



**HEART** فريق الإغاثة والتعزيز الإنساني  
Humanitarian Empowerment and Relief Team



# HEART'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY

(Organizational Safeguarding Policy is publicly available at the organization's official website)

Version	1.1
Dated (Revision)	March 18, 2026
Approved by	Board of Directors

This document establishes HEART's safeguarding commitments and minimum standards. It should be customized with operational contact details and aligned with applicable national laws in countries of operation.



**HEART'S SAFEGUARDING Policy**

Document Code: HEART/POL/SAFE/SG/2026/007 - Revised Version: 1.1

Revised on: March 18, 2026 - Publicly available at: [www.heart-sudan.org/documents](http://www.heart-sudan.org/documents)

## 1) Document Control

<b>Document Title</b>	HEART's Safeguarding Policy
<b>Document Code</b>	HEART/POL/SAFE/SG/2026/007
<b>Version</b>	Revised Version 1.1
<b>Designated Safeguarding Focal Point</b>	PSEA Officer (Designated Safeguarding Focal Point)
<b>Approved by</b>	Board of Directors (BoDs)
<b>Oversight by</b>	Oversight & Audit Committee
<b>Effective Date (Revised as version 1.1)</b>	March 18, 2026
<b>Upcoming Review Date</b>	Before: March 17, 2028
<b>Document URL</b>	<a href="https://heart-sudan.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/HEARTs-Safeguarding-Policy-2024.pdf">https://heart-sudan.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/HEARTs-Safeguarding-Policy-2024.pdf</a>

### Controlling Notes:

#### Review Cycle

This policy shall be reviewed every two years or earlier if required due to operational, regulatory, or donor compliance changes.

#### Related Policies and Documents

This policy forms part of HEART's governance and accountability framework and shall be read in *conjunction with the following documents*:

1. Code of Conduct.
2. Organizational Coding and Reference System Policy.
3. Master Register System.
4. Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy.
5. Programme Management and Emergency Response Policy.
6. Human Resources Policy.
7. Institutional Governance and Partnerships Policy.
8. Relevant operational and safeguarding procedures.



HEART's SAFEGUARDING Policy

Document Code: HEART/POL/SAFE/SG/2026/007 - Revised Version: 1.1

Revised on: March 18, 2026 - Publicly available at: [www.heart-sudan.org/documents](http://www.heart-sudan.org/documents)

## **Article One: Scope and Applicability**

This Safeguarding Policy applies to all individuals associated with HEART, including Board members, staff, volunteers, consultants, interns, contractors, and partner organizations implementing activities supported by HEART.

## **Article Two: Key Definitions**

Safeguarding refers to the responsibility of organizations to ensure that their staff, operations, and programs do not cause harm to children or vulnerable adults, and that they actively prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment, or any form of misconduct.

Additional safeguarding terms and definitions are provided in Annex 2.

## **Article Three: Policy Statement**

HEART adopts a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of abuse, exploitation, and misconduct. Safeguarding means promoting and protecting the health, well-being, dignity, and human rights of individuals, enabling them to live free from harm, exploitation, and abuse. A safeguarding approach requires HEART to ensure that it does not expose children, young people, or vulnerable adults, including affected populations, staff, volunteers, and partners, to the risk of discrimination, neglect, injury, or abuse, and that any safeguarding concerns are addressed promptly and reported through appropriate channels.

In this policy, safeguarding is conceived as protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), sexual harassment (SH), intimidation and violence, bullying, humiliation and discrimination, neglect, and exploitation. Safeguarding is integral to HEART's mission to deliver principled, inclusive, and effective humanitarian assistance and empowerment programs that place affected populations at the center.

HEART commits to the following pledges:

1. Safeguarding of staff and affected populations is a primary guiding principle in all programs and operations.
2. Safeguarding commitments are reflected in HEART's values, Code of Conduct, and operational procedures.
3. Safeguarding is incorporated into program design, implementation, monitoring, and learning (MEAL).



**HEART's SAFEGUARDING Policy**

Document Code: HEART/POL/SAFE/SG/2026/007 - Revised Version: 1.1

Revised on: March 18, 2026 - Publicly available at: [www.heart-sudan.org/documents](http://www.heart-sudan.org/documents)

4. Where necessary, additional safeguarding mechanisms are established, maintained, and resourced.
5. Safeguarding risks are actively identified and addressed through continuous improvement and learning.
6. Survivor-centered and confidential approaches guide response and support to those harmed.

#### **Article Four: Safeguarding Principles**

HEART is committed to the following principles that underpin all safeguarding actions and decisions:

1. **Empowerment:** People are enabled and motivated to make their own choices, based on clear information and genuine consent.
2. **Prevention:** Acting in advance is ideal, and safeguarding is integrated into planning and day-to-day activities to prevent harm before it occurs.
3. **Proportionality:** The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
4. **Protection:** Extra help and advocacy are provided to those most at risk; HEART carries a duty of care.
5. **Partnership:** Community-led approaches, with services working alongside local people to prevent, identify, and report abuse.
6. **Accountability:** Transparency and accountability in safeguarding commitments, actions, and outcomes.

#### **Article Five: Standards of Behaviour (Do No Harm)**

To keep the risk of harm to children, young people, and vulnerable adults as low as reasonably practicable, HEART strictly prohibits the following behaviours. These standards apply to all personnel and associated personnel acting on behalf of HEART.

1. Sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18, regardless of local age of consent or mistaken belief about age.
2. Any form of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse of community members or affected populations.
3. Any sexual relationship with a community member/beneficiary that involves the exchange of money, employment, goods, services, or other benefits.
4. Sexual harassment, including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal/physical conduct of a sexual nature.
5. Physical assault, hitting, or any form of violence against children or adults.



6. Any act that puts a child or vulnerable adult at risk of harm, including negligence and unsafe practices.
7. Bullying, humiliation, intimidation, or discrimination based on gender, religion, ethnicity, disability, age, race, or other status.
8. Abuse of power or position to take unfair advantage of staff, volunteers, partners, or community members.
9. Retaliation against anyone who raises a safeguarding concern in good faith.

## **Article Six: Safeguarding Practices and Prevention**

### **6.1 Organizational Ethos**

HEART recognizes that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. HEART promotes an environment that helps children and vulnerable adults feel safe, respected, and heard. HEART aims to reduce the likelihood of harm by:

1. Creating safe, inclusive, and accessible program environments and activities.
2. Providing clear information to communities on their rights and how to raise complaints.
3. Ensuring physical safety measures in facilities, distributions, and community activities.
4. Ensuring staff and volunteers can recognize signs of abuse and know reporting lines.
5. Maintaining secure and confidential records, shared only on a need-to-know basis.
6. Strengthening liaison and referral pathways with competent authorities and specialist services.

### **6.2 Safe Program Design and Risk Management**

Safeguarding must be integrated into project design, implementation, and monitoring. HEART will:

1. Conduct safeguarding and PSEA risk assessments during design and prior to major activities.
2. Ensure programming includes mitigation measures (e.g., safe site layouts, lighting, crowd control, data protection).
3. Ensure meaningful participation of women, girls, persons with disabilities, and other at-risk groups.
4. Apply "Do No Harm" principles and conflict-sensitive approaches where relevant.



5. Include safeguarding requirements in partner agreements and conduct partner due diligence.

### **6.3 Line Management Responsibilities**

Managers have direct responsibilities in preventing abuse. They must ensure that risk mitigation measures are implemented and that staff understand and follow this policy. Managers must intervene immediately if they witness abuse or are alerted to it, and must create a team culture that enables reporting without fear.

### **Article Seven: Safe Recruitment, Vetting, and Workforce Management**

HEART is committed to safe recruitment, selection, and vetting of staff, trustees, and volunteers. Recruitment and workforce management processes will include safeguarding measures proportional to the role and risk.

1. Vacancy announcements and Terms of Reference will affirm HEART's commitment to safeguarding and the Code of Conduct.
2. Shortlisting will pay attention to unexplained gaps in employment and frequent changes of employer/address.
3. All offers are conditional upon satisfactory references (minimum two), including questions on conduct and disciplinary history.
4. Interviews will explore candidates' attitudes and motivation regarding humanitarian values and working with vulnerable groups.
5. Essential qualifications and relevant accreditations will be verified.
6. Proof of identity (passport or ID) is required before engagement.
7. All personnel must sign and abide by HEART's Code of Conduct and safeguarding commitments as a condition of employment/engagement.
8. Where legally available and relevant, background checks may be conducted in line with national laws and data protection.
9. For Managing and Deploying Personnel, HEART will maintain appropriate supervision, clear reporting lines, and mechanisms to address misconduct, including prompt suspension of duties where required to manage risk during investigations.

### **Article Eight: Training, Awareness, and Communications**

Safeguarding is embedded from the beginning of the employee journey and reinforced throughout. HEART will:

1. Provide all new personnel with induction on HEART's mission, values, Code of Conduct, PSEA, and this Safeguarding Policy.



**HEART's SAFEGUARDING Policy**

Document Code: HEART/POL/SAFE/SG/2026/007 - Revised Version: 1.1

Revised on: March 18, 2026 - Publicly available at: [www.heart-sudan.org/documents](http://www.heart-sudan.org/documents)

2. Provide role-specific training for managers and those handling complaints and investigations.
3. Conduct periodic awareness sessions for staff, volunteers, partners, and communities, tailored to context and language.
4. Ensure information on complaints and reporting channels is visible, accessible, and culturally appropriate.
5. Promote safe and respectful communications, including safe imagery and responsible data handling.

### **Article Nine: Reporting, Case Management, and Response**

HEART will ensure safe, appropriate, and accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns to staff, affected populations, and other stakeholders. Reports can be made anonymously where feasible.

All safeguarding incidents shall be reported and documented using the Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form (Annex 1).

Failure to report safeguarding concerns may result in disciplinary action in accordance with HEART's policies.

#### **9.1 Reporting Channels**

Reports may be submitted through one or more of the following channels:

1. Directly to the PSEA Officer (Designated Safeguarding Focal Point) in person or by phone.
2. To a line manager, Country Director, or the CEO/SG (who must forward immediately to the safeguarding focal point).
3. Through a confidential complaints mechanism (hotline and/or email).
4. Through community feedback mechanisms (complaints boxes, helpdesks, trusted community focal points), where established.

All reports received through any channel shall be formally recorded using the Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form (Annex 1).



## 9.2 Survivor-Centered Response

HEART adopts a survivor-centred approach. Safety, confidentiality, respect, and informed choice guide all actions. Where needed and feasible, HEART will support survivors to access medical care, psychosocial support, and protection services through appropriate referrals. Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

## 9.3 Case Management and Investigation

All safeguarding reports will be triaged promptly to determine immediate safety actions, referral needs, and the appropriate internal or external response.

All case management processes shall be documented and tracked using standardized safeguarding reporting tools (see Annex 1).

HEART will:

1. Take immediate steps to prevent further harm and manage risk.
2. Maintain a secure case file and record key decisions and actions.
3. Conduct internal investigations where appropriate and lawful, using trained personnel and due process.
4. Report crimes to relevant law enforcement authorities unless doing so may pose a risk to anyone involved.
5. Apply disciplinary measures for substantiated breaches, up to and including termination and referral to authorities.
6. Ensure protection from retaliation for complainants and witnesses who report in good faith.

## Article Ten: Confidentiality and Information Sharing

All safeguarding matters are confidential. Information relating to concerns and case management will be shared only on a need-to-know basis, stored securely, and handled in accordance with applicable laws and data protection principles. Staff must not promise to keep secrets that might compromise a person's safety or well-being.

All safeguarding records and case documentation shall be assigned unique reference codes in accordance with HEART's Coding and Reference System and recorded in the Master Register.



## **Article Eleven: Working with Partners and Authorities**

HEART recognizes the importance of working with competent authorities and specialist agencies to protect people from harm. HEART is not the investigating authority for statutory child protection matters and will refer cases to relevant authorities and specialized services, while supporting affected persons throughout the process as appropriate.

Where HEART works through partners, safeguarding requirements will be integrated into partner selection, contracting, monitoring, and capacity support. HEART may suspend or terminate partnerships where safeguarding standards are not met.

## **Article Twelve: Governance, Oversight, and Accountability**

Safeguarding is overseen through HEART's governance structure. The Board of Directors has a supervisory role and ensures that safeguarding is integrated into organizational policies and risk management. The CEO/SG carries executive accountability for safeguarding implementation. Country Directors, managers, and the PSEA Officer ensure operational implementation and compliance.

### **12.1 Roles and Responsibilities (Summary)**

#### **Board of Directors (BoDs)**

1. Approve safeguarding and PSEA policies and oversee organizational compliance.
2. Receive periodic safeguarding reports (anonymized) and ensure corrective actions are resourced.
3. Ensure independent oversight for serious cases and risk management decisions.

#### **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**

1. Ensure this policy is implemented across the organization and integrated into strategies and operations.
2. Ensure appropriate structures, resources, and trained personnel are in place for safeguarding.
3. Ensure serious incidents are reported to the Board in line with reporting protocols.

#### **PSEA Officer (Designated Safeguarding Focal Point)**

1. Receive and manage safeguarding reports, ensuring safe and timely response.
2. Maintain confidential case records and coordinate investigations and referrals.
3. Lead safeguarding/PSEA training and awareness, and advise on risk mitigation.

#### **Country Directors and Managers**



HEART's SAFEGUARDING Policy

Document Code: HEART/POL/SAFE/SG/2026/007 - Revised Version: 1.1

Revised on: March 18, 2026 - Publicly available at: [www.heart-sudan.org/documents](http://www.heart-sudan.org/documents)

1. Implement safeguarding risk mitigation in programs and operations.
2. Promote a speak-up culture and ensure staff and communities know reporting channels.
3. Take immediate action to prevent harm and support safe referrals.

**MEAL Director**

1. Ensure community feedback and accountability mechanisms support safeguarding.
2. Support monitoring, learning, and reporting of safeguarding performance and improvements.

**All Personnel and Associated Personnel**

1. Understand and comply with this policy and HEART's Code of Conduct.
2. Report concerns promptly and cooperate with safeguarding processes.

**12.2 Review and Continuous Improvement**

This policy shall be reviewed at least every two years, and after any significant incident, major contextual changes, or changes in legal requirements. Lessons learned will be used to strengthen prevention and response.

**Article Thirteen: Approval and Promulgation**

This policy is hereby approved and enters into force on the date indicated below.

**Approved by:**

HEART's Board of Directors

**Signed by:**

Dr. Mohamed Mahdi - The Chairman, HEART

**Signature:** 

**Date:** March 18, 2026



# Annexes and Operational Tools

## Annexes and Operational Tools (Independently Coded):

Annex	Code
<a href="#">Annex 1: HEART's Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form</a>	HEART/FOR/SAFE/IR/2026/001
<a href="#">Annex 2: Safeguarding Terms and Definitions</a>	HEART/GL/SAFE/DEF/2026/002



## Annex 1: HEART's Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form

Annex Code: HEART/FOR/SAFE/IR/2026/001

Related Policy: HEART/POL/SAFE/SG/2026/007

### 1. Basic Information

Item	Details
Date Report Received	
Time Report Received	
Location of Incident	
Report Received By	
Case Reference Number	

### 2. Reporting Channel

How was the report received?

Safeguarding / PSEA Focal Point

Line Manager

Complaint Box

Hotline / Email

Community Feedback Mechanism

Other (specify):

\_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Information About the Survivor

Item	Details
Gender	
Age (if known)	
Relationship to Organization	<input type="checkbox"/> Beneficiary <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Immediate Safety Concerns	Yes / No

*Note: Personal identifying details should be handled confidentially.*

### 4. Description of the Incident

Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief description of what happened:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



HEART's SAFEGUARDING Policy

Document Code: HEART/POL/SAFE/SG/2026/007 - Revised Version: 1.1

Revised on: March 18, 2026 - Publicly available at: [www.heart-sudan.org/documents](http://www.heart-sudan.org/documents)

**5. Alleged Perpetrator (if known)**

Item	Details
Name or Identifier	
Affiliation	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> Contractor <input type="checkbox"/> Partner <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
Position / Role	

**6. Immediate Actions Taken**

- Survivor referred to medical support
- Survivor referred to psychosocial support
- Safeguarding focal point notified
- Immediate risk mitigation implemented
- Other action taken: \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Initial Assessment**

Conducted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommended Action:

- Referral only
- Internal review
- Formal investigation
- External reporting (authorities)

Notes:

---

---

**8. Case Status**

- Open
- Under Review
- Investigation Ongoing
- Closed

**9. Authorized Officer**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Confidentiality Notice**

All safeguarding reports must be handled with strict confidentiality and shared only on a need-to-know basis in accordance with HEART's Safeguarding Policy.



## Annex 2: Safeguarding Terms and Definitions

Annex Code: [HEART/GL/SAFE/DEF/2026/002](#)

Related Policy: [HEART/POL/SAFE/SG/2026/007](#)

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Child</b>	Any person under the age of 18
<b>Vulnerable adult</b>	An adult who may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation due to age, disability, illness, displacement, or other factors.
<b>Safeguarding</b>	Actions taken to promote welfare and protect people from harm, exploitation, and abuse.
<b>SEA</b>	Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian personnel against affected populations
<b>SH</b>	Sexual harassment occurs within the workplace or related work contexts.
<b>Survivor</b>	A person who has experienced harm or abuse; the term emphasizes agency and dignity.
<b>Complaints mechanism</b>	A set of trusted channels for receiving, responding to, and learning from complaints and feedback.
<b>Associated Personnel</b>	Individuals or entities working with or on behalf of the organization who are not directly employed by HEART, including contractors, consultants, volunteers, partner staff, and service providers.
<b>Safeguarding Concern</b>	Any suspicion, allegation, disclosure, or observation indicating that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, is at risk of harm, or that safeguarding standards may have been breached.
<b>Case Management</b>	The process through which safeguarding concerns are assessed, documented, addressed, and resolved through appropriate actions, including referral, investigation, and support to survivors.
<b>Retaliation</b>	Any form of intimidation, harassment, discrimination, or adverse action taken against an individual for reporting safeguarding concerns in good faith.

