

# Food for the Hungry

## Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Child Abuse Protection Policy

### (“Protection Policy”)

Effective April 30, 2013

Food for the Hungry (“FH”) prohibits:

- Engaging in **sexual exploitation or abuse (“SEA”)** of any beneficiary or community member including both adults and children
- Committing **child abuse**
- **Failing to promptly report** suspected or alleged SEA or child abuse
- **Retaliating** against anyone who opposes, reports, or is involved in the investigation of suspected or alleged SEA or child abuse

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## 1. Who this Policy Covers

This policy applies to all FH staff, officers, directors, partners, representatives, volunteers, and anyone else associated with the delivery of FH work (“Personnel”). This policy applies to FH Personnel at all times, including when they are on duty, off duty, or on leave.

## 2. Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (“SEA”)

FH prohibits any conduct that constitutes SEA as defined below:

### a. Definition of SEA

#### *Sexual exploitation*

Occurs when someone uses, or tries to use, a differential power relationship or a person’s vulnerable position or trust for sexual purposes. This can include coercing or engaging a person into a sexual act, prostitution, or pornography, with or without the person’s consent, in exchange for goods and services, money, drugs, shelter, food, protection or other benefits.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Sexual abuse*

Defined as actual or threatened physical sexual contact, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Aid beneficiaries or other community members may be at particular risk of sexual exploitation or abuse.

It is the responsibility of all FH leaders to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse.

### b. Prohibited activities

FH Personnel are prohibited from the following activities:

- Any sexual activity with a person under the age of 18, regardless of the age of majority or the age of consent under local law. The mistaken belief that the person is 18 or older cannot be used as a defense.
- Any exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sexual acts, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior.
- Any sexual relationships between FH personnel and beneficiaries.

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<sup>1</sup> UN Secretary General Bulletin: <http://www.pseataaskforce.org/uploads/tools/1327932869.pdf>

### 3. Child Abuse

FH prohibits any conduct that constitutes child abuse as defined below:

#### a. Definition of child abuse

Child abuse is defined as the infliction of physical or emotional injury on a person under the age of 18 years old. There are four categories of child abuse:

##### *Sexual abuse*

Includes any actual or threatened sexual contact, prostitution, or pornography involving a child. A child is incapable of “consenting” to sexual activity with an adult. The mistaken belief that the person is 18 or older cannot be used as a defense.

##### *Physical Abuse*

Includes the actual or likely physical injury of a child, or the failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. Child physical abuse includes deliberately hitting, beating, shaking, or throwing a child.

##### *Neglect*

Includes the persistent or severe neglect of a child, the failure to protect a child from exposure to danger including cold or starvation, and the failure to carry out important aspects of care resulting in the impairment of the child’s health or development.

##### *Emotional Abuse*

Includes severe or persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection of a child that may impair the child’s emotional or behavioral development. Emotional abuse can include telling the child that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate. Emotional abuse can include the inappropriate use of spiritual authority (for example, the Bible, church tradition, church authority, etc.) to coerce or force a child to act in an unhealthy way.

#### b. Prohibited activities

When interacting with FH beneficiaries or community members who are children, FH Personnel are prohibited from engaging in any of the following actions:

##### *Sexual*

- Never spend time with a child where they are hidden from the view of others. Always use the “different gender two adult” rule when possible.
- Never touch a child in a sexual manner or engage in a sexual relationship with a child.
- Never behave with a child in a manner that is sexually provocative.
- Never expose a child to pornography or other sexually explicit images or media.
- Never sleep in the same room or bed with a child.

- Never suggest that an alleged victim of sexual abuse has any responsibility for the abuse or that he or she behaved in a “seductive” manner.

#### *Physical*

- Never hit or otherwise physically assault a child, even if this is locally acceptable.

#### *Emotional*

- Never act in ways that shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade a child, or otherwise perpetrate any form of abuse.
- Never participate in harmful traditional practices or spiritual or ritualistic abuse.

#### *Images*

- Never take, produce, or create images of a child that are humiliating, degrading, shameful, or otherwise offensive. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be perceived as sexually suggestive.

#### *Parental or guardian consent*

- Never enlist or engage a child in FH activities without parental or guardian consent.
- Never drive a child without parental or guardian consent and at least one other adult in the car.

#### *Other*

- Never include in media publications the full name or address of the child, and never provide this information to unauthorized people.
- Never take a child to the home of FH Personnel.
- Never be intoxicated or consume alcohol or drugs before or during encounters with children.
- Never use offensive language, suggestions, or advice.
- Never expose a child to situations that are unsafe, abusive or illegal.
- Never blame a child for SEA or child abuse, as children cannot be blamed for the actions of others.
- Never leave non-FH Personnel visiting FH project areas unsupervised.

## 4. Duty to Report

### a. Report all suspicions within two business days

All FH Personnel are required to report, verbally or in writing, within two business days any suspicion or allegation of SEA or child abuse.

### b. Reporting options

FH Personnel must report suspected or alleged SEA or child abuse to:

- Anonymous email reporting: [protection-claim@fh.org](mailto:protection-claim@fh.org)
- Their location's Protection Focal Point
- The confidential reporting mechanism that is available in their location
- Their supervisor (who must then forward the allegation or suspicion to the Protection Focal Point within one business day)

Appendix A contains a link for all the Protection Focal Points in each FH country. You can view an up-to-date version of this document at any time at:

<https://docs.google.com/a/fh.org/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0As-N-TwZ4w1udEUzYXlxbWVsdG1YSjFWNHxSzJmOFE#gid=0>

### c. Must report suspected misconduct even if alleged victim does not want it reported

If a FH Personnel member learns of potential SEA or child abuse, he or she must report the matter even if the alleged victim does not want it reported. While FH will strive to take the wishes of the alleged victim into account, in some situations FH may need to investigate the matter, even against the alleged victim's wishes, to ensure that the alleged victim and others are protected from mistreatment. Also, in some situations, FH may be required to report the potential misconduct to local authorities for investigation.

### d. Must report allegations that involve non-FH Personnel

FH Personnel must report suspected or alleged SEA or child abuse regardless of whether or not the alleged perpetrator is a FH Personnel member. If the alleged perpetrator is not a FH Personnel member, FH will refer the matter to the appropriate authorities.

### e. Failure to report can result in discipline and criminal prosecution

FH Personnel should not try to confirm whether suspected or alleged SEA or child abuse is true before reporting the matter within two business days of learning of it. Supervisors to whom FH Personnel report potential SEA or child abuse must notify their location's Protection Focal Point within one business day. FH may discipline or terminate FH Personnel who fail to timely report these claims. In some situations, failure to report SEA or child abuse can result in criminal liability.

## 5. Investigation, Discipline, Criminal Referrals, and Confidentiality

### *Duty to investigate*

Once FH learns of a suspicion or allegation of SEA or child abuse, it will investigate the matter promptly.

### *Discipline*

If FH determines that a FH Personnel member has violated this policy, it will take corrective action as necessary. Corrective action can include disciplinary action, including termination.

### *Criminal Referrals*

Where appropriate, FH will refer the matter to local authorities to determine if a criminal prosecution is appropriate. In some situations, FH is mandated to report certain allegations to local authorities.

### *Confidentiality*

FH will keep all reports and investigations of potential violations of this policy confidential to the greatest extent possible. FH cannot always promise alleged victims and witnesses absolute confidentiality, as sometimes their identity may have to be revealed to conduct an appropriate investigation. Also, in certain situations, FH may be required to report the matter to local authorities. FH, however, will keep the matter as private as possible by telling only those people who need to know about it, and FH will do everything it can to prevent retaliation.

FH will maintain documentation of the allegation, the investigation, and the response in a secure location.

## 6. Retaliation

FH prohibits retaliation against anyone who:

- Opposes any act of SEA or child abuse
- Reports in good faith any suspected or alleged SEA or child abuse
- Participates in the investigation of any alleged incident of SEA or child abuse

Anyone who believes that he or she has been retaliated against should promptly report the matter to:

- His or her location's Protection Focal Point
- The confidential reporting mechanism that is available in his or her location
- His or her supervisor (who must then forward the report to the Protection Focal Point within one business day)

FH may discipline or terminate any FH Personnel member found to commit retaliation.

## Appendix A: List of Protection Focal Points for Each FH Country Office

For a current list of Protection Focal Points for each FH Country Office and their contact information:

- Visit this website for an updated list:  
<https://docs.google.com/a/fh.org/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0As-N-TwZ4w1udEUzYXlvbWVsdG1YSjFWNHNxSzJmOFE#gid=0>
- Contact your HR Manager, or
- Contact the Global HR Department by email at [protection-support@fh.org](mailto:protection-support@fh.org) or call 1-888-222-1949 for additional information or training.

## Appendix B: Commitment to Adhere to the FH Protection Policy

All FH staff, partners, representatives, volunteers, and anyone else associated with the delivery of FH work (“Personnel”) must sign this document every three years. The relevant FH office will keep a copy of the signed documents.

### Acknowledgement of Receipt:

I declare that:

- I have read, understood, and agree to adhere to the FH Protection Policy, which addresses sexual exploitation and abuse of adults and children.
- I will follow the procedures detailed in the FH Protection Policy.
- I have never been accused of, arrested, or convicted of any offense involving sexual exploitation or abuse or child abuse, as those terms are defined in the Protection Policy.
- I understand that I must fully cooperate in the investigation of any violation of this policy, including if I am accused of misconduct.
- I agree that if I become aware of any suspicion or an allegation of a violation of this policy, I must report the matter as described in the Protection Policy.

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

Position/Role: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

*\* Parents or legal guardians of anyone under the age of 13 should sign on behalf of the child.*

*\*\* If you are unable or unwilling to sign this form, please contact your local HR leader or FH representative.*