

Policy name: <b>Safeguarding Policy</b>	
Policy owner: <b>Senior Director Risk Management and Compliance</b>	Effective: 15 December 2020
Version: <b>1.1</b>	Last Reviewed: 15 November 2018

**Audience:** All Food for the Hungry (FH) employees, partners, representatives, board members, consultants, volunteers, and anyone else (“personnel”) associated with the delivery of FH work. This policy applies to personnel at all times, including when they are on duty, off duty, or on leave.

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**Purpose:**

Food for the Hungry (FH) believes all people are made in the image of God and should be treated with respect, honored for their intrinsic value, and cared for in ways that glorify God.

The purpose of this policy is to protect all beneficiaries, including children and all vulnerable populations, from any harm that may be caused due to their involvement with FH programs. This includes harm caused by:

- The conduct of personnel associated with FH.
- The design and implementation of FH's programs and activities.

FH strives to provide an environment free of sexual exploitation and abuse in all places where relief and development programs are implemented. FH holds a zero-tolerance policy against sexual exploitation and abuse between personnel and beneficiaries.

This policy affirms the commitments made by FH and informs personnel of responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

**Key Terms:**

- a. Safeguarding
  - i. The process of protecting beneficiaries, including children and vulnerable populations, from abuse or neglect, including sexual exploitation and abuse, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are safe and have effective care that enables them to flourish.
  - ii. FH is responsible to ensure that personnel, operations, and programs do no harm. This includes protecting children and vulnerable populations from the risk of harm and abuse.

b. Child(ren)

A child is an individual under the age of 18, irrespective of local or cultural definitions of when a child reaches adulthood.

c. Child Abuse

The infliction of physical or emotional injury on a person under the age of 18 years old. There are four categories of child abuse:

- i. Sexual Abuse: Includes any actual or threatened sexual contact, prostitution, or pornography involving a child. A child is incapable of "consenting" to sexual activity with an adult. The mistaken belief that the person is 18 or older cannot be used as a defense.
- ii. Physical Abuse: Includes the actual or threatened physical injury of a child. Child physical abuse can include deliberately hitting, beating, shaking, and/or throwing a child.
- iii. Emotional Abuse: Includes severe or persistent mistreatment, or rejection of a child that may impair emotional or behavioral development. Emotional abuse can include telling the child they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate; inappropriate use of spiritual authority (for example, the Bible, church tradition, church authority, etc.); or forcing a child to act in any unhealthy way.
- iv. Neglect: Includes the persistent or severe failure to care for and/or protect a child from exposure to danger that results in the impairment of health or development. Neglect can include educational, physical or emotional elements.

d. Beneficiary

A resident of a community where FH partners who may be a recipient of services, and/or participate actively as a contributor of project service activities sponsored by FH and FH partners.

e. Vulnerable populations

Adults and children who are unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation or, who for any reason including gender, mental health, physical health, disability, ethnicity, religious identity, economic, social status, and/or as a result of disasters and conflicts, are deemed to be at risk.

f. Sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation occurs when someone uses, or tries to use, a differential power relationship or another person's vulnerable position or trust for sexual purposes. This can include coercing or engaging a person into a sexual act, prostitution, or pornography, with or without the person's consent, in exchange

for goods and services, money, drugs, shelter, food, protection, or other benefits<sup>1</sup>

g. Sexual abuse

Actual or threatened physical sexual contact, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. Beneficiaries or other community members may be at particular risk of sexual exploitation or abuse.

**Policy:**

Safeguarding

All people have the right to protection from harm, abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation, and abuse. FH will not tolerate abuse and/or exploitation by personnel.

FH commits to instituting safeguarding measures through prevention, reporting, and response.

FH will:

- Ensure all personnel have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities in relation to this policy.
- Design and implement all its programs and activities in ways that protect people from risk of harm arising from contact with FH. This includes how personal information about beneficiaries is collected and shared.
- Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, deploying, and managing personnel.
- Ensure personnel receive annual training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organization, including reporting obligations and procedures.
- Investigate and respond to reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to set standards.
- Maintain documentation of allegations, investigations, and responses in a secure location.

*Prohibited activities*

When interacting with beneficiaries, children, and vulnerable populations where FH partners, personnel are prohibited from engaging in any of the following actions (this list is not all inclusive):

A. Sexual Misconduct

- a. Spending time with a child where they are outside the view of others. Use the “different gender two adult” rule when possible.
- b. Behaving with beneficiaries, children, and vulnerable populations in a manner that is sexually provocative.

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<sup>1</sup> UN Secretary General's Bulletin: Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. 9 October 2003. <https://undocs.org/ST/SGB/2003/13>

- c. Exposing beneficiaries, children, and vulnerable populations to pornography or other sexually explicit images or media.
  - d. Sleeping in the same bed with a child (that is not your own) or vulnerable individuals.
  - e. Suggesting that an alleged survivor of sexual abuse has any responsibility for the abuse or that the he or she behaved in a “seductive” manner.
  - f. Unwanted touch, molesting, oral sex and/or sexual intercourse with any beneficiaries, children, and vulnerable populations.
  - g. Engaging in prostitution.
- B. Physical Misconduct
- a. Hitting or physically assaulting beneficiaries, children, and vulnerable populations, even if acceptable in local culture.
- C. Emotional Misconduct
- a. Acting in ways that shame, humiliate, belittle, or degrade beneficiaries, children, and vulnerable populations, or otherwise perpetrate any form of abuse.
  - b. Participating in harmful traditional practices or spiritual or ritualistic abuse.
- D. Inappropriate Images
- a. Taking, producing, or creating images of beneficiaries, children, and vulnerable populations that are humiliating, degrading, shameful, or otherwise offensive. All beneficiaries should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be perceived as sexually suggestive.
- E. Other
- a. Enlisting or engaging a child or vulnerable populations in FH activities without parental or guardian consent.
  - b. Driving a child without parental consent or vulnerable individuals without proper consent; at least one other adult must be present in the car or on a motorcycle.
  - c. Including the full name or location of the beneficiary, child, or vulnerable individuals in media publications or to unauthorized people.
  - d. Taking beneficiaries, children, and vulnerable populations to the home of personnel.
  - e. Being intoxicated or consuming alcohol or drugs before or during encounters with beneficiaries, children, and vulnerable populations.
  - f. Using offensive language, suggestions, or advice.
  - g. Exposing beneficiaries, children, and vulnerable populations to situations that are unsafe, abusive, or illegal.
  - h. Dressing in a culturally inappropriate way where bodies are exposed to beneficiaries, children, and vulnerable populations.
  - i. Blaming the survivor for abuse, as they cannot be blamed for the actions of others.
  - j. Leaving non-FH personnel unsupervised during visits to FH project areas.
  - k. Hiring vulnerable populations to do any work that exploits them.

## Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

In order to protect the most vulnerable populations, particularly vulnerable populations and children, from sexual exploitation and abuse ("SEA"), and to ensure the integrity of FH activities, the following core principles must be followed:

- A. SEA constitutes acts of gross misconduct and are grounds for termination of employment.
- B. Sexual activity with children is prohibited. The mistaken belief that the person is 18 or older cannot be used as a defense.
- C. Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliation, degrading or exploitative behavior, is prohibited. This includes the exchange of assistance that is due to program beneficiaries.
- D. Sexual relationships between personnel and beneficiaries is not allowed. Such relationships, as they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics, undermine the credibility and integrity of FH's relief and development work.
- E. When personnel develop concerns or suspicions regarding SEA by a fellow worker, whether in FH or not, he or she must immediately report such concerns via established reporting mechanisms.<sup>2</sup>
- F. Personnel are required to create and maintain a safe environment that prevents SEA and promotes the implementation of this policy. Supervisors at all levels have responsibilities to support and reinforce systems which maintain this environment.

## *Commitments*<sup>3</sup>

FH is dedicated to fulfilling the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)'s Six Core Principles through implementation of the following commitments.<sup>4</sup> FH will:

- A. Develop organization-specific strategies to prevent and respond to SEA. This includes incorporating appropriate job responsibilities in specific personnel positions, undertaking assessments to identify areas of risks, and document steps taken to mitigate these risks.

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<sup>2</sup>The established complaints mechanism may at times be an independent, third-party reporting mechanism. However, FH is committed to participating in inter-agency community based complaints mechanisms in humanitarian contexts, and therefore inter-agency complaints mechanisms may be the established system in some contexts.

<sup>3</sup>The Commitments are based on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)'s Statement of Commitment Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and non-UN personnel and the Six Core Principles, 23 September 2019.

[https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/iasc\\_six\\_core\\_principles\\_relating\\_to\\_sexual\\_exploitation\\_and\\_abuse\\_sept\\_2019.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/iasc_six_core_principles_relating_to_sexual_exploitation_and_abuse_sept_2019.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> The IASC is a unique inter-agency forum for coordination, policy development and decision-making involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners. The Six Core Principles are a set of standards to protect affected populations from sexual exploitation and abuse within humanitarian and development response operations. 23 September 2019.

[https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/iasc\\_six\\_core\\_principles\\_relating\\_to\\_sexual\\_exploitation\\_and\\_abuse\\_sept\\_2019.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/iasc_six_core_principles_relating_to_sexual_exploitation_and_abuse_sept_2019.pdf)

- B. Incorporate FH's standards on SEA in relevant documentation and materials, including but not limited to, codes of conduct, onboarding materials, training courses for personnel, and legal employment agreements and documentation.
- C. Ensure that when engaging in partnerships, sub-grant or sub-recipient agreements, partnership agreement documents must,
  - a) include this Policy as an attachment;
  - b) incorporate appropriate language requiring contracting entities and individuals, their employees, and volunteers to abide with a code of conduct aligned with this Policy; and
  - c) expressly state that failure to take preventive measures against SEA, to investigate and report allegations, or to take corrective actions when SEA has occurred, shall constitute grounds for FH to terminate the agreement and partnership.
- D. Regularly inform personnel, non-personnel, and beneficiaries on measures taken to prevent and respond to SEA, including complaint mechanisms. Confidentiality will be respected for all parties involved.
- E. Engage the support of communities and governments to prevent and respond to SEA by personnel and non-personnel.
- F. Ensure that reporting mechanisms are accessible and that FH focal points understand how to respond appropriately, including a reporting procedure in a relevant local language and policy for non-compliance.
- G. Provide support and assistance to SEA survivors. This may include medical treatment, legal assistance, and psychosocial support as appropriate, taking into account confidentiality, cultural sensitivities, and survivor safety.
- H. In compliance with applicable laws, prevent perpetrators of SEA from being (re)hired or (re)deployed. Managers and Human Resource teams must ensure robust recruitment screening processes for all personnel. Investigate allegations of SEA in a timely and professional manner.
- I. Take swift and appropriate action, including legal action when required, against personnel and non-personnel who commit SEA. This includes termination, and referral to the relevant authorities for appropriate action in the abuser's country of origin as well as the host country.
- J. Take appropriate actions to the best of FH's abilities to protect complainants from retaliation where allegations of SEA are reported involving personnel and non-personnel.
- K. Ensure high-level oversight on SEA reports received and actions taken, in order to monitor effectiveness, report progress, and improve efforts to prevent and respond to SEA.
- L. Personnel will treat all people with respect and not use language or behavior towards beneficiaries, children, and/or vulnerable populations that are inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, or culturally inappropriate.

- M. When photographing or filming a beneficiary, child, and vulnerable populations, personnel will:
- a. Comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images;
  - b. Obtain written, informed consent from the parent or guardian, before photographing or filming a beneficiary, child, or vulnerable populations, explaining how the photograph or film will be used. If the parent or guardian is illiterate, verbal explanation of guidelines for consent must be given in the local language, asking for thumb print or other marking to indicate consent on the form;
  - c. Ensure photographs, videos, social media, and digital technology present beneficiaries, children, and vulnerable populations in a dignified and respectful manner;
  - d. Ensure beneficiaries, children, and vulnerable populations are adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive;
  - e. Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts, and;
  - f. Ensure file labels do not reveal identifying information about a beneficiary, child, or vulnerable populations including full name, city, and/or country.

#### Duty to Report

- A. Personnel are required to immediately report, verbally or in writing, any suspicion, or allegation of a policy breach.
- B. Reporting options:
  - a. Confidential, anonymous reporting: <https://fh.ethicspoint.com>
  - b. The confidential reporting mechanism available in their location
  - c. Their supervisor (who must then forward the allegation or suspicion to the reporting site at: <https://fh.ethicspoint.com> immediately.)
- C. If personnel learn of potential safeguarding issues, he/she must report even if the alleged survivor does not want it investigated. While FH will strive to respect the alleged survivor's wishes, in some situations FH may need to investigate to ensure protection and prevention of future mistreatment. Also, in some situations, FH may be required to report the potential misconduct to local authorities for investigation.
- D. Personnel must report suspected or alleged safeguarding issues. If the alleged perpetrator is not personnel, FH will refer the matter to appropriate authorities.
- E. Personnel are to report suspected or alleged safeguarding issues and not follow-up or investigate on their own.
- F. Failure to report safeguarding issues can result in criminal liability and/or termination.

#### Retaliation

FH prohibits retaliation against anyone who:

- Opposes any act of abuse;
- Reports in good faith any suspected or alleged child and vulnerable populations; and
- Participates in the investigation of any alleged incident of child and vulnerable populations.

Retaliation is grounds for discipline of personnel, including termination. Anyone who believes that he/she has been retaliated against should promptly inform FH using the reporting options listed previously.

**Associated Policies and Laws:**

- FH Global Code of Conduct
- Whistleblower Policy
- Anti-Harassment Policy
- Gender Policy