

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Updated: June 2026

Policy Statement

Doctors For You (DFY) is committed to a zero-tolerance approach toward sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment (PSEAH), child abuse, and harm to vulnerable adults. DFY prioritizes the dignity, safety, and well-being of all beneficiaries, community members, healthcare workers, and personnel in all disaster response and humanitarian health operations.

Scope

This policy applies to all personnel associated with Doctors For You:

- Full-time, part-time, and contractual staff
- Medical volunteers, international deployments, and interns
- Board members, trustees, and executive leadership
- Third-party contractors, vendors, and local partner organizations

Guiding Principles

- **Do No Harm:** Prioritize the safety and well-being of vulnerable populations above all organizational goals.
- **Survivor-Centered Approach:** Respect the rights, wishes, and safety of survivors, ensuring confidentiality and non-retaliation.
- **Zero Tolerance:** Explicit prohibition of sexual exploitation, abuse, child exploitation, and workplace harassment.
- **Mandatory Reporting:** Duty to report any suspected, observed, or disclosed safeguarding violations immediately.

Code of Conduct & Prohibited Behaviors

All DFY personnel strictly must **NOT**:

- Engage in any form of child abuse, sexual exploitation, or physical/emotional harm.
- Exchange money, medical care, employment, goods, or relief services for sexual favors.
- Engage in sexual relationships with beneficiaries, acknowledging the inherent power imbalance in emergency and healthcare settings.
- Take photographs, videos, or audio recordings of beneficiaries especially children without informed, written consent, or in a manner that compromises their dignity.
- Engage in workplace bullying, discrimination, or physical assault against colleagues or community members.

Core Safeguarding Areas

Safeguarding Pillar	Key Requirements & Standards
Child Protection	Mandatory background checks for staff deployed in pediatric settings; presence of two adults during examinations; express parental/guardian consent for medical interventions and photography.
Vulnerable Adults	Specialized care protocols for elderly, displaced, or disabled patients; protection against financial abuse, neglect, or withholding of medical aid.
PSEAH (Protection from Sexual Exploitation)	Complete ban on transactional sex or using DFY authority to solicit personal favors in exchange for healthcare access.
Data & Privacy Protection	Secure handling of patient health records (EHRs) and identity confidentiality in disaster zones.

Reporting Mechanisms

DFY provides accessible, confidential reporting channels for staff, volunteers, and beneficiaries.

- **Internal Incident Reporting:** Reports can be submitted directly to the designated **Safeguarding Focal Point (SFP)** or via email at grievance@doctorsforyou.org
- **Anonymous Whistleblowing:** Dedicated helpline numbers and confidential reporting boxes at mobile medical units (MMUs) and field health posts.
- **Immediate Danger Protocol:** If a person is in immediate physical danger, personnel must contact local emergency services immediately before initiating internal reporting.

Investigation & Disciplinary Actions

1. **Initial Assessment:** The Safeguarding Officer/ Project incharge logs the report within **24 hours** and assesses immediate safety risks.
2. **Investigation:** An independent, survivor-centered investigation is conducted within **14 business days**.



3. **Disciplinary Outcome:** Substantiated violations result in immediate termination of contract, revocation of medical deployment, and reporting to statutory legal authorities and medical regulatory boards.