

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Background

1. The purpose of this policy is to provide a set of guiding principles and minimum standards for creating a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults within the framework of the SURT's programmes and activities.
2. **SURT. Fundació de Dones. Fundació privada** adheres to the principles enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the Council of Europe Convention on Human Rights and all relevant international, regional and domestic instruments on human rights and the rights of the child and expects all adults involved in the Organization to fully encompass and realize the principles enshrined therein.
3. In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (article 1), for the purposes of this policy, a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18. The organization acknowledges that children can be potentially subjected to exploitation, abuse, violence and neglect and are entitled to special protection measures.
4. The organization has zero-tolerance for child abuse and is fully committed to safeguarding all children, irrespective of ability, ethnicity, faith, gender, sexuality and culture.
5. The organization subscribes the protocols of the Government of Catalonia to ensure the protection of children and to establish codes of conduct for adults who work in contact with them.
6. Specifically, in their work with children the organization adheres to general principles of "Action protocol in cases of sexual abuse and other serious mistreatment of children and teenagers" of the Government of Catalonia.
7. Under Catalan legislation all individuals and/or institutions are obliged to inform the authorities in case of situations involving risk to minors or their helplessness. Furthermore, Article 6 of Law 8/1995 provides that children and teenagers "must be protected against any form of abuse, neglect, cruelty or manipulation and the use and trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, the exploitation, sexual abuse, prostitution and pornographic practices".
8. The organization considers that a child is abused when is subject to physical, emotional and/or sexual violence by action and/or omission by individuals or institutions of which depends for its development or by any other person.

Scope

9. SURT child protection policy applies to all staff of the organization, whatever their status is, including volunteers, associates and consultants. Furthermore, SURT will only collaborate with other organizations that come in contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults, if they agree with the standards and principles of SURT on protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Guiding principles

The organization recognizes that everyone has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children and states that both representatives and staff/associates act under the following principles and criteria:

10. To equally protect the rights of all children irrespective of his/her race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or cultural beliefs, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth, or other status or those of his/her parents.
11. To act always to ensure the best interest of the child, meaning that their rights take precedence over those of any other person.
12. To respect the right of children to be heard and to participate in a safe way and to support the empowerment of children as the subject of their own rights.
13. To create a safe environment for all children, young people and vulnerable adults through the cooperation of all staff/associates members and partners.
14. To protect the personal data of children and to prevent unauthorized access or inappropriate use of personal data
15. To preserve the child's dignity and privacy.
16. To address and reduce to the fullest possible extent any harm to which a child is being or may be subjected to.
17. To protect children from all forms of abuse and exploitation.

Policy statements

18. This policy is integrated into all aspects of the organizational strategy, structures and work practices of the organization.
19. The organization ensures that all its staff/associate are informed about this policy and act in accordance with all its provisions, and do no harm to children who may come into their contact within or outside their work.

20. Staff/associates working with children will be issued with a copy of this policy and this policy will be also available in an electronic form. They will have access to training and advice on child safeguarding that is appropriate for their role and responsibilities.
21. Wherever staff/associates are required to have direct contact with children, the organization will only recruit or appoint staff who are deemed suitable to work with children, including having a clean criminal record.
22. With regard to the activities in which children are involved, they will be informed about this policy, their rights and the possibility to withdraw from participation and consent at any point for any reason. Informed consent will be sought before taking any photos, videos, or requesting personal information about children's lives that may then be used by the organization.
23. All staff/associates should be alert to signs that may suggest a child is in need of help. The organization ensures the involvement and participation of the staff/associates working on the front line in the detection and immediate response in case of abuse, risk situation or disclosure.
24. When abuse is suspected or disclosed, staff/associates are obliged to intervene in a coordinated manner, following shared guidelines and protocols. a. If someone discloses that they are being abused, then upon receiving the information you should, (a) React calmly. (b) Reassure the child that they were right to tell and that they are not to blame and take what the child says seriously. (c) Be careful not to be deemed as putting words into the child's mouth, the easiest way of doing this is by asking questions. (d) Do not promise confidentiality. (e) Inform the child/young person what you will do next. (f) Make a full and written record of what has been said as soon as possible and do not delay in passing on the information. b. Staff/associates and any other person/s involved in the Organization should not undertake any investigations themselves, referring evidence instead to the appropriate authorities, such as Child Protection Services and/or the Police. c. Staff/associates and any other person/s involved in the Organization may make preliminary enquiries, if the incident concerns the child's school. The school has the principal responsibility for dealing with child protection issues and will involve the appropriate authorities.
25. Any incident reported will be responded promptly, in full compliance with this policy, the mission of the organization and the relevant laws. The information will be handled in a confidential manner that does not harm the victim or the person reporting the abuse.
26. All staff/associates, including volunteers and any other person involved in the Organization have responsibility to report concerns to the Executive management team of the organization as soon as those concerns are being raised.

27. The minimum necessary intervention principle will be followed, avoiding institutional abuse generated by the repetition of actions or their practice in unsuitable conditions.
28. Any member of staff found in breach of the guidance will be subject to immediate removal from their position/contract and appropriate measures will be taken in line with this policy and national legislation. Adherence to this policy is part of the organization's employment contracts.

Implementation and compliance

29. It is the responsibility of the Board of trustees and the Executive management team to ensure the effective implementation of this Policy.
30. This policy will be periodically reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees every 3 years.

Sira Vilardell, Director

Barcelona, April 2020