POLICY 01

Safeguarding Policy

Protection of children and adults at risk in all of the Foundation's work

Policy owner	CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER	**Approved by**	Board of Trustees
Version	1.0	**Date adopted**	05/08/2026
Applies to	All trustees, staff, volunteers, interns, consultants, contractors, ambassadors, visitors and partner personnel acting in the Foundation's name		
Review	Annually, or after any serious incident	**Next review**	05/08/2029

1. Purpose and commitment

1.1 Synia Aid Foundation works with children, with displaced families and with people in circumstances of acute vulnerability. Protecting them from harm comes before our programmes, before our growth and before our fundraising.

1.2 We accept that responsibility for safeguarding rests with the Foundation and not with the people we serve.

1.3 **No programme may begin delivery in a community before the arrangements in this policy are in place there.** No exception is permitted for any reason, including a funding deadline or a partner's timetable.

2. Scope and definitions

2.1 This policy applies to everyone listed in the control block above, in all Foundation activity, whether or not on Foundation premises and whether or not in working hours.

2.2 A **child** is any person under the age of eighteen, regardless of local definitions of majority or of the child's own circumstances.

2.3 An **adult at risk** is any person aged eighteen or over who may be unable to protect themselves from harm, whether because of displacement, disability, illness, age, isolation or dependence on our support.

2.4 **Abuse** includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, exploitation (including economic and online), trafficking, and any use of position to obtain advantage from a person we serve.

2.5 Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment are additionally governed by the Foundation's **PSEAH Policy**, which should be read alongside this one.

3. Principles

3.1 **The welfare of the child or adult at risk is paramount** and outweighs the reputation of the Foundation, the interests of any individual, and the continuation of any programme.

3.2 **All children have equal right to protection**, regardless of sex, disability, ethnicity, religion, displacement status or family circumstance.

3.3 **Concerns are acted on, not weighed.** Nobody is required to be certain, or to hold proof, before reporting.

3.4 **Support is never conditional.** No person's access to our support depends on their silence, their compliance, their appearance in our materials, or their relationship with any member of our team.

4. Responsibilities

WHO	RESPONSIBLE FOR
Board of Trustees	Adopting and reviewing this policy; receiving reports of serious incidents; ensuring resources are available to implement it
Safeguarding Focal Point	Receiving and recording concerns; deciding on immediate action and referral; maintaining the incident record; advising the Board
Chief Operations Officer	Ensuring vetting, induction, training and the two-adult rule operate in practice across all programmes
Programme owners	Applying this policy in their programme, including with partner personnel
Everyone covered by this policy	Reading it, complying with it, and **reporting any concern immediately**

4.1 The Safeguarding Focal Point is CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER, contactable at INFO@SYNIAFOUNDATION.ORG.

4.2 Where a concern involves the Focal Point, the Founder-Chair or the Chief Operations Officer, it is reported instead to the independent Trustee nominated for this purpose: NASBELLA@GMAIL.COM.

5. Prevention

5.1 **Safer recruitment.** Every role involving contact with children or adults at risk is subject to a documented selection process, verified identity, at least two references taken up before engagement, and a check for any history of concern. Vetting applies equally to volunteers and to partner personnel.

5.2 **Code of Conduct.** Everyone covered by this policy signs the Foundation's Code of Conduct before beginning work. Signed copies are retained.

5.3 **Two-adult rule.** There is no unaccompanied one-to-one contact between an adult and a child in any Foundation activity. Where a private conversation is necessary, it takes place in sight of another adult.

5.4 **Training.** Everyone receives safeguarding induction before their first contact with a programme, and a refresher at least annually. Attendance is recorded.

5.5 **Prohibited conduct** is set out in the Code of Conduct and includes, without limitation: physical punishment; sexual contact or relationships with any person we serve; private contact, transport or accommodation alone with a child; giving personal gifts or money; and any use of position for personal advantage.

6. Safeguards in programme delivery

6.1 **Selection.** Beneficiaries are selected against written criteria and verified in the community. Selection is never made by referral alone, and no individual both selects a participant and controls the benefit they receive.

6.2 **Images and information.** Written consent is obtained from a parent or carer before photographing or filming any child. A child's full name is never published alongside their image. Consent may be withdrawn at any time and the material removed.

6.3 **Access to complaint.** Every community we work in is told, in plain language, how to raise a concern and that doing so costs them nothing.

6.4 **Partners.** Every partner whose personnel come into contact with children is bound by this policy or by an equivalent standard, as a written condition of the partnership.

7. Reporting a concern

7.1 **Anyone with a concern must report it immediately** and in any event within twenty-four hours, to the Safeguarding Focal Point or, where clause 4.2 applies, to the nominated independent Trustee.

7.2 Concerns may be reported by telephone, by email, in person, in writing, or through any member of staff or volunteer. They may be reported anonymously.

7.3 The person reporting must not investigate, must not confront the person concerned, and must not discuss the matter with anyone other than the Focal Point.

7.4 Where a person is in immediate danger, emergency services are contacted first and the Focal Point immediately afterwards.

> NEVER DO THESE
>
> - Never promise a child or adult that you will keep what they tell you secret. Explain that you must tell someone whose job it is to help.
> - Never delay a report because you are unsure, because you lack proof, or because the person involved is senior.
> - Never question a child in detail about what happened. Record what they said in their own words and pass it on.
> - Never handle a concern informally, or resolve it by moving someone to another role.

8. Response

8.1 The Focal Point records the concern on the day it is received and takes immediate action to secure the safety of the person affected, including suspending any individual from contact with children pending assessment.

8.2 **Support to the person affected comes first** — medical, psychosocial, legal or protection referral as required, with their informed agreement and that of their carer where they are a child.

8.3 The Focal Point notifies the Board within seventy-two hours of any concern assessed as serious, and reports all concerns to the Board in summary at each meeting.

8.4 Where an allegation may involve a criminal offence, the matter is referred to the Nigeria Police Force or other competent authority, subject to the safety and wishes of the person affected.

8.5 Internal investigation is conducted fairly, promptly and by someone with no involvement in the matter. Substantiated breaches result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, and termination of any partnership or contract.

8.6 Reports made in good faith attract full protection under the Foundation's Whistleblowing Policy. **No person who reports a concern in good faith will be disadvantaged**, and no person's support will be affected. Deliberately false allegations are a disciplinary matter.

9. Records and confidentiality

9.1 Safeguarding records are held securely, separately from personnel and programme files, and accessible only to the Focal Point and the Board.

9.2 Information is shared strictly on a need-to-know basis, and only as far as is necessary to protect the person concerned or to comply with the law.

9.3 Records are retained for SAF in line with the Foundation's data protection obligations, and longer where safeguarding requires it.

10. Monitoring and review

10.1 The Board reviews this policy annually, and immediately following any serious incident.

10.2 The Focal Point reports annually to the Board on concerns received, training completed, vetting coverage, and any changes recommended.