explain the policies in a language employees understand.

2. Workforce Planning and Recruitment

2.1 Policy

Recruitment must be planned, budgeted, competitive where practicable, documented and based on the skills and competencies required for the role. No person may promise employment or commence an appointment without the required approval.

2.2 Vacancy approval

The hiring manager submits a recruitment request stating the business/programme need, job title, location, contract type and duration, reporting line, budget code, salary range, funding source and proposed start date. HR checks the job description, grade and recruitment process; Finance confirms budget availability; the authorised approver approves the request.

2.3 Job descriptions

Every role must have an approved job description before recruitment. It should state the job purpose, key duties, reporting line, required qualifications and experience, competencies, safeguarding responsibilities, decision authority and performance indicators. HR and the manager review it when duties or structure change materially.

2.4 Advertising and selection

Vacancies should be advertised internally and/or externally through channels likely to reach qualified candidates. The advertisement must accurately describe the role, essential criteria, location, contract duration and application deadline. Shortlisting criteria must be set before reviewing applications. Interviews should use consistent, job-related questions and a documented scoring rubric.

2.5 Selection panel and conflicts

A panel should normally include HR and the hiring manager, with a technical representative where appropriate. Panel members must disclose family, financial, supervisory or other relationships that could affect impartiality and recuse themselves where necessary. Selection decisions must be based on evidence and recorded reasons.

2.6 Due diligence

Before appointment, HR verifies identity, qualifications, employment references and any role-specific checks permitted by law and justified by risk. Safeguarding-related checks should be conducted for roles involving children or adults at risk. Checks must be proportionate, confidential and consistent with applicable law. Any material discrepancy is assessed fairly with the candidate given an opportunity to respond.

2.7 Offer and contract

The written offer and employment contract must state position, duties, duty station, start date, term, probation if applicable, remuneration, working time, leave, notice, benefits, confidentiality and other lawful conditions. The employee receives a signed copy. No contract term may waive a mandatory legal right.

2.8 Nepotism and equal opportunity

SCF prohibits discrimination and favouritism in recruitment. A relative of a staff member may be considered only through the same objective process, with the relationship disclosed and the staff member excluded from the decision. No employee may directly supervise or approve payments for a close relative without documented safeguards.

Implementation record: HR should maintain the relevant approval, checklist, form or case record to demonstrate that this policy was applied.

3. Employment Contracts, Probation and Personnel Files

3.1 Contract types

SCF may use lawful indefinite, fixed-term, part-time, temporary, internship or consultancy arrangements according to operational need. The contract must reflect the actual working relationship and must not be used to avoid legal obligations.

3.2 Probation

Where lawful and stated in the contract, probation provides a structured period to assess suitability and support the employee. HR and the line manager set expectations at the start, conduct documented check-ins and complete a written assessment before probation ends. Confirmation, lawful extension or termination must be communicated in writing and comply with the contract and law.

3.3 Personnel files

HR maintains a confidential file for each employee containing recruitment records, signed contract, job description, emergency contact, payroll details, performance and training records, leave, disciplinary/grievance records where applicable, and separation documents. Access is limited to authorised personnel with a legitimate work need.

3.4 Changes to employment

Changes to title, salary, duty station, working time, reporting line or contract term must be documented, approved under the delegation of authority and communicated in writing. Contract variations require employee agreement where required by law.

3.5 Staff identification and property

SCF may issue identification cards, equipment, keys and access credentials for work purposes. Staff must protect them, report loss promptly and return them upon request or separation. SCF property may not be used for unauthorised personal or commercial purposes.

4. Induction, Learning and Development

4.1 Induction

All new staff must complete induction as soon as practicable, preferably during the first working week. Induction covers SCF's mission and structure, job responsibilities, HR policies, Code of Conduct, safeguarding/PSEA, reporting channels, security, health and safety, data protection, finance/procurement controls relevant to the role, attendance, leave and performance expectations.

4.2 Manager responsibilities

The line manager explains role-specific tasks, team interfaces, work plans and performance measures. HR maintains an induction checklist signed by the employee, manager and HR and follows up on outstanding items.

4.3 Learning and development

Training priorities should be based on job requirements, performance reviews, safeguarding and compliance risks, donor commitments and available budgets. Training approval must be documented. Employees are expected to apply learning and share relevant knowledge.

4.4 Career development

SCF may support coaching, mentoring, acting assignments, internal recruitment and development plans, subject to organisational need, fairness and budget. Training does not automatically guarantee promotion or salary increase.

5. Working Hours, Attendance and Flexible Work

5.1 Working schedule

Normal working hours, workdays, rest breaks and any field or shift arrangements must be specified in the contract or written staff schedule and must comply with applicable law. Because programme operations and locations may differ, SCF must approve and publish the applicable schedule rather than assume one universal schedule.

5.2 Attendance and punctuality

Employees must attend work, meetings, training and approved field activities as scheduled. Attendance records must be accurate and must not be falsified or completed on behalf of another person. HR and managers should promptly address unexplained absence or recurring lateness.

5.3 Absence notification

An employee who cannot attend work must notify the line manager as early as practicable and follow the applicable leave or sickness reporting process. Managers must inform HR of unapproved absence and avoid disclosing personal medical details beyond those needed for administration.

5.4 Overtime and time off

Overtime must be authorised in writing in advance except in a genuine emergency. Eligibility, payment or compensatory time must follow the employment contract, donor budget and applicable law. Managers must monitor workload, rest periods and staff safety; employees should not be pressured to work unsafe or unlawful hours.

5.5 Flexible and remote work

Flexible or remote arrangements may be approved where duties, security, confidentiality, supervision and programme need allow. Approval must specify schedule, availability, deliverables, data-security requirements and review date. Such arrangements do not remove attendance, performance or confidentiality obligations.

6. Leave and Absence Management

6.1 General rule

SCF administers annual leave, sick leave, maternity and other parental leave, public holidays, compassionate leave and any other leave required by law or contract. Entitlements, accrual, documentation and payment must be checked against current applicable law and each employee's contract before this Manual is adopted.

6.2 Annual leave

Employees should submit leave requests in advance using the approved form or HR system. Managers consider operational coverage and respond promptly. HR maintains balances and records. Leave should not be taken before approval except in an emergency, in which case the employee must notify the manager as soon as possible.

6.3 Sick leave

Employees must notify their manager promptly when illness prevents work and follow reasonable, lawful documentation requirements. Medical information is confidential and may only be accessed by authorised staff. SCF must not require disclosure of unnecessary medical details.

6.4 Maternity, paternity and parental leave

SCF will provide statutory and contractual parental leave and related protections. HR must confirm current legal entitlements, eligibility, notice and pay arrangements before issuing individual guidance. No employee may be penalised for exercising a legally protected leave entitlement.

6.5 Compassionate, emergency and unpaid leave

Managers may approve compassionate or emergency leave and, where permitted, unpaid leave in accordance with law, contract, consistency and documented operational considerations. Any exception must be recorded and approved by the authorised manager and HR.

6.6 Public holidays and religious observance

SCF observes applicable official public holidays and manages any programme-related staffing requirements lawfully and fairly. Alternative arrangements must be documented where employees are required to work on a holiday.

7. Remuneration, Benefits and Payroll

7.1 Salary setting

Salary ranges should be based on job responsibilities, grade, internal equity, relevant labour-market information, funding availability and donor restrictions. Salary decisions must be approved under the delegation of authority and documented. No manager may make an unauthorised salary promise.

7.2 Payroll controls

Finance prepares payroll from approved contracts, attendance and authorised changes; HR validates staff status and changes; an authorised person independent of payroll preparation reviews and approves the payroll. Payments should be made through traceable channels and supported by payslips or equivalent records.

7.3 Deductions

Deductions may only be made when legally permitted and properly authorised. SCF must not impose arbitrary fines or deduct money from wages without a lawful basis. Any recovery for loss or damage requires documented investigation, due process and legal review where needed.

7.4 Salary review and benefits

Salary reviews are subject to budget, performance, role changes, equity and donor rules; they are not automatic unless required by law or contract. Any benefits, allowances, insurance or per diem arrangements must be documented in policy or contract and applied consistently.

7.5 Confidentiality and conflicts

Employees must protect payroll and salary information they access through their duties. HR and Finance may not disclose personal compensation information except to authorised persons or where disclosure is legally required.

8. Performance Management

8.1 Purpose

Performance management supports clear expectations, accountability, staff development and delivery of programme outcomes. It must be continuous, evidence-based and fair—not limited to an annual rating.

8.2 Objectives and reviews

At the beginning of each performance cycle, the manager and employee agree measurable objectives aligned with the job description and programme plan. Reviews should occur at agreed intervals, with a formal review at least annually and more frequently during probation or where performance concerns arise.

8.3 Assessment criteria

Assessment may cover quality and timeliness of work, achievement of objectives, teamwork, communication, responsible use of resources, compliance, safeguarding, learning and role-specific competencies. Indicators must be within the employee's reasonable control and appropriate to the role.

8.4 Underperformance

Managers must explain concerns, provide examples, listen to the employee's perspective and agree a written improvement plan with support, measures and a reasonable review period. Continued underperformance may lead to further action only after a fair process and in accordance with law and contract.

8.5 Records and appeals

Employees should receive a copy of their review and may submit written comments. HR maintains records securely. A staff member who believes an assessment was biased or procedurally unfair may raise the matter through the grievance procedure.

9. Code of Conduct, Equality and Workplace Respect

9.1 Expected conduct

Employees must act honestly, professionally and respectfully; use Foundation resources responsibly; follow lawful instructions; protect confidential information; disclose conflicts of interest; and comply with safeguarding, security, anti-fraud and donor requirements.

9.2 Equal opportunity and non-discrimination

SCF prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying, intimidation and retaliation. Employment decisions must be based on role-related criteria. Reasonable accommodation should be considered where practicable and consistent with law and operational safety.

9.3 Harassment and sexual harassment

Unwelcome conduct that humiliates, intimidates, coerces or creates a hostile work environment is prohibited. Complaints must be taken seriously, assessed promptly and handled confidentially. Informal resolution is never required where there is a safety risk, serious misconduct or a power imbalance.

9.4 Conflicts of interest and gifts

Staff must promptly disclose actual, potential or perceived conflicts, including outside employment, family relationships with suppliers or beneficiaries, financial interests and gifts that may influence decisions. Managers document mitigation, recusal or other controls. Cash gifts, bribes and kickbacks are prohibited.

9.5 Political activity and impartiality

Employees must not use SCF resources, role or beneficiary relationships to coerce political support or present personal political views as SCF's position. Staff must follow applicable law and any neutrality requirements in donor agreements.

9.6 Alcohol, drugs and weapons

Employees must not work while impaired or possess/use prohibited substances or unauthorised weapons at work or during Foundation activities, subject to applicable law and legitimate security arrangements. Safety-related concerns must be handled fairly and confidentially.

10. Safeguarding and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

10.1 Zero tolerance

SCF prohibits sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, child abuse, exploitation, neglect, trafficking, and abuse of power by staff or anyone acting on its behalf. Humanitarian assistance must never be exchanged for sex, money, employment, goods or favours.

10.2 Mandatory conduct

Staff must maintain professional boundaries, obtain appropriate consent, protect children and adults at risk, follow photography and information-sharing rules, and report safeguarding concerns promptly through designated channels. Staff must never investigate allegations on their own or promise absolute secrecy.

10.3 Reporting and response

Reports may be made to the designated safeguarding focal point, HR, Executive Director, Board-designated contact or a confidential reporting channel. If a person implicated controls the normal channel, reports must bypass that person. SCF will prioritise survivor safety, informed choice, confidentiality, non-retaliation and referral to qualified services where appropriate.

10.4 Investigation and interim measures

Only trained, authorised persons may manage investigations. SCF may take proportionate interim measures to protect people and evidence, without presuming guilt. The process must be impartial, documented and respectful of due process. Mandatory reporting obligations and survivor consent must be assessed under applicable law and safeguarding standards.

10.5 Consequences and partner coverage

Substantiated violations may result in disciplinary action up to termination, referral to authorities where legally required, and action under partner or contractor agreements. Safeguarding obligations must be included in relevant contracts and partner due diligence.

11. Grievance, Whistleblowing and Non-Retaliation

11.1 Grievance channel

Employees may raise concerns about supervision, workload, discrimination, harassment, pay, working conditions, policy application or other employment matters. Were safe, they may first speak with their manager; otherwise, they may contact HR or a higher-level manager directly.

11.2 Process

Complaints should be acknowledged promptly, recorded securely and assessed for urgency, conflicts of interest and appropriate route. HR or an impartial investigator gathers relevant information, gives

affected parties a fair opportunity to respond, and documents findings and actions. The complainant should receive an outcome update to the extent confidentiality permits.

11.3 Whistleblowing

Staff and other stakeholders may report suspected fraud, corruption, abuse, safeguarding failures, serious misconduct, unlawful conduct or deliberate concealment. Reports may be made confidentially and, where a channel exists, anonymously. SCF will assess anonymous reports based on available evidence.

11.4 Protection from retaliation

Retaliation against a person who raises a concern in good faith, participates in an investigation or refuses to engage in misconduct is prohibited. Retaliation itself may result in disciplinary action. Knowingly fabricated allegations may be addressed through a fair process, but an unsubstantiated complaint is not automatically a false complaint.

11.5 Appeals

An employee may appeal a formal grievance or disciplinary outcome in writing within the period communicated in the decision letter. The appeal should be reviewed by a person or panel not materially involved in the original decision, where practicable. The appeal outcome must be documented.

12. Discipline and Investigations

12.1 Principles

Disciplinary action must be lawful, proportionate, consistent, confidential and based on evidence. SCF will distinguish misconduct, capability/performance concerns, safeguarding allegations and criminal allegations, applying the appropriate process.

12.2 Examples of misconduct

Examples include fraud, theft, bribery, falsifying records, serious negligence, unauthorised disclosure of confidential data, harassment, discrimination, safeguarding violations, retaliation, repeated unauthorised absence, deliberate refusal to perform lawful duties, misuse of assets, conflicts concealed from SCF and serious breaches of security or donor rules.

12.3 Procedure

As appropriate to the seriousness of the allegation, the process may include preliminary assessment, written notice of concerns, reasonable opportunity to respond, impartial fact-finding, a meeting, a written decision and an appeal. The employee may be accompanied by a colleague or representative where required by law or SCF procedure.

12.4 Interim suspension

Where necessary to protect people, evidence or operations, SCF may consider temporary reassignment or suspension pending investigation, subject to law and contract. Suspension is a neutral measure and not a finding of guilt.

12.5 Outcomes

Possible outcomes, subject to law and contract, include coaching, written warning, final warning, training, reassignment, other proportionate lawful action or termination. Serious misconduct may justify skipping progressive steps only where lawful and after a fair process.

12.6 Documentation

HR maintains secure records of allegations, notices, evidence, meeting notes, findings, decisions and appeals. Access is restricted to those with a legitimate need. Retaliation, intimidation of witnesses or interference with an investigation is prohibited.

13. Health, Safety, Security and Staff Wellbeing

13.1 Duty of care

SCF will take reasonable steps to provide a safe working environment, identify and manage workplace and field risks, communicate security procedures and respond to incidents. Staff must follow safety instructions and report hazards promptly.

13.2 Fieldwork and travel

Field travel requires appropriate authorisation, security briefing, movement planning, emergency contacts and risk assessment proportionate to the context. Staff must not be pressured to undertake travel assessed as unacceptably unsafe. Security instructions and stop-work decisions must be respected.

13.3 Incidents and emergencies

Accidents, threats, injuries, near misses, security incidents and serious wellbeing concerns must be reported promptly through the designated channel. SCF will record incidents, arrange appropriate response and review lessons learned while protecting confidential information.

13.4 Wellbeing

Managers should monitor workload, provide respectful supervision and signpost available support. Staff should be able to raise concerns about stress, fatigue or unsafe working conditions without retaliation. Support does not replace emergency or professional services where needed.

13.5 Substance and safety-sensitive roles

For safety-sensitive duties, SCF may introduce lawful, proportionate fitness-for-duty requirements with appropriate privacy safeguards. Any testing or medical assessment requires legal review and a clear legitimate purpose.

14. Data Protection, Confidentiality and IT Use

14.1 Data handling

Personal and sensitive information must be collected only for legitimate, specified purposes; kept accurate and limited to what is necessary; accessed only by authorised people; and retained or securely destroyed according to an approved retention schedule and applicable law.

14.2 HR data

Personnel, payroll, medical, disciplinary, safeguarding and reference records are confidential. Employees may request access or correction through HR, subject to lawful restrictions and protection of third-party information.

14.3 Digital security

Staff must use approved accounts and devices where provided, protect passwords and multi-factor authentication, lock screens, avoid unsafe links, report suspected data breaches promptly and not transfer sensitive records to personal accounts or unauthorised storage.

14.4 Confidentiality

Employees must not disclose non-public information about beneficiaries, donors, partners, staff, security arrangements or internal operations without authorisation, except where disclosure is legally protected or required. Confidentiality must not be used to suppress legitimate complaints or whistleblowing.

14.5 Photos and stories

Photographs, case studies and beneficiary stories must follow informed-consent, safeguarding, dignity and donor rules. Additional safeguards apply to children and adults at risk. Staff must not publish identifying information on personal social media without authorisation and lawful consent.

15. Promotion, Transfer, Talent and Succession

15.1 Promotion

Promotion decisions are based on documented role requirements, demonstrated performance, competencies, organisational need, budget and a fair assessment process. Promotion does not occur automatically based on tenure.

15.2 Transfer and acting assignments

Transfers and temporary acting assignments must be based on legitimate operational needs, staff safety and competence. Material changes to contractual terms require consultation and any consent required by law.

15.3 Talent development

Managers identify critical skills and succession risks, support learning and consider internal candidates fairly. Development plans should be realistic, reviewed periodically and aligned with available resources.

15.4 Equal access

Training, promotion and development opportunities must be communicated transparently and allocated without unlawful discrimination or favouritism.

16. Separation, Resignation and Exit

16.1 Separation grounds

Employment may end through resignation, expiry of a fixed-term contract, mutual agreement, redundancy/restructuring, retirement, death or termination for a lawful reason. All separation actions must comply with the contract and applicable law.

16.2 Notice and final dues

Notice periods, payment in lieu where lawful, accrued leave, final salary, benefits and other entitlements must be calculated and paid in accordance with law and contract. HR and Finance must document the calculation and provide a final statement where practicable.

16.3 Fair process

Before involuntary termination, SCF must document the reason, review relevant evidence, follow applicable disciplinary or redundancy procedures, provide any required opportunity to respond and obtain the required approval. Safeguarding and serious misconduct cases must be handled through the appropriate process.

16.4 Exit clearance

Before or promptly after the last working day, the employee returns SCF property, hands over records and responsibilities, closes access credentials, submits outstanding expense claims and completes clearance. Any recovery or deduction must have a lawful basis.

16.5 Exit interview and records

HR may conduct an exit interview to identify organisational improvements. Participation is voluntary unless a lawful requirement applies. HR retains separation records securely and restricts access.

16.6 Continuing obligations

Confidentiality, data protection, intellectual property, safeguarding-related reporting and other obligations that lawfully survive employment continue after separation as specified by contract and law.

17. Consultants, Interns, Volunteers and Third Parties

17.1 Engagement

Consultants and service providers must be engaged through approved terms of reference, budget and procurement/approval procedures. Agreements must specify deliverables, duration, fees, confidentiality, intellectual property, safeguarding, data protection, conflicts of interest and termination terms.

17.2 Classification

SCF must not label a person a consultant or volunteer where the actual relationship legally constitutes employment. HR and the relevant manager should obtain legal advice when classification is uncertain.

17.3 Interns and volunteers

Roles must have clear objectives, supervision, safety arrangements and appropriate agreements. No intern or volunteer may be assigned duties beyond their competence or used to evade employment obligations.

17.4 Partner compliance

Contracts and partnership agreements must set out applicable conduct, safeguarding, anti-fraud, data protection, audit and incident-reporting requirements, with proportionate due diligence and follow-up.

18. Compliance, Records and Implementation

18.1 Training and acknowledgement

HR will communicate the Manual, provide induction or refresher training and obtain written or electronic acknowledgement from employees. Managers are responsible for applying policies consistently.

18.2 Monitoring

HR will periodically review recruitment files, contracts, leave records, performance reviews, training completion, grievances, safeguarding reporting arrangements, payroll controls and exit records. Internal audit or an independent reviewer may test compliance.

18.3 Exceptions

Exceptions require a written justification, risk assessment and approval by the authorised person, with HR and legal review where needed. No exception may waive a mandatory legal right, donor condition or safeguarding obligation.

18.4 Records retention

HR will maintain a retention schedule for recruitment, personnel, payroll, performance, grievance, disciplinary and separation records. Records must be securely stored and disposed of when retention is no longer required, subject to legal holds, donor requirements and applicable law.

18.5 Questions and disputes

Employees should direct policy questions to HR. Where HR is implicated in a concern, the employee may report directly to the Executive Director or Board-designated channel. Any dispute that cannot be resolved internally may be referred to the competent external mechanism as permitted by law.

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