
Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy

1. Introduction

Yafa Relief believes that all beneficiaries, staff members, and volunteers have the right to a safe and respectful environment free from any form of abuse, exploitation, or harassment.

This includes any act or behavior that misuses power, trust, or professional relationships for personal or sexual gain.

Yafa Relief is firmly committed to a **Zero Tolerance Policy** toward all forms of sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment whether perpetrated by its employees, partners, representatives, or any individual acting on its behalf.

This policy is grounded in key international humanitarian standards, including:

- The ICRC/IFRC Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief.
- The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Minimum Operating Standards on PSEA (2019).
- The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) on Quality and Accountability
- The United Nations Policy on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (UN PSEA).

2. Purpose of the Policy

This policy aims to:

1. Prevent all forms of sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment in all Yafa Relief activities.
2. Ensure a safe working environment that upholds and respects the dignity of every individual.
3. Establish clear, confidential, and accessible mechanisms for reporting any actual or suspected violations.
4. Guarantee a fair, timely, and survivor-centered response to all victims and complainants.

5. Promote a culture of protection, accountability, and integrity throughout the organization.

3. Core Principles

a) Zero Tolerance:

Yafa Relief maintains an absolute zero-tolerance stance toward any form of inappropriate behavior, including gestures, actions, or relationships that breach professional trust or abuse power.

b) Individual and Collective Responsibility:

Every employee, volunteer, and member of the organization shares the duty to protect beneficiaries—particularly the most vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and persons with disabilities.

c) Strict Confidentiality:

All reports and investigations are managed with the highest degree of confidentiality to protect all parties involved.

d) Non-Retaliation:

Any form of retaliation, intimidation, or threat against individuals who report or raise a complaint in good faith is strictly prohibited.

e) Survivor-Centered Approach:

Victims and survivors are treated with empathy, dignity, and respect, and provided with psychological, medical, and legal support whenever possible.

f) Transparency and Accountability:

Confirmed cases are reported to donors and relevant partners, and corrective actions are taken to prevent recurrence and ensure organizational accountability.

4. Scope of Application

This policy applies to all individuals and entities associated with Yafa Relief, including:

- All full-time and part-time employees.
- Volunteers, consultants, and suppliers.
- Implementing partners and contracted local organizations.
- Any person acting on behalf of or receiving funding from Yafa Relief.

All individuals covered by this policy are required to sign the Safeguarding Code of Conduct prior to commencing any form of employment, partnership, or collaboration with Yafa Relief.

5. Key Definitions

a. Sexual Exploitation:

The abuse of a position of power, trust, or influence to obtain sexual favors or benefits from a person in a position of vulnerability, dependency, or need.

b. Sexual Abuse:

Any actual or threatened sexual act committed against a person without their consent, including unwanted touching, coercion, or use of force.

c. Sexual Harassment:

Any unwelcome verbal, non-verbal, or physical behavior of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or degrading environment.

d. Sex for Aid:

The exchange of assistance, employment, goods, or protection for sexual favors or relationships. This practice constitutes a serious violation and is strictly prohibited under all circumstances.

6. Prohibited Conduct

The following behaviors are strictly prohibited within Yafa Relief and its operations:

- Engaging in any form of sexual relationship with beneficiaries or individuals under protection.
- Offering, requesting, or accepting any service, favor, or benefit in exchange for sexual relations.
- Using sexually suggestive language, jokes, or gestures in the workplace or during field activities.
- Sharing or displaying inappropriate materials or images, or exploiting beneficiaries' stories in a degrading or disrespectful manner.
- Ignoring, concealing, or failing to report any unethical or inappropriate behavior committed by a colleague, partner, or representative.

7. Reporting Mechanism

Yafa Relief upholds that reporting inappropriate or unethical behavior is a moral and professional obligation for all staff and affiliates.

a) Official Reporting Channels:

- Through the Beneficiary Complaint and Feedback Form.
- Via the secure email address: safeguarding@yafarelief.org
- Through the confidential internal hotline (to be designated by the organization).
- Directly to the Safeguarding and Accountability Coordinator or the Executive Director.

b) Reporting Conditions:

- Reports may be submitted verbally or in writing.
- Anonymous complaints are accepted, provided sufficient details are included for verification.
- No report should be ignored, dismissed, or minimized, regardless of its perceived severity.

8. Response and Investigation Procedures

a. Immediate Response:

Priority is given to the safety and well-being of the affected person. Immediate medical or psychological assistance must be provided when needed.

b. Initial Assessment:

The Safeguarding Coordinator reviews the report within 24 hours to determine the level of risk and appropriate next steps.

c. Investigation:

- A neutral and independent investigation committee is formed to ensure impartiality and confidentiality.
- All actions and findings are documented using the official Internal Incident Report Form.

d. Corrective Actions:

- If the violation is confirmed, the perpetrator will face immediate dismissal, and relevant legal authorities and donors will be notified.

e. Feedback to Complainants:

The complainant or survivor will be informed within the limits of confidentiality about the actions taken and outcomes of the case.

9. Support for Victims and Survivors

Yafa Relief is committed to providing comprehensive and survivor-centered support, including:

- Referral to specialized medical or psychological services.
- Legal assistance in coordination with human rights organizations.
- Provision of temporary safe shelter, when required.
- Assurance of confidentiality and privacy throughout the entire process.

10. Disciplinary Measures

Any confirmed case of sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment will result in:

- a. Immediate termination of employment or contractual relationship.
- b. Permanent exclusion from future collaboration or partnership with Yafa Relief.
- c. Official reporting to relevant donors and competent legal authorities.
- d. Inclusion of the offender in an internal blacklist database.

Failure by any staff member to report a known or suspected incident will be considered complicity in concealment and will result in disciplinary action equivalent to that of the perpetrator.

11. Capacity Building and Prevention

- All staff shall receive annual training on PSEAH principles and prevention measures.
- Safeguarding clauses are incorporated into all employment and supplier contracts.
- The organization's Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policies are displayed in all workplaces and field offices in Arabic and English.
- Awareness sessions are conducted for beneficiaries to inform them of their right to protection and safe complaint mechanisms.

12. Review and Updates

- This policy is reviewed annually by the Governance and Accountability Unit.
- It is updated in accordance with any changes in national legislation or donor requirements.
- All updated versions are binding on all employees, partners, and affiliates.

Final Statement

Protection is not merely a written policy it is a core ethical culture and way of working.

At Yafa Relief, we are fully committed to ensuring that humanitarian assistance is delivered in a manner that is safe, respectful, and equitable, where no form of aid is ever exchanged for exploitation or abuse.