



## **Arci APS**

### **Child Protection Policy and Procedures**

#### **Purposes**

In line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that all children have a right to protection, Arci APS believes that it has a duty of care and obligation to protect those children for whom we are given responsibility.

#### **Definitions:**

- Child

A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

- Child Protection

Child protection is a broad term to describe philosophies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In the current context, it applies to Arci APS's duty to make sure that its 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 activities and programmes in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities.

- Direct contact with children

Being in the physical presence of a child/children in the context of Arci APS's work, whether contact is occasional or regular, short or long-term. This could involve attending meetings and conferences at which children are present or working with child volunteers in the Arci APS's office (N.B. these are examples).

- Indirect contact with children

Having access to information on children in the context of Arci APS's work, such as children's names, locations (addresses of individuals or projects), photographs and case studies. Providing funding for organisations that work 'directly' with children. Although indirectly, this nonetheless has an impact on children, and therefore confers upon the donor organisation responsibility of child protection issues. (N.B. this list of examples is not exhaustive)



- Member

For the purpose of this policy, a member is a full or associate member organisation or an individual member of Arci APS.

- Policy

“A statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children from harm and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and to show that the organisation is taking its duty and responsibility of care seriously.”<sup>1</sup>

- Child abuse and exploitation

According to the World Health Organisation, “child abuse” or “maltreatment” constitutes ‘all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power’.<sup>2</sup>

Our understanding of child abuse and exploitation includes, but it not limited to:

Physical abuse<sup>3</sup> may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child who they are looking after. This is commonly described using terms such as 'fictitious illness by proxy' or 'Munchausen’s syndrome by proxy'.

Emotional abuse<sup>4</sup> is defined as the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or valued only so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed in children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse<sup>5</sup> involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g., rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic materials or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate way.

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<sup>1</sup> Setting the Standard: A common approach to Child Protection for international NGOs, Standard 1 (Policy).

<sup>2</sup> The WHO definition of Child Abuse as defined by the Report of the Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention WHO – 1999

<sup>3</sup> Source: Child protection fact sheet: The definitions and signs of child abuse. NSPCC, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Source: Child protection fact sheet: The definitions and signs of child abuse. NSPCC, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Source: Child protection fact sheet: The definitions and signs of child abuse. NSPCC, 2009.



Neglect<sup>6</sup> is defined as the persistent failure to meet the child's basic physical and/ or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's physical or cognitive development.

Bullying<sup>7</sup> may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group).

Sexual abuse of children<sup>8</sup> can also be defined as contacts or interactions between a child and an older or more knowledgeable child or adult (a stranger, sibling or person in a position of authority, such as a parent or caretaker) when the child is being used as an object of gratification for an older child's or adult's sexual needs. These contacts or interactions are carried out against the child using force, trickery, bribes, threats or pressure. Sexual abuse can be physical, verbal or emotional.

Commercial sexual exploitation of children<sup>9</sup> comprises sexual abuse by the adult and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third person or persons. The child is treated as sexual object and as a commercial object. The commercial sexual exploitation of children constitutes a form of coercion and violence against children, and amounts to forced labour and a contemporary form of slavery.

Child pornography<sup>10</sup> means any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for primarily sexual purposes. This can include photographs, negatives, slides, magazines, books, drawings, movies, videotapes and computer disks or files. Generally speaking there are two categories of pornography: soft-core which is not sexually explicit but involves naked and seductive images of children and hard core which relates to images of children engaged in sexual activity and use of children in the production of pornography is sexual exploitation<sup>11</sup>.

Violence was defined by the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence as 'physical, psychological (psychosocial), and sexual violence to children through abuse, neglect or exploitation, as acts of commission or omission in direct or indirect forms, that endanger or harm the child's dignity, physical, psychological, or social status, or development.'<sup>12</sup>

Commercial exploitation means exploiting a child in work or other activities for the benefit of others and to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. It includes, but is not limited to, child labour.

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<sup>6</sup> Source: Child protection fact sheet: The definitions and signs of child abuse. NSPCC, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Source: Child protection fact sheet: The definitions and signs of child abuse. NSPCC, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Source: Definitions of Child Sexual Exploitation and Related Terms. NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2000.

<sup>9</sup> Source: Questions and Answers about the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. ECPAT International, 2001.

<sup>10</sup> Source: Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. United Nations, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> Source: Child Protection Policies and Procedures. ECPAT International Secretariat, 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Source: The UN Secretary General's Study on Violence, 2005.



A child who is being abused may experience more than one type of cruelty. Discrimination, harassment, and bullying are also abusive and can harm a child, physically and emotionally.

In particular, the purpose of this Child Protection Policy is to:

- take into account, in all of our planning and activities, the interests and wellbeing of children;
- respect the rights, wishes and feelings of the children with whom we are working;
- take all reasonable steps to protect children from neglect and physical, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse;
- treat children with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status;
- not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate;
- empower children: discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.

Our responsibility to children extends to any contact we have with them, be it direct, by phone, text, chat, social network sites etc.

In the use and production of images, pictures and films we are committed to:

- before photographing or filming a child, assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images;
- before photographing or filming a child, obtain consent from the child or a parent or guardian of the child. As part of this we must explain how the photograph or film will be used;
- ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive;
- ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts;
- ensure file labels do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically.

In particular, when addressing to minors both in research or training activity, parents/guardians and the minors themselves will be asked to sign a specific informed consent declaration where all aspect of children's involvement will be clarified. The minor as well as the parent/guardian written permission is required for the publication of a picture of a minor.

### **Recruitment and Application of the Policy**

This policy ensures that all the staff of Arci APS as well as external staff and stakeholders involved in the project are aware of this 'Child Protection Policy and Procedures'. A child protection referee is responsible for this, namely Walter Massa, President of Arci APS.

Recruitment procedures include checks on suitability for working with young people. Concerning youth workers, the recruitment procedure includes the verification of the criminal record and the CV. In particular, we ensure that the staff of Arci APS is clear on what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children. The staff will participate to an entry information meeting on the child protection policy.

At the beginning of all projects, the management team is committed to brief partners' representatives and staff on the Child Protection Policy, on how to reduce risks and create child safe environments, on how to promote child safe practices which keep children safe during the project and in their own community, and provide information about child protection to the children and communities in which we work, especially for the staff working directly with children. Any external staff who will participate



to a project will also be made aware of this policy. Concerning photographers, filming crews, journalists or visitors :

- Make sure that photographers and filmmakers are not allowed to spend time with or have access to children without supervision. They have to be accompanied by Arci APS staff at all times.
- In order to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the children, Arci APS must be notified as to how the photographer or film maker intends to use the images or stories. Arci APS reserves the right to refuse use if it is felt that, in doing so we are not acting in accordance with our child protection policy and our media and communication principles.
- If an image or any material is to be used by another organisation, it must be credited to Arci APS/Photographer's Name © with an appropriate caption.

This information will also concern how to report child abuse if they have concerns about a staff member of Arci APS and information on state, provincial and local laws regarding what individuals must do when aware of youth in potentially harmful situations.

This Child Protection Policy applies to all part-time and full-time employees as well as to independent contractors, freelance and other experts, interns and volunteers, associate firms and sub-contractors working with Arci APS on the implementation of the project.

### **Contrasting and reporting child abuse**

Arci APS is committed to providing a management strategy to prevent child abuse and protect children in the course of its work, delivering to the staff clear information on what to do in the case of suspected child abuse in order to respond to all suspicions and allegations of abuse swiftly and appropriately.

In the case of suspected or actual child abuse, our first priority is always for the safety and welfare of the child and that no child is ever left in an un-safe situation.

Information about suspected abuse must be accurate and a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure or when the concern arises. It should include if known and applicable, as much details as possible concerning the incident (the cause, the date, the time and location etc.) as well as the identity of the perpetrator(s) and the victim(s).

Where it is suspected that any form of criminal behaviour is taking place at a programme or outside the organisation, the child protection referee and the General Delegate of the organization should be informed immediately. Following this procedure, the appropriate local authorities should be informed and their advice followed.

### **Guidelines for adults working with children within the projects of Arci APS**

Adults who work with children are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.

The following behaviors are not accepted when working with children and youth:

- Use any form of degrading treatment to punish a child. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards children and young people is not acceptable in any situation.
- Use of alcoholic beverages and tobacco products in the presence of children and youth.
- Engage in any form of sexual activity with children.
- Avoid any action or behavior that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive. For example, never behave in an inappropriate or sexually provocative manner.
- Never have a child stay overnight in the adult's room or sleep in the same bed (unless prior consent is provided by both the child and his/her parent/guardian).
- Perform activities for children that they can do themselves, including dressing, bathing and



grooming.

- Hit or otherwise physically assault participants.
- Act in any way that may be abusive or place others at risk of abuse.
- Condone violations of this code by others – staff, interns, consultants, etc.
- Be alone with a child in any circumstances that might be questioned by others
- Allow children to engage in sexually provocative games with each other.
- Kiss, hug, fondle, rub, or touch a child in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way (e.g. do not initiate physical contact, such as holding hands, unless initiated by the child)
- Suggest inappropriate behavior or relations of any kind or encourage any crushes by a child.
- Take photos, film or request personal information if not required for Arci APS's activities.
- Use inappropriately contact details (including social media accounts) from children out of Arci APS's programmes.

Adults acting in the projects of Arci APS are called to treat each minor with respect and care, ensuring that minors are properly supervised at all times, thus providing them a safe environment.

The same professional standards should always be applied and should be sensitive to differences expressed through culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity.

All adults who work with, and on behalf of children are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority, manage risk, use resources, and safeguard children and young people.

Adults, should work and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way. Whenever possible, we try to have another adult present when it needs to work with minors in an unsupervised setting. Meetings with children and young people outside agreed working arrangements should not take place without the agreement of senior managers and parents or carers.

All documents bearing personal information, including registration forms, medical information forms, permission to treat forms, etc., are be treated as being confidential, minimizing the number of people who have access to any such documents and securing the documents at all times.

Adults should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident with this potential. Communication between children and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

Adults should treat their interaction with youth on social networking sites as though the interaction were occurring in public, in front of other adults and young people. In other words, if it would not be appropriate to say to a young person in public, it should not be said as a comment on a social networking site either.

Every partner organization of the projects of Arci APS will inform and educate its members on these guidelines, providing a copy of the guidelines to each staff member.

The child protection policy will be available on Arci APS's website, attached to the article on the Civ-Ashoah presentation project. Its adoption date is April 1<sup>st</sup> 2022. It will be revised every 5 years.

Walter Massa,

President

Signature



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