

## ***Safeguarding policy***

# **POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, WOMEN, AND VULNERABLE PERSONS**

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## 1. Introduction and ethical commitment

Support and Sustain Children (SSCh) is committed to ensuring the protection, wellbeing, and fundamental rights of all individuals involved in its programs, with particular focus on children, women, and vulnerable persons, who represent the primary beneficiaries of our interventions. We operate in contexts of emergency and extreme vulnerability – including Syria (armed conflict), Madagascar (environmental crisis and food insecurity), Gaza (conflict and chronic instability), and the Turkish-Syrian border (forced migration).

SSCh adopts a **zero-tolerance policy** towards any form of physical, sexual, psychological, verbal, or economic abuse perpetrated by anyone acting on behalf of or in connection with the organization. We are committed to creating safe environments that are protective and respectful of human dignity, through prevention, training, listening, and active response.

SSCh also recognizes that protection is not only about preventing abuse, but also about actively promoting physical and psychological wellbeing, inclusion, equity, and the informed participation of vulnerable people, especially children and women. This Policy is part of an integrated vision in which safeguarding is a core component of program quality and organizational culture.

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## 2. Scope of application

This policy applies to:

- All full-time or part-time SSCh staff
- Volunteers, consultants, external collaborators, interns
- Partner organizations, donors, visitors, journalists, institutional representatives

All individuals listed above are required to know, understand, and adhere to the principles of this document, which is an integral part of their collaboration with SSCh. They must sign a statement of commitment and attend introductory or periodic training sessions.

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## 3. Guiding principles

SSCh grounds its actions in the following principles:

- **Primacy of the child's and vulnerable person's wellbeing:** every decision and action must prioritize the safety and dignity of the protected person
- **Proactive prevention and informed program design:** we are responsible for reducing risks through safe environments, respectful relationships, continuous training, and risk assessment tools
- **Listening and survivor-centered approach:** we ensure protection, empathetic listening, and appropriate support for survivors

- **Confidentiality and protection of the whistleblower:** safeguarding the identity of those who report is non-negotiable, as is the right to be heard without fear of retaliation
  - **Shared responsibility and culture of care:** every member of the organization, at every level, shares the moral and legal duty to protect beneficiaries and actively contributes to a safe and responsible organizational culture
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#### 4. Code of conduct

All persons involved in SSCh programs commit to:

- Maintaining respectful, professional, and non-discriminatory behavior in all interactions
- Avoiding any inappropriate physical contact or communication with children, women, or vulnerable persons, including touching, sexual innuendos, or offensive language
- Not facilitating unsupervised isolation with children or vulnerable beneficiaries
- Not offering personal gifts or asking for favors in exchange for benefits or access to programs
- Promptly reporting any suspicion of abuse, exploitation, neglect, or inappropriate behavior
- Cooperating with investigation, verification, and monitoring procedures

Violations of this Code of Conduct will be treated as serious breaches and may lead to immediate termination of collaboration and, when required, reporting to the competent authorities.

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#### 5. Reporting and response

SSCh promotes a safe, accessible, and non-stigmatizing reporting culture. Confidential channels are activated to collect reports of inappropriate behavior, risks, negligence, or abuse. Reports may be submitted:

- Via a dedicated and protected email accessible only by the Safeguarding Focal Point
- Through a local Safeguarding focal point or project manager
- Anonymously, where logistically feasible

Every report will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and follow a defined process including:

- Reception and listening to the reporting person
- Activation of the responsible Focal Point
- Preliminary assessment of the report
- Immediate actions to ensure the safety of those involved

The approach will be non-judgmental, protective, and transparent, with particular attention to the wellbeing of children or vulnerable persons.

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## 6. Roles and responsibilities

SSCh identifies the following operational roles:

- **Country Safeguarding Focal Points**, responsible for listening, receiving reports, local training, and coordination
- **Central Safeguarding Focal Point** at the headquarters, responsible for oversight, data collection, policy updates, and critical situation support
- **Project Managers**, trained to integrate safeguarding into operational plans and monitoring activities

All organizational levels – including boards and financial officers – must ensure adherence to the policy principles, also by integrating them into budgets, procedures, and contracts. A cross-cutting safeguarding perspective is a qualifying element of SSCh’s action quality.

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## 7. Training and awareness

All collaborators must:

- Receive mandatory introductory training on the Safeguarding Policy upon joining SSCh
- Sign the Code of Conduct and acknowledgement of the policy
- Participate in regular updates, discussions, simulations or drills, where applicable

Simplified materials, infographics, operational guides, and digital tools will be made available to support implementation, including in low-literacy local contexts.

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## 8. Monitoring, evaluation, and review

This policy is a dynamic tool. It will be reviewed every two years or in the event of:

- Changes in operational context
- Emergence of significant good practices
- Serious reports requiring adjustments
- Recommendations from donors or oversight authorities

Revisions will be coordinated by the Central Safeguarding Focal Point with input from local partners and formally communicated to all staff.

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## 9. Contacts and operational references

For reports, support requests, training, or additional information, please contact:



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**Safeguarding Focal Point – Syria**

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**Safeguarding Focal Point – Madagascar**

Name: Claudery Zeodin

Phone: +261 34 94 728 74

**Safeguarding Focal Point – Gaza**

Name: Nezar Ebraheem Saedaldin

Phone: +972 56-694-9597

**Central Safeguarding Focal Point (Verdellino HQ)**

Name: Arianna Martini

Email: [helpssch@gmail.com](mailto:helpssch@gmail.com)

**General Reports (protected channel)**

Email: [safeguarding@supportandsustainchildren.org](mailto:safeguarding@supportandsustainchildren.org)

Anonymous form: Annex A – Anonymous Reporting Form

**Final Note:** *This policy represents SSCh's formal and concrete commitment to protection, human dignity, and collective responsibility. It will be accompanied by operational procedures, training tools, reporting forms, and materials for beneficiaries and local communities.*

**"Safety is everyone's responsibility. Change begins with each of us."**

## Annex A – Anonymous Reporting Form

### **Form for anonymous reporting of inappropriate behavior, risks, or abuse**

*(The information provided will be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for protection purposes.)*

1. Date of the report:
2. Location of the incident (if known):
3. Description of the incident: (Please provide a clear and detailed description. Specify who was involved, what happened, where and when)
4. The reported person is:
5. The person involved (potential victim) is:
6. Is the situation still ongoing?
7. Do you have evidence, witnesses, or other relevant information? (Include only what is known)
8. Additional comments or recommendations:

**IMPORTANT:** You are not required to include your name or contact details if you wish to remain anonymous. However, more detailed information may help SSCh respond more effectively.