

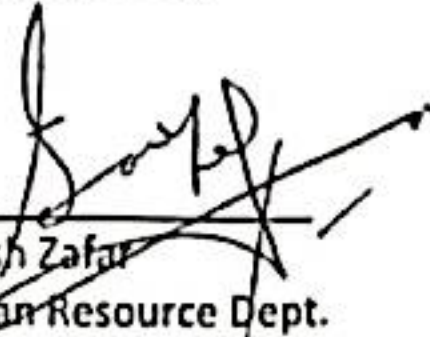
THE SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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Approved by:	CEO-Vision Health Care Foundation (VHCF)
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Change History

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Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

Vision Health Care Foundation (VHCF) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing eye health and ensuring access to quality eye care services, particularly for underserved communities. We focus on:

- Strengthening healthcare systems
- Raising awareness about preventable blindness
- Delivering comprehensive eye care through clinics, School Health Programs, and community-based initiatives

Our mission is to enhance vision health and overall well-being through early detection, effective treatment, and comprehensive education. Through strategic partnerships and innovative interventions, we strive to create a future where everyone has the opportunity to see clearly and lead a better quality of life.

1.1. Who Benefits from Our Projects?

Individuals of all ages in the community who approach our hospital and those whom we reach out to in our community outreach programs, such as school healthcare services.

1.2. Purpose of the Policy

The Safeguarding Policy of Vision Health Care Foundation (VHCF) serves to:

- Provide clear definitions of safeguarding principles and responsibilities.
- Set and maintain high safeguarding standards across the organization.
- Offer guidance on applying and implementing safeguarding measures within Vision Health Care Foundation (VHCF) and partner organizations.

This policy ensures a safe and protective environment for all individuals, particularly vulnerable groups, reinforcing our commitment to preventing harm, exploitation, and abuse in all aspects of our work.

1.3. What Safeguarding Means to Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF)

Safeguarding is the broader framework that protects the health, well-being, and rights of individuals, ensuring they live free from harm, abuse, and exploitation. It applies to both children and adults, focusing on proactive risk reduction and effective response mechanisms.

1.4. Who We Aim to Protect

At Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF), we prioritize safeguarding for:

- 1.4.1. Children in vulnerable communities with limited access to healthcare and education.
- 1.4.2. Adults with disabilities face risks of neglect, discrimination, and exploitation.

- 1.4.3. Elderly individuals who may experience neglect or mistreatment due to physical or cognitive decline.
 - 1.4.4. Women and girls who are at a greater risk of gender-based violence and exploitation.
 - 1.4.5. Marginalized and underserved communities, where a lack of access to essential services increases vulnerability.
 - 1.5. Who the Policy Applies To
 - This policy applies across all organizational activities and programs, including:
 - 1.5.1. Hospital services
 - 1.5.2. Outreach initiatives
 - 1.5.3. Education programs
 - 1.5.4. Community engagement activities
- All Vision Health Care Foundation (VHCF) representatives, employees, volunteers, and partner organizations are required to adhere to this policy to ensure a safe, ethical, and inclusive work environment.

2. Policy Statement

Vision Health Care Foundation (VHCF) believes that children, young adults or vulnerable groups should never experience abuse or exploitation of any kind and that children, young adults/vulnerable groups:

- 2.1. Have the right to be protected from harm;
- 2.2. Need to be safe and to feel safe;
- 2.3. Need support that matches their individual needs, including those who may have experienced abuse, torture and trauma;
- 2.4. Have the right to speak freely and voice their values and beliefs;
- 2.5. Have the right to be supported to meet their emotional and social needs;
- 2.6. Community and the organizations we work with can and do contribute to the prevention of abuse, victimization, bullying, exploitation, discriminatory views and risk-taking behaviors. Community members and volunteers play a crucial role in safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable adults within their community. All activities are conducted in the best interests of children, young adults, and other vulnerable groups. All staff members and contractors/volunteers/consultants have a responsibility to promote the welfare of children, young adults and vulnerable groups with whom they are engaging. Anyone under the age of 18 years is considered a child, and anyone between the ages of 18 and 32 is regarded as a young adult, in line with UN definitions. Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) believes in the following principles, which

are reflected in all of the organisation's projects. Each principle is explained in terms of its duty of care to the organisation's staff, volunteers and rights holders:

- 2.6.1. Zero Tolerance for Exploitation & Abuse: Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) has a zero-tolerance approach to child and adult exploitation or abuse. Any violations will result in criminal, civil, or disciplinary actions.
- 2.6.2. Best Interests of the Child and Vulnerable Adults: Every decision and action concerning children and vulnerable adults must prioritize their best interests.
- 2.6.3. Shared Responsibility: All individuals working with Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) must take every precaution to prevent harm to children and vulnerable groups.
- 2.6.4. Prevention: It is better to take action before any foreseen or unforeseen harm.
- 2.6.5. Risk Management: While risks cannot be eliminated, they can be identified, mitigated, and managed effectively.
- 2.6.6. Procedural Fairness: All concerns and allegations will be investigated fairly, ensuring confidentiality and adherence to due process.
- 2.6.7. Accountability: Accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice.

3. Objectives

This policy aims to:

- 3.1. Protect children and vulnerable adults by implementing strict safeguarding measures.
- 3.2. Ensure ethical conduct and protect Vision Health Care Foundation (VHCF)'s reputation.
- 3.3. Prevent abusers from entering the organization and uphold high standards of behavior.

3.4. Safeguarding Commitments

Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) is committed to the safety and well-being of all community members coming into contact with Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF)'s employees. Our organization takes its duty of care seriously and will aim, at all times, to provide the safest possible environment. This will be achieved by identifying and managing risks that may lead to harm and addressing concerns and reports promptly if they arise. All staff, volunteers/interns, visitors/donors, consultants/resource persons, partners, contractors, suppliers, and any other individuals working for or representing Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) shall ensure that they follow the organizational Code of Conduct on Safeguarding (Annex.2) as well as report on any protection-related concern or staff's conduct towards children, young adults, and vulnerable groups.

All Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) employees shall work in a way that does not harm the population we are working with by:

- 3.4.1. Receiving safeguarding training to ensure awareness and compliance.
- 3.4.2. Designing programs that minimize risks of harm, exploitation, or abuse.
- 3.4.3. Following clear procedures for identifying and reporting safeguarding concerns.
- 3.4.4. Acting swiftly and appropriately on safeguarding reports.
- 3.4.5. Adhering to strict recruitment and vetting procedures.
- 3.4.6. Engaging in ongoing safeguarding training and updates.
- 3.4.7. Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) shall ensure support for survivors and whistleblowers, enhance accountability and transparency, strengthen reporting, and tackle impunity.
- 3.4.8. Adopt global standards and ensure they are met or exceeded.
- 3.4.9. Strengthen organizational capacity and capability.

4. Implementing the Policy

4.1. Role and Responsibilities of Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) in Safeguarding

Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) is committed to ensuring the safety and protection of children, young adults, and vulnerable adults. All staff must remain vigilant and report any safeguarding concerns immediately.

4.2. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

- 4.2.1. Immediate Reporting – If a staff member becomes aware of abuse, exploitation, or any safeguarding violation, they must report it immediately to the Safeguarding Officer.
- 4.2.2. Review by the Safeguarding Committee – The SG Focal Person will escalate the case to the Safeguarding Committee, led by the CEO, for further review and final decision-making.
- 4.2.3. Contact details of SG Sarosh Zafar AM Human Resource:0300-2330241, Email Address: sarosh.zafar@vhc-foundation.org, Tabinda Hanif 0322-8244640 tabinda.hanif@vhc-foundation.org
- 4.2.4. Complaint Anonymously at <https://forms.gle/6hZUtByqJTfaRnk77>

4.3. Actions Taken by the Safeguarding Committee

Based on the nature of the case, the CEO and the Safeguarding Committee may take the following actions:

- 4.3.1. **Reporting to Authorities** – If the case involves a criminal offence, it will be reported to local law enforcement or relevant external agencies.
- 4.3.2. **Providing Support** – If necessary, the affected individual(s) and their families will be referred to appropriate support services.
- 4.3.3. **Further Investigation** – If the case breaches Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF)'s safeguarding policies, an **Investigation Officer or Team** will be appointed to conduct an inquiry.

4.4. Role of the Safeguarding Focal Person (SG Focal Person)

At each hospital, center, or office, the SG Focal Person plays a key role in handling safeguarding concerns:

- 4.4.1. Receives reports from managers or directly from victims when necessary.
- 4.4.2. Ensures the case is documented and reported to the Safeguarding Committee.
- 4.4.3. Maintains confidentiality and ensures timely action is taken.

4.5. Ensuring a Safe and Transparent Process

- 4.5.1. All reports and investigations will be handled confidentially.
- 4.5.2. Decisions will be based on clear evidence and in the best interests of the affected individuals.
- 4.5.3. Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) is committed to accountability and providing a safe space for survivors and whistleblowers.

4.6. The role and duty of Managers in Safeguarding

- 4.6.1. To record and report protection concerns to the VT Safeguarding Focal Person.
- 4.6.2. Ensure that staff are aware of and have access to the Safeguarding Policy and related documents.
- 4.6.3. Ensure that staff are aware of the procedures for reporting concerns and their responsibilities in doing so (see Section 3).
- 4.6.4. Ensure that the community members we work with directly are aware of the main aspects of the Safeguarding Policy and procedures for reporting concerns and complaints.
- 4.6.5. Ensure parental or guardian consent is sought for any activity with a child, and encourage parental participation in all activities involving children.
- 4.6.6. Ensure parental or guardian consent is sought before taking any images or footage of children. Ensure that the parent or guardian understands the purpose of this activity and how the images or footage will be used.

- 4.6.7. Plan and organize the work and the workplace to eliminate risks to children, young adults and vulnerable groups.
- 4.6.8. Be aware of situations that may present risks and ensure these are supervised appropriately.
- 4.6.9. Ensure that the staff is accountable during Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF)'s project and organizational activities.
- 4.6.10. Ensure that a culture of openness exists amongst staff to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed.
- 4.6.11. Ensure that poor practice or potentially abusive behavior by Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) or partner staff does not go unchallenged.

4.7. The role of the Human Resource Department in implementing the Safeguarding Policy

- 4.7.1. Ensure this Safeguarding policy and procedure, as well as the code of conduct, are included in the job contracts/agreement/MOU to all new employees and all Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF)'s stakeholders. As part of the acceptance procedure, employees will be asked to sign a declaration stating that they are aware of the policy's existence and will abide by it. The declaration will be kept in the staff member's file and may be referred to in legal proceedings if a staff member is found to be in breach of the policy.
- 4.7.2. Ensure that during the recruitment and selection of all types of human resources, the staff recruitment practices outlined below are followed.
- 4.7.3. Ensure that all staff are adequately trained on the policy and protocols.

4.8. Recruitment and Safeguarding Practices

- 4.8.1. Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) is committed to prohibiting the recruitment of anyone under the age of 18 years. The organization ensures that all selected candidates respect and value children, young adults, and vulnerable groups, following best practices when working with them. Our recruitment process is designed to choose the most qualified and suitable individuals for our programs, hospitals, and centers while upholding the highest safeguarding standards.

4.9. Recruitment Procedures for Staff

All line managers responsible for recruiting and selecting staff must follow these procedures carefully to ensure proper screening and verification processes.

4.9.1. Job Descriptions and Selection Criteria

- 4.9.1.1. Every position within Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) has a specific job description.

- 4.9.1.2. For roles that involve direct interaction with community members, the line manager must ensure that candidates meet the necessary qualifications and experience to uphold safeguarding standards.
- 4.9.1.3. Candidates must be selected strictly by the set criteria to ensure that they align with the organization's values and safeguarding policies.

4.9.2. Interview and Selection Process

To ensure a thorough selection process:

- 4.9.2.1. All staff, volunteers, and interns (both local and national) must undergo screening measures, including reference checks.
- 4.9.2.2. Competency-based tests and interviews will be conducted to accurately assess a candidate's abilities.
- 4.9.2.3. One interview question will focus on safeguarding to evaluate the candidate's knowledge on the subject.
- 4.9.2.4. Employment will only be offered to applicants who possess official identification documents (e.g., CNIC), which will be verified before hiring.

4.10. Safe Recruitment Practices and Screening Measures

- 4.10.1. Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) follows strict measures to ensure the safe and appropriate recruitment of job applicants.

5. Safe Recruitment Practices and Screening Measures

Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) follows strict measures to ensure the safe and appropriate recruitment of job applicants.

5.1. Screening and Verification Measures

- 5.1.1. Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) will ensure a rigorous screening process to assess the suitability of candidates. This may include direct telephonic communication with HR or a supervisor, with a preference for references from ex-employers, particularly former supervisors. For applicants with experience working with community members, Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) will conduct reference checks through partners and obtain feedback from management and staff. Additionally, Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) will verify educational documents, conduct CNIC (National ID) verification, and perform online background checks to assess the candidate's professional reputation.

5.2. Recruitment and Selection Guidelines

- 5.2.1. To uphold safeguarding standards, Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) follows these principles:

5.2.1.1. **Job Advertisements** – All postings will explicitly state: *“Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) is committed to safeguarding children, young adults, and vulnerable groups.”*

5.2.1.2. **Interview Process** – Candidates for hospital and community-based roles will be asked specific safeguarding-related questions during the interview process.

5.2.1.3. **Mandatory Safeguarding Training** – All new hospital and community staff will undergo orientation training on safeguarding practices.

5.2.1.4. **Employee Handbook** – Every employee will receive a handbook that includes Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF)’s safeguarding policies.

5.2.2. **Disqualification Criteria** – Any candidate whose background contradicts Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF)’s safeguarding policy will be disqualified immediately.

5.3. **Recruitment of Consultants, Partners, Contractors, and Suppliers**

All consultants, resource persons, partners, contractors, and suppliers working with Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) must:

5.3.1. Receive a copy of the Safeguarding Policy.

5.3.2. Sign the Code of Conduct as part of their MOU, contract, or agreement.

5.3.3. Abide by the safeguarding requirements throughout their engagement.

5.4. **Implications of Non-Compliance**

Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) has zero tolerance for any form of abuse, exploitation, or safeguarding violations. The organization reserves the right to:

5.4.1. Refuse employment to staff, volunteers, or interns who pose a risk to the communities we serve.

5.4.2. Take disciplinary action against consultants, partners, contractors, or suppliers involved in any safeguarding violations.

5.4.3. Report violations to relevant authorities, employers, or other regulatory bodies.

5.4.4. Blacklist offenders from any future engagement with Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF).

5.5. **Safeguarding Risk Management**

Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) integrates safeguarding risk assessment into its Quality and Accountability monitoring tools at all levels, including hospitals and field programs.

5.5.1. The organization ensures that children, young adults, and vulnerable adults are safeguarded and protected through its partnerships and stakeholder engagements.

5.5.2. Community voices are actively included in program design to ensure that their interests and concerns are addressed effectively.

5.6. Recruitment and Safeguarding Practices

Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) is committed to prohibiting the recruitment of anyone under the age of 18 years. Our recruitment process is designed to select the most qualified and suitable individuals for our programs, hospitals, and centers while upholding the highest safeguarding standards.

5.7. Recruitment Procedures for Staff

All line managers responsible for recruiting and selecting staff must follow these procedures carefully to ensure proper screening and verification processes.

6. Job Descriptions and Selection Criteria

- 6.1. Every position within Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) has a specific job description.
- 6.2. For roles that involve direct interaction with community members, the line manager must ensure that candidates meet the necessary qualifications and experience to uphold safeguarding standards.
- 6.3. Candidates must be selected strictly by the set criteria to ensure that they align with the organization's values and safeguarding policies.

7. Interview and Selection Process

- 7.1. To ensure a thorough selection process:
 - 7.1.1. All staff, volunteers, and interns must undergo screening measures, including reference checks.
 - 7.1.2. Competency-based tests and interviews will be conducted to accurately assess a candidate's abilities.
 - 7.1.3. One interview question will focus on safeguarding to evaluate the candidate's knowledge on the subject.
 - 7.1.4. Employment will only be offered to applicants who possess official identification documents (e.g., CNIC), which will be verified before hiring.

8. Safeguarding Concerns, Reporting, and Incident Management

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

- 8.1. Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) is committed to ensuring a safe and transparent reporting mechanism for safeguarding concerns. Any known or suspected safeguarding violation must be reported immediately.

8.2. Reporting Process

- 8.2.1. Staff must report concerns directly to the Safeguarding (SG) Focal Person at their respective hospital, center, or office.
- 8.2.2. The SG Focal Person will escalate the matter to the Safeguarding Committee, led by the CEO, where the final decision will be made.
- 8.2.3. In serious or highly sensitive cases, the Safeguarding Committee will notify the Governing Board immediately.

9. Cases Requiring Immediate Governing Board Notification

The Safeguarding Committee must report the following serious concerns to the Governing Board:

- 9.1. Sexual or Physical Assault

9.2. Sexual Harassment, Blackmail, Extortion, or Physical Abuse

9.3. Abuse of Authority or Power

9.4. Cases involving Senior Management

9.5. Cases that become public or have legal implications

9.6. Allegations affecting the integrity of the organization

10. Reporting Timelines

10.1. Serious safeguarding complaints must be reported to the Governing Board within 24 hours of being recorded.

10.2. Investigation updates must be shared within 5 days.

10.3. Final decisions must be communicated to the Governing Board within one week.

11. Complaint Lodging and Documentation

11.1. Complaints can be lodged through the existing Complaints Response Mechanism in project areas where it is already established.

11.2. All complaints will be recorded in a Complaint Log Sheet to ensure transparency and accountability.

11.3. The Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form must be completed within 24 hours of an incident being reported.

11.4. An Investigation Report will be prepared if further action is required.

12. Implementation and Training

To ensure effective implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) will take the following steps:

12.1. Staff Orientation and Training

12.1.1. The Safeguarding Policy will be included in the staff orientation package

12.1.2. All new staff will undergo mandatory safeguarding training.

12.1.3. Quarterly refresher sessions will be conducted for all employees to reinforce their commitments to safeguarding and job expectations.

12.2. Integration of Safeguarding in Programs

12.2.1. All program staff must consider safeguarding principles while planning, implementing, and monitoring projects.

12.2.2. Safeguarding compliance will be regularly monitored through Quality and Accountability assessments.

13. Monitoring and Policy Compliance

The Human Resource Department (HRD) will:

- 13.1. Promote safeguarding awareness.
- 13.2. Monitor internal compliance with safeguarding policies.
- 13.3. Conduct regular policy reviews after 2 years and updates.
 - 13.3.1. **Accessibility of Safeguarding Policy** - The policy will be made accessible to all employees through Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF)'s Human Resources Department.
 - 13.3.2. **Strict Prohibition on Misuse of Organizational Resources** -The use of Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF)'s systems, computers, internet, or email for any form of abuse, exploitation, or violence (e.g., accessing pornography) is strictly prohibited.- Any violation must be reported to an immediate supervisor, and disciplinary action will be taken as per organizational guidelines.

14. Incident Management and Response

Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) has a structured Incident Management Process for handling safeguarding complaints related to children, young adults, and vulnerable groups.

- 14.1. The welfare and safety of children and vulnerable adults will always be the top priority in managing an incident.
- 14.2. The organization ensures a swift and appropriate response to safeguard all individuals at risk.

15. Confidentiality

Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) is committed to maintaining the strict confidentiality of all reports and information related to safeguarding. All concerned persons must handle safeguarding cases with the highest level of discretion to protect the identities of:

- 15.1. Children & Vulnerable Adults Concerned – Ensuring their safety, dignity, and privacy are upheld.
- 15.2. Informer (Whistleblower) – Protecting the identity of the person who reports the concern to prevent retaliation or harm.
- 15.3. Accused – Maintaining confidentiality until the case is investigated and a decision is made, ensuring fairness in the process.

All safeguarding-related documentation will be securely stored, and access will be restricted to authorized personnel involved in the case. Information will only be shared when necessary and by Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF)'s safeguarding policies, legal requirements, and best practices.

16. Communication and Ethical Use of Images

Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) is committed to ensuring ethical, respectful, and safeguarding-compliant communication when interacting with women, children, young adults, and vulnerable groups during projects and outreach activities.

- 16.1. Always obtain informed consent from individuals or their guardians before using images for publicity, fundraising, or awareness. If a child is mature enough to understand, their consent will also be obtained alongside their guardian's approval.
- 16.2. Seek permission before taking photos, except in exceptional circumstances where documentation is necessary for safety or reporting.
- 16.3. Allow individuals to share their own experiences rather than having others speak on their behalf.
- 16.4. Highlight their resilience, abilities, and contributions instead of portraying them as victims.
- 16.5. Avoid sensationalizing, manipulating, or stereotyping stories and images.
- 16.6. Ensure that all images and messages are dignified, accurate, and culturally sensitive and appropriate.
- 16.7. Ensure individuals are appropriately clothed and not in compromising poses.
- 16.8. Do not share personal information (such as names or locations) that could put them at risk on websites, brochures, social media, or other public platforms.
- 16.9. Maintain strict confidentiality to protect the identities of those featured in communications.
- 16.10. Store all images, interviews, and personal data in a secure database, accessible only to authorized personnel.
- 16.11. Ensure that any information shared with third parties aligns with Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF)'s safeguarding policies. Any materials shared externally will be carefully reviewed to prevent misuse or misrepresentation.
- 16.12. Prepare individuals for interviews and clearly explain the purpose beforehand.
- 16.13. A parent or guardian must always be present during interviews with children and vulnerable adults.
- 16.14. All interviews and images will be handled with sensitivity, ensuring individuals are comfortable and respected.
- 16.15. Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) will carefully protect the personal data of individuals featured in its publications and reports.

17. Monitoring & Review

- 17.1. Safeguarding Committee / Working Group for Monitoring Implementation
To ensure the effective implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures, Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) will establish a Safeguarding Committee / Working Group.

This committee will oversee compliance, provide guidance, and address safeguarding concerns in a timely and effective manner.

17.2. Committee Members:

17.2.1. Chair: Dr. Mazhar Awan, CEO, Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF)

17.2.2. Fatima Zehra, Director of Inclusive Health and Innovation, SG Certified Trainer

17.2.3. Shabir Almani, General Manager, KNEH

17.2.4. Humayun Kalam, HR Incharge

17.2.5. Dr. Mazhar Awan, CEO, Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF), formally approved this committee.

18. Safeguarding Focal Person, Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF): Sarosh Zafar & Tabinda Hanif

18.1. Accountability -Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF)'s safeguarding responsibilities fall on every member of the organization. All staff are responsible for ensuring that the activities in which they are involved during their work are carried out in accordance with this policy. Managers are committed to ensuring that this policy is fully communicated and followed by their team members. It is their responsibility to ensure that the activities and services they provide have adequate procedures in place to protect and safeguard children, young adults, and vulnerable groups.

18.2. Review - This policy will be reviewed by the Human Resource Development Department and senior management as needed. The focal person for Safeguarding will facilitate the review and update of the policy in consultation with the relevant managers. This policy must be revised at least every 2 years.

19. Consequences of Breaching the Policy

19.1. Violations will be investigated promptly.

19.2. Possible actions include training, warnings, dismissal, or legal prosecution.

19.3. Any substantiated case of abuse will result in immediate termination and may lead to legal action.

19.4. Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) will cooperate fully with authorities in case of legal prosecution.

Annexe 1: Definitions

Purpose: To ensure clarity and consistency in terminology used in safeguarding practices.

Term	Definition
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Safeguarding	Protecting the health, well-being, and rights of individuals, particularly children, young adults, and vulnerable groups, from harm, abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
Child	Any person under the age of 18 years, in line with UN conventions.
Young Adult	Individuals aged 18–32 years, as defined by Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF).
Vulnerable Groups	Individuals at heightened risk due to age, disability, gender, or socio-economic status, including children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and marginalized communities.
Exploitation	Abuse of power for personal gain, including sexual, financial, or labor exploitation.
Abuse	Physical, emotional, sexual harm, or neglect.
Whistleblower	A person who reports safeguarding concerns in good faith.
SG Focal Person	Designated staff member responsible for handling safeguarding reports.

Annexe 2: Safeguarding Code of Conduct

Purpose: To outline expected standards of behavior for all staff, volunteers, and partners.

1. Professional Boundaries:

- Avoid physical contact beyond what is necessary and culturally appropriate.
- Do not exchange personal contact details with beneficiaries.

2. Prohibited Actions:

- No involvement in sexual relationships with beneficiaries or exploitation of any kind.
- No use of derogatory language, discrimination, or harassment.

3. Reporting Obligations:

- Report *all* safeguarding concerns immediately to the SG Focal Person.
- Do not investigate concerns independently.

4. Confidentiality:

- Maintain strict confidentiality of sensitive information.

5. Use of Resources:

- Prohibited: Accessing inappropriate content (e.g., pornography) using organizational devices.

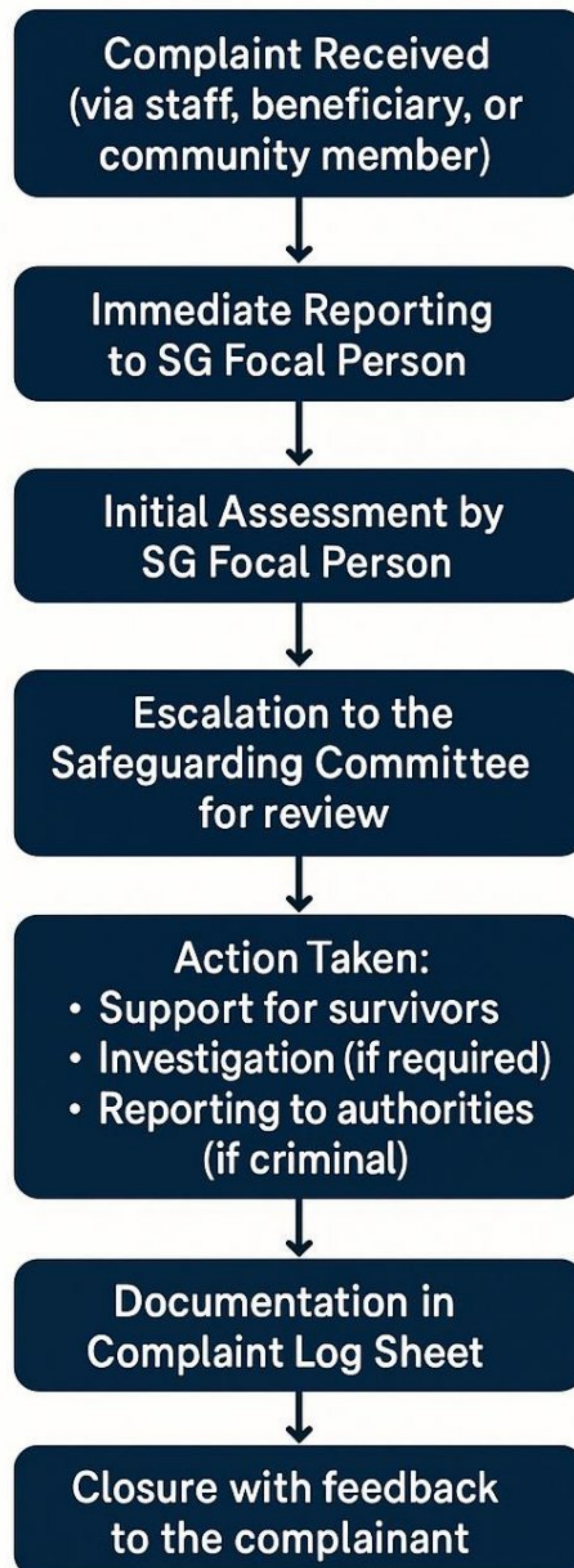
6. Consent:

- Always obtain informed consent before photographing or interviewing beneficiaries.

Annexe 3: Complaints and Response Management Flow Diagram

1. **Complaint Received** (via staff, beneficiary, or community member).
2. **Immediate Reporting** to SG Focal Person.
3. **Initial Assessment** by SG Focal Person.
4. **Escalation** to the Safeguarding Committee for review.
5. **Action Taken:**
 - Support for survivors.
 - Investigation (if required).
 - Reporting to authorities (if criminal).
6. **Documentation** in the Complaint Log Sheet.
7. **Closure** with feedback to the complainant.

Annex 3: Complaints and Response Management Flow Diagram



Annexe 4: Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form
(Template for documenting safeguarding incidents)

Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) Safeguarding Incident Report
Case ID: [Auto-generated]
Date of Report: [DD/MM/YYYY]

1. Reporter's Details

Name:	Position:	Contact No.:	Email:

2. Incident Details

- **Date of Incident:** [DD/MM/YYYY]
- **Time:** [HH: MM]
- **Location:** [Specific area/project site]
- **Type of Incident:**
 - ☐Physical Abuse
 - ☐Sexual Harassment/Exploitation
 - ☐Emotional Abuse
 - ☐Neglect
 - ☐Discrimination
 - ☐Other (Specify): _____
- **Persons Involved:**
 - **Victim(s):** [Name(s), age(s), relationship to Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF)]
 - **Alleged Perpetrator(s):** [Name(s), role(s), affiliation]
 - **Witnesses:** [Name(s), contact details (if known)]

- **Description of Incident:**
[Provide a detailed account, including what happened, who was present, and any immediate observations.]

3. Immediate Actions Taken

- ☐ Ensured the victim's safety
- ☐ Separated the involved parties
- ☐ Provided medical/psychological support
- ☐ Secured evidence (e.g., photos, documents)
- ☐ Other: _____
Details: [Describe steps taken to address the incident.]

4. Confidentiality Agreement

I confirm that all information provided is accurate and understand the need for confidentiality.

Reporter's Signature: _____

Date: [DD/MM/YYYY]

SG Focal Person's Acknowledgement:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: [DD/MM/YYYY]

Annexe 5: Complaint Monitoring Log Sheet

Purpose: To track complaints and ensure accountability.

Complaint ID	Date Received	Nature of Complaint	Status	Actions Taken	Resolution Date
[Auto-generated]	[DD/MM/YYYY]	[e.g., harassment]	[Open/Closed]	[Details]	[DD/MM/YYYY]

Annexe 6: Safeguarding Investigation Reporting Form

(Template for documenting investigation outcomes)

Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) Safeguarding Investigation Report

Case ID: [Auto-generated]

Date Report Finalized: [DD/MM/YYYY]

Investigator's Name: _____

1. Case Summary

- **Date Reported:** [DD/MM/YYYY]
- **Incident Type:** [e.g., Sexual Harassment]
- **Brief Overview:**
[Summarize the incident, including key parties and why the case was escalated.]

2. Investigation Process

- **Interviews Conducted:**

Name	Role	Date Interviewed	Summary of Statement

Evidence Reviewed:

- ☐ Incident Report (Annexe 4)
- ☐ Witness Statements
- ☐ Photographs/Videos
- ☐ Emails/Documents
- ☐ Other: _____

3. Findings

- **Conclusions:**
[State whether the allegations are substantiated, partially substantiated, or unsubstantiated, based on evidence.]
- **Root Causes Identified:**
[e.g., Lack of supervision, policy gaps]

4. Recommendations

- **Corrective Actions:**

- ☐ Disciplinary action (specify): _____
- ☐ Policy revision
- ☐ Additional staff training
- ☐ Referral to authorities
- ☐ Support for victim(s): _____

- **Preventive Measures:**

[Suggest steps to avoid recurrence, e.g., improved monitoring, awareness sessions.]

5. Signatures

Investigator's Signature: _____

Date: [DD/MM/YYYY]

Safeguarding Committee Chair's Approval:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: [DD/MM/YYYY]

Instructions for Use:

- Store completed forms securely in the Safeguarding Committee's records.
- Share findings only with authorized personnel.
- Update the Complaint Monitoring Log Sheet (Annexe 5) upon resolution.

Annexe 7: Consent Form

Purpose: To obtain informed consent for photography, interviews, or data use.

I, [Name], hereby grant Vision Health Care Foundation(VHCF) permission to:

- Use my photograph/video in awareness campaigns, reports, or social media.
- Share my story for fundraising or educational purposes.

I understand that:

- My details (e.g., full name, location) will not be disclosed publicly.
- I may withdraw consent at any time by contacting [SG Focal Person's email/phone].

Signature of Participant: _____

Signature of Guardian (if under 18): _____

Date: _____