

## Child Protection Policy

### 1. Introduction

Yafa Relief considers child protection one of its strategic priorities and an integral part of its humanitarian mission. Children are among the most vulnerable populations during crises, conflicts, and disasters, and any form of abuse or neglect against them constitutes a direct violation of the humanitarian principles and values upon which the organization is founded.

Yafa Relief adopts **a Zero Tolerance approach** toward any form of abuse, violence, exploitation, or neglect that may affect any child who interacts with its programs, staff, or partners. The organization is committed to ensuring a safe environment for all children, whether they are beneficiaries, participants, or featured in communication and media outputs.

This policy is grounded in key international standards, including:

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989)
- The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2019
- The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS)
- Child safeguarding and protection policies endorsed by the United Nations and international donors.

### 2. Purpose of the Policy

The Child Protection Policy aims to ensure that all Yafa Relief programs and activities are safe for children and uphold their dignity and fundamental rights to protection, development, and participation.

This policy focuses on four core objectives:

#### a) Prevention:

Identifying and mitigating any potential risks to children that may arise through employment practices, program activities, or media and communication interactions.

**b) Early Detection and Rapid Response:**

Ensuring swift and appropriate action when concerns or allegations of abuse, harm, or risk to a child are identified.

**c) Accountability:**

Implementing clear and transparent procedures for reporting, investigation, and corrective measures to address incidents of abuse or misconduct.

**d) Empowerment:**

Building awareness and capacity among staff, volunteers, partners, and communities to understand children's rights and actively contribute to their protection.

### **3. Core Principles**

**a. Best Interests of the Child**

All decisions and interventions must prioritize the best interests of the child above any political, financial, or administrative considerations.

**b. Dignity and Do No Harm**

Every child's dignity must be respected at all times. Children must not be exposed, represented, or engaged in ways that could cause psychological, emotional, or social harm.

**c. Non-Discrimination**

Protection is ensured for all children without distinction based on gender, race, religion, disability, nationality, or socioeconomic status.

**d. Participation**

Children's views should be encouraged and considered in decisions affecting their lives, in a manner appropriate to their age, developmental stage, and level of understanding.

### e. Confidentiality and Respect

All information related to children is handled with absolute confidentiality and shared only when necessary to prevent harm or to support legal safeguarding measures.

## 4. Scope of Application

This policy applies to the following groups:

- All Yafa Relief staff, whether permanent or temporary.
- Volunteers, consultants, and field workers engaged in program activities.
- Suppliers, contractors, and implementing partner organizations working on behalf of Yafa Relief.
- Visitors, photographers, media representatives, and supporting entities who may come into contact with children during Yafa Relief activities.

All individuals covered under this policy are required to sign the Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct prior to the start of any engagement, collaboration, or assignment.

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. Institutional Commitments

Yafa Relief commits to the following measures to ensure the protection and well-being of children:

### a) Safe Recruitment:

Conducting background and security checks for all staff and volunteers prior to hiring or engagement, ensuring that individuals with a history of child abuse or misconduct are not employed.

### b) Safe Environment:

Designing programs and activities in a manner that ensures children's physical and emotional safety, including avoiding situations of isolation, inappropriate contact, or unsupervised interaction.

### c) Continuous Training:

Providing regular capacity-building and training for all staff, volunteers, and partners on child safeguarding principles, risk prevention, and reporting procedures.

### d) Accountability:

Implementing clear, fair, and transparent processes for handling complaints, conducting investigations, and applying corrective or disciplinary actions when violations are confirmed.

### e) Community Engagement:

Involving parents, caregivers, and community members in promoting child protection, raising awareness of children's rights, and supporting children who may be affected by harm or abuse.

## 6. Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers are required to adhere to the following principles:

- Treat all children with respect, care, and dignity, without any form of discrimination.
- Ensure a safe environment where children are protected from intimidation, harm, or mistreatment.
- Report immediately any incident, concern, or suspicion of abuse or exploitation.
- Ensure that interactions with children take place in open, visible, and safe settings, avoiding private or isolated encounters.

The following actions are strictly prohibited:

- Using any form of physical or verbal violence against children.
- Engaging in any inappropriate, exploitative, or suspicious relationship with a child.
- Photographing or publicly sharing images or information about children without written consent from the parent or legal guardian.
- Offering gifts, benefits, or promises to children in exchange for participation, services, access, or images.
- Ignoring, minimizing, or concealing any reported or observed incident of abuse.

All staff and volunteers are expected to uphold these standards at all times, and violations may result in immediate disciplinary action, including termination and legal accountability.

## 7. Reporting and Response Mechanism

### 1. Available Reporting Channels:

- Verbal or written reporting to the Child Protection Focal Point.
- Submission through the general complaint and feedback form or the designated child protection incident form.
- Use of the secure, dedicated child safeguarding email provided by the organization.

### 2. Immediate Response:

- If the child is in immediate danger, urgent protective actions must be taken (such as relocating the child to a safe environment or contacting relevant authorities).
- The incident must be documented confidentially using the official Incident Reporting Form.
- The Child Protection Focal Point must notify the Executive Management within 24 hours of receiving the report.

### **3. Follow-Up and Investigation:**

- A specialized and impartial investigation committee is assigned to review and assess the case, ensuring confidentiality and neutrality throughout the process.
- Communication with the child and/or caregiver will be conducted sensitively, in a manner appropriate to the child's age and circumstances.
- Immediate disciplinary and corrective measures will be taken against any staff member, volunteer, or partner confirmed to be involved in the violation.

### **8. Child Safeguarding in Media and Communications**

- Images or footage that depict children in situations of distress, vulnerability, pain, or nudity are strictly prohibited.
- Written consent from a parent or legal guardian must be obtained before capturing, using, or sharing any photographs, videos, or personal stories of children.
- Stories, interviews, and visual content must be used solely for humanitarian and awareness purposes, in ways that respect the child's dignity and do not expose them to harm, stigma, or exploitation.

### **9. Disciplinary Measures and Sanctions**

Any violation or act of negligence in relation to this policy constitutes a serious breach of the Safeguarding Code of Conduct and will result in corrective action, which may include:

- a. Formal warning or immediate suspension from duties.

- b. Termination of employment or partnership without notice.
- c. Referral of the offender to relevant legal authorities, both locally and internationally, where applicable.
- d. Placement of the violator on Yafa Relief's internal blacklist, preventing future engagement with the organization.

## 10. Monitoring and Policy Review

- a) This policy is reviewed annually by the Child Protection and Accountability Unit.
- b) Updates are made in accordance with legal developments, donor requirements, and international standards.
- c) The Child Protection Focal Point, in coordination with the Executive Management, is responsible for ensuring effective implementation across all programs and departments.

## 11. Institutional Reminder

Child protection is not the responsibility of one department.

It is a shared organizational obligation.

Every staff member, volunteer, partner, and representative of Yafa Relief forms the first line of defense in ensuring a safe, respectful, and dignified environment for all children we serve.