



**VšĮ Vilnius Social Club
Child Protection Policy**
June 14th, 2021

I. PRINCIPLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

VšĮ Vilnius Social Club provides socio-educational assistance to children and youth. The Organization respects the principles set out in this policy in an effort to protect the children. For the purposes of this Policy, the term 'child' shall mean all individuals under the age of 18.

1. The Principles

- Violence against children is a violation of the rights of the child and is not acceptable.
- In the face of possible violations of the rights of the child, interests of the child take priority.
- This Policy is an integral part of the Organization's strategy, structure, and work practices.
- The Organization is committed to protecting all children equally irrespective of their abilities, ethnic origin, religion, cultural affiliation, gender identity, sexual orientation, financial circumstances, or social standing.
- This Policy applies to all staff and volunteers working for the Organization.
- Staff and volunteers of the Organization seek to protect children against violence within the Organization and outside of it.
- All partners of the Organization must respect at least the basic principles of child protection.
- All current and future projects and programmes are developed and implemented in a manner that minimises possible dangers to children. All projects and programmes are implemented to ensure the protection of children irrespective of the project's or programme's key objectives.
- All events and activities held by the Organization are safe for children.
- This Policy and implementation thereof are subject to review at least once a year.

2. Distribution of Responsibilities and Implementation of Duties

- Staff and volunteers are responsible for their actions involving the children.
- The ultimate responsibility for ensuring child safety is born by programme managers and head of the Organization.
- All staff and volunteers are familiarized with this Policy and agree to abide by the Policy by signing off on an acknowledgement document.
- Cedric Raffier, cedric.raffier@vilniussocialclub.lt or 864502762, is responsible for the implementation of this Policy and review thereof.

II. PROCEDURES

1. Safe Employment

- No individual can be part of the Organization's staff, or volunteer team, who has previous convictions for crimes listed in paragraph 1 of Article 30 of the Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child, i.e., crimes against an individual's right to sexual self-determination and bodily integrity, sexual exploitation of children for pornography, profiting from child prostitution, involving a child in prostitution or possession of pornographic articles that depict a child or present someone as a child, buying or selling a child, other deliberate serious and severe crimes, or equivalent acts described in the criminal law of other states.
- An individual who seeks employment or wishes to volunteer for the Organization shall be required to produce an abstract from the Register of Suspects, Accused and Convicts supporting the absence of convictions for the crimes listed above.
- Prospect staff and volunteers are familiarised with this Policy of the Organization.

2. Education/Training

- The Organization provides a space and opportunity for its staff and volunteers to learn and reflect. The Organization supports its staff and volunteers in an attempt to ensure that they perform their duties and that support includes team meetings, supervision and intervision techniques, case study meetings, regular volunteer days and staff days, etc.
- The Organization conducts training on a regular basis on the application of this Policy.
- Staff and volunteers participate on a regular basis and build capacity in a variety of training courses and seminars in Lithuania and abroad.

3. Communication

- In its public communication, the Organization prioritises images that communicate the environment, moods, and situations.
- Before taking any pictures of, or filming, children for the purpose of public communication, written consent from the child's guardians must be obtained allowing the use of the pictures or filmed footage. Consent must be obtained for a specific photograph taking or filming occasion when the child participates in the Organization's activities.
- Before taking any pictures of, or filming, children for the purpose of public communication, children must be told in advance of the planned photograph taking or filming and explained how the pictures or filmed material will be used.
- The Organization ensures that children are depicted in public communication in a respectful and dignified manner as opposed to being vulnerable and submissive individuals.
- External parties who meet the children for the purposes of public communication (journalists, photographers, etc.) can engage with the children only in the presence of a representative of the Organization, or where the child's safety is ensured in some other way.

4. Responding to Suspicions

No employee or volunteer working for the public institution Vilnius Social Club (for compensation or without it) is responsible for investigating violations of the rights of the child and providing conclusions on these violations. The Organization, however, has the duty to address any suspected cases of abuse by contacting the competent authorities so that these authorities can conduct an investigation into the matter and take the required action to protect the child. This applies also in cases when suspicions of child abuse involve a member of the staff or volunteer team.

4.1. Obtaining information about suspected abuse

Staff and volunteers may come into knowledge of possible abuse in a variety of ways: they may notice that abuse was happening, they may suspect abuse was happening as a result of objectively visible signs, abuse may be brought to their attention by somebody else or by the child directly affected by it. In the latter case it is particularly important that staff and volunteers respond appropriately. If a child says or indicates the fact of abuse against them, staff or volunteers should:

- Remain calm as not to scare the child.
- Ensure that the immediate needs of the child for safety are met. If the child needs urgent medical attention, staff or volunteers should immediately make the appropriate arrangements.
- Always take information disclosures seriously even if there are doubts as to the truth.
- If abuse was physical, observe and capture on record any bruises and marks but staff or volunteers should not ask the child to undress.
- Tell the child that they will have to report the words of the child to other people and services and explain to the child that this is a way to stop abuse from happening and that staff and volunteers will support the child in this process.
- Provide information about the rights of the child, what behaviour towards a child is appropriate and which one is not as well as what are the responsibilities of staff and volunteer.

WHAT SIGNS MIGHT HELP RECOGNIZE			
PHYSICAL ABUSE?	PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE?	SEXUAL ABUSE?	NEGLECT?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bleeding • Bruises • Scratches • Marks left by an item • Burns • All injuries that are unlikely to appear because of an accident • Presence of great fear, anxiety • Increased physical aggression • Other signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apathy • Low self-esteem • Aggression • Eating disorders • Self-mutilation, suicidal thoughts • Avoiding closer relations with other kids and staff • Other signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts of sexual nature at play • Exposing one's body to others • Fear of a particular gender • Drawings on sexual topics • Extensive knowledge inconsistent with the child's age • Other signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunger • Dirty appearance • Dishevelled appearance • No hygiene skills • Other signs

4.2. Algorithm of actions

1. Reporting

- Directly involved employee reports the event to the programme manager or head of the organization.

2. Case study

- An internal committee of the organization is convened.
- The Committee shall consist of at least 3 employees: directly involved employee, programme manager, and head of the organization.
- At its first meeting the committee shall:
 - Analyse the case by taking all available facts into consideration
 - Draft a plan of follow-up actions
 - Assess whether the event is a one off thing or shows a trend in a specific programme or community

3. Action plan implementation

- Irrespective of the findings of any investigation conducted by the CPS, attempts are made to continue work in line with the action plan drafted by the internal committee.

4. Assessment

After a month from the moment of a potential violation has been identified, the internal committee shall convene for another meeting to discuss the event, assess the likely risks and decide whether the internal process should be continued.

4.3. Reporting to the Child Protection Service (CPS)

The Organization must ensure that any information provided in its report to the Service is objective and based on facts rather than opinions. Any such report should include the following:

- Name and surname, age and date of birth of the child
- Child's home address and telephone number(s)
- Nature of suspicions, including dates, times and other important information
- Description of all visible bruises or injuries: location, size, etc.; all indirect signs, e.g., behavioural changes
- Have parents been contacted? If yes, what was their answer.
- Have any other specialists been consulted or the matter reported to them?

4.4. Suspension from work

In cases where allegations of abuse involve a member of the staff or volunteer team working for the Organization, all their activities within the Organization shall be suspended temporarily until the police and social services complete their investigations.

Once the investigations by the police and social services have been completed, an internal committee of the Organization shall take the decision, based on the information available, whether a member of the staff/volunteer in question may be reinstated and continue working at the Organization.

4.5. Confidentiality and retention

The Organization complies with the General Data Protection Regulation (the Law on Legal Protection of Personal Data of the Republic of Lithuania, also all other data processing

requirements laid down in other regulations). In the case of a violation of the rights of the child confidentiality of all stakeholders shall be ensured.

Meeting of an internal committee of the Organization where matters of violations of the rights of the child are heard shall be recorded in minutes and retained for as long as the child participates in the activities provided by the Organization.

5. Code of Ethics for Working with Children

This Code of Ethics is not exhaustive. Volunteers and staff should follow the general principle of conduct of refraining from inappropriate and abusive behaviour with children.

Volunteers and staff will never:

- Beat or use any other physical force against children
- Engage in physical/sexual relationships with children or provoke children in a sexual or physical manner
- Show inappropriate images of violent or pornographic nature to children
- Engage in relationships with children that could be seen as exploitative (emotionally, physically, sexually, financially)
- Behave in a manner that endangers children
- Extend advice or make suggestions to children that could be harmful
- Do things that relate to personal hygiene for children that could be accomplished by the children themselves
- Tolerate or join together with children in activities that are unsafe or violent in nature
- Shame, humiliate or bully children and refrain from exerting emotional pressure in any way
- Discriminate children or present some children as better than others
- Be with any child in private without informing another members of the staff of the Organization or parents

Volunteers and staff should:

- Recognise situations that could be dangerous to children and minimise any dangers
- Plan their work in a way that minimises dangers to children
- Follow the principle of damage mitigation in unsafe situations
- Report suspected abuse or inappropriate behaviour in line with the procedures that are in place at the Organization
- Ensure that organizational culture fosters openness and responsiveness to things and behaviour that is inappropriate or causes concern
- Encourage children to share experiences of their relationships with staff and volunteers
- Empower children, i.e., talk to children about their rights, what is appropriate and what is not, what they can do if there is a problem
- Assess all the risks associated with communication with children by external parties and prioritise child safety when taking decisions
- Volunteers working individually with children inform the responsible staff member and advise on the time and place of the meeting