CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

For Citizens - European Institute for Active Citizenship

Policy Statement

At For Citizens - European Institute for Active Citizenship, we are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all children who engage with our services, programs, and activities. Our child safeguarding policy is designed to uphold the highest standards of protection for children and to create a secure environment where they can thrive. This policy statement outlines our key principles, objectives, and guidelines for safeguarding children under our care.

This policy was Approved by the Board and the General Assembly of the For Citizens - European Institute for Active Citizenship at January of 2020

1.- Key principles:

Commitment to the Roles and Responsibilities: We clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of staff, volunteers, and management in safeguarding children and specify reporting procedures and the chain of command for safeguarding concerns.

Recruitment and Training: We implement thorough background checks for all staff and volunteers working with children and provide comprehensive training on child safeguarding, including recognizing and responding to abuse.

Welfare of Children: We maintain a steadfast commitment to safeguarding the welfare of children, and we operate under a zero-tolerance policy towards any form of abuse or neglect of children.

Legal and Ethical Standards: We adhere to all relevant laws and regulations concerning child safeguarding and uphold ethical standards when dealing with child protection issues.

Clear Definitions and prevention scenarios: Clearly define abuse and all its forms to members, staff, volunteers, third parties, and especially to children, providing clear examples and scenarios to help staff identify potential signs of abuse.

2.- Aim and scope of the policy

- Guarantee that the projects and programs implemented by the organisation respond to the differentiated needs of children.
- Ensure that the actions of the organisation and its members apply the principle of no harm to children
- To ensure compliance with all legal and ethical standards related to child safeguarding, thereby upholding the rights of children.

3.- Definitions

Children: Based on Article 1 of the UNCRC3 and Article 3 of the Lanzarote Convention4, a child means any person below the age of eighteen years. And as laid down in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), a child is any human being below the age of 18.

Safeguarding: Child safeguarding is the responsibility that organisations have to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children, that is that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organisation has about children's safety within the communities in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities. (Keeping children safe).

Children's rights: The EU and its Member States are obligated to respect, protect, and fulfill the rights of the child, which are considered as part of human rights. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU ensures the protection of children's rights by the EU institutions and EU countries when implementing EU law. Specifically, Article 24 covers children's rights, while Article 32 prohibits child labor.

4.- Guidelines for conduct

All members of the organisation, but especially those who have direct contact with children, must adhere to the following code of conduct:

a) *Zero Tolerance for Abuse*

- Clearly state the organisation's zero-tolerance policy towards any form of abuse or exploitation of children and ensure all team members are properly informed.

- Define and provide examples of what constitutes abuse or exploitation within the organisation's context.

- These indications and measures expressed in this policy apply to all members and volunteers who are part of the organization, but also to third parties who are hired for specific activities and tasks in the projects and programs and who deal directly with the children.

- When engaging in recruitment processes for permanent or contracted third-party teams, as well as volunteers, it is crucial to include obligations in the service contracts related to the protection of children. This applies especially to those who will be directly involved in projects or programs that involve children. Requirements for relevant and verifiable skills and qualities will be included in the terms of reference for roles that involve working directly with children.

b. Duty to Report

- Mandate all staff, volunteers, and stakeholders to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the designated authorities within the organization.

- Establish clear reporting procedures and channels to ensure that concerns are addressed promptly and appropriately.

- Children and their representatives must have access to information and follow up on the cases initiated, as well as demand feedback on the progress of the projects in which they have participated.

c. **Child-Centric Approach**

- Emphasise the organisation's commitment to putting the best interests of the child as a priority in all activities and decision-making processes.

- Ensure the inclusion of the children's perspective in the organisation's activities, projects and programs, particularly those that are aimed directly at children as a beneficiary public.

- Participation should ensure inclusion of children from diverse backgrounds and population groups, recognizing their unique needs and interests.

- Ensure the inclusion of children’s perspectives from the initial phase of the project and programmes(design phase), particularly those that are intended to address their needs, and provide all the condicitions to guarantee their participation.

- Children must be duly informed about their right to participation and what it entails, its purpose, the channels to exercise their participation and the results they could expect to obtain.

- Likewise, as they have the right to participate and agree to be part of the project, children have the right to know that they can also withdraw without any inconvenience or consequence.

- Time, resources and activities must respond to the evolution of children's needs and capacities.

d**. Screening and Training**

- Outline the requirements for background checks, screening, and training for all personnel and volunteers who will have contact with children.

e. Communication and Social Media

- Establish guidelines for appropriate communication with children, including the use of social media, and set boundaries to maintain professionalism and respect for children's privacy.

- Request signed informed consent from the parents/representatives or institution in charge of the child, and also from the child to use their image for reporting purposes, use on social networks, advertising, awareness or fundraising campaigns.

- Ensure that the use of photographs and images of children does not expose them, for example by including personal information or the places where they can be located.

- Photographs of children must reflect them in a dignified and resection manner, taking into account the context in which they were taken.

f**. Privacy and Confidentiality**

- Stress the importance of respecting the privacy and confidentiality of children and their families, and provide clear guidelines for handling sensitive information.

- The storage of information related to children and their image must be done securely and only authorised personnel who directly work with it should have access to it.

g. Behavioural Expectations

- Set clear behavioural expectations for all personnel and volunteers when interacting with children, including appropriate physical contact and boundaries.

- Staff and volunteers should pay attention to the language they use when interacting with children.

- Use positive methods to manage children’s behaviour.

- Talk to children about the behaviour that adults should have with them, particularly the staff and volunteers of the organisation, so that they feel safe to report any irregular situation.

h. Response and Support

- In the planification phase, always take into consideration the potential risks to which children could be exposed when participating and develop a plan to address them.

- Rights should be explained clearly to children, including mechanisms and procedures for addressing problems and identifying relevant authorities or services.

- Detail the organisation's procedures for responding to and supporting children who disclose abuse or exploitation, ensuring that they receive the necessary care and protection.

Behaviours members and volunteers **should avoid**:

- Whenever possible, a member or volunteer should be prevented from spending too much time alone with a child; instead, they should remain in a group with the children and have at least two adults present.

- Never leave children alone. At the end of each activity with them, make sure that everyone has been picked up by their parents or representatives.

- Never use any form of force, manipulation or threats with children to force them to comply with any activity or force them to participate.

- Favour or reward one group of children over others, or discriminate against them for any reason.

- Not paying attention to or minimising children's demands and requests.