

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

### **ABOUT STICHTING CHILDREN OF HEROES OF UKRAINE**

Stichting Children of Heroes of Ukraine (Foundation) was created in 2023 to help children who lost one or both parents during the Russian war in Ukraine by providing them long-term assistance in all life spheres.

As many of the employees at the Foundation work directly with children, we are well placed to contribute to the protection of all children. Foundation has a responsibility to ensure that our staff can identify the signs of possible abuse or neglect and are able to take appropriate action.

This Child Protection policy encourages a culture of child protection that always safeguards and promotes the well-being of children.

### **THE POLICY IS BASED ON:**

- The Foundation's mission and values
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action
- The standards on child protection as defined by the UN and EU guidelines as well as other child protection organizations' best practices and guidelines.

### **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY GOALS**

The Child Protection Policy includes the following goals:

- To prevent cases of child abuse and reduce the number of incidents in programs
- To make children aware of their rights and their active role in child protection
- To inform children, employees, board members, family, and community members, volunteers, and partners (sponsors, donors, contractors, governmental authorities, etc.) about the Child Protection Policy and related procedures (awareness, prevention, reporting, responding)
- To encourage staff directly involved with children to apply the skills needed to contribute to each child's development and protection
- To ensure that all employees have the working conditions needed to contribute to each child's development and protection
- To put in place fair, secure, and transparent reporting channels in all types of programs that guarantee the right of stakeholders (children, parents, staff) to be heard
- To form an active network of protection so that all children and adults in the Foundation are safe and protected. Within and across all member associations, co-workers strive together for the protection of children.

### **TO WHOM THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY APPLIES**

This Child Protection Policy applies to all employees, contractors, partners, and volunteers working for the Foundation.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AT THE FOUNDATION**

Foundation guarantees that the main standards are applied to comply and guarantee Child Protection Policy's implication:

- **Safeguarding and accountability at the Foundation** – includes presence of the procedures for reporting and escalating safeguarding concerns; ensuring that all staff have received the appropriate training and are aware of safeguarding guidance; regular modification and updating of the existing safeguarding policies etc.
- **Careful recruitment of personnel, preparation and regular training** - safeguarding measures are incorporated into Foundation's recruitment practices to ensure all its staff are suitable for the role and do not represent a risk to others. Our staff is supported to understand and fulfill their safeguarding responsibilities from the start of their work and during all their work under the basis of regular training.
- **Safeguarding in relation to our partners and contractors** - Foundation cooperates and sets relations with many organizations in different matters and we expect all the organizations we cooperate to have measures in place to prevent harm and to respond to safeguarding concerns. Before our partnership starts the safeguarding due diligence is made for each of the potential partner/contractor. The safeguarding clauses are always included into contracts. Foundation establishes clear expectations regarding safeguarding that are monitored throughout the duration of the partnership.
- **Compliance with ethical and legal norms concerning children's privacy** - Foundation's staff is obliged to act in accordance with laws regulating data protection, sensitive data. That includes, for instance, obligation not to disclose a child's last name, personal address or other information that could be used to identify and/or locate a child within a country; never using images of inappropriately clothed children; not to publish health information, unless the informed consent was provided; securing documentation, both electronic and in hard copy; defining clear rules for releasing information from documentation to third parties etc. The Foundation does not release child's information to the media, nor does it use child's images in its information and other materials without prior consent. As well as "Do No Harm" Principle always applies to protect the safety and well-being of everyone involved in story telling of the Foundation.

## **MAIN PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN**

All employees and of the Foundation must:

- treat all children equally, no matter their origin, appearance, convictions, age and language.
- show respect for the child's otherness, other convictions, other experiences, other child-like perspectives.
- listen to children attentively and treat their statements, as well as their version of events with due respect.
- use non-judgmental language, no labels, express themselves in a way adapted to the child's level of development.
- create within the Foundation a culture of openness and mutual responsibility, facilitating discussion of numerous topics and issues regarding child protection
- be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these

- ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed
- empower children - discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.

### **BEHAVIORS THAT ARE NOT ACCEPTED WHILE WORKING WITH CHILDREN**

In contact with children by staff of the Foundation, it is unacceptable for employees, contractors and volunteers working for the Foundation to do any of the following:

- To embarrass, humiliate, or demean children or display any behavior bearing signs of emotional, physical or sexual abuse
- To come into inappropriate physical contact with the child, violating the child's dignity; permissible physical contact is naturally associated with play, hygienic assistance, ensuring safety or the need to soothe the child
- To serve and/or advise for the children to have alcohol, medications or other psychoactive substances
- To condone or participate in illegal activities involving a child
- To establish sexual relations with children
- To exhibit sexually provoking behavior
- To maintain private relationship with the child, outside the framework of work and support
- To act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse
- To use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- To act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that staff should avoid actions or behavior which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behavior.

All suspicions regarding proper conduct of Foundation employees and collaborators are investigated and clarified without delay.

### **STEPS TO FULFILL THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

Foundation fulfills its obligation under this Child Protection Policy by the following steps:

- Awareness
- Prevention
- Reporting and Responding.

### **AWARENESS**

To prevent child abuse, the Foundation runs a number of educational initiatives addressed to its employees, collaborators and volunteers working with children and children themselves. Educational activities and training are founded on observations from latest research and draw from good practices, as well as validated models based on experience and proper evaluation. Whenever updates are prepared, sessions are organized to ensure that Foundation staff is aware of any update and best practices regarding child protection.

As well as staff of the Foundation directly involved in child-related activities will receive additional technical and specialized training, and may develop their skills on the subject, including (but not limited to) child protection policy, prevention of and response to violence against children, and integration of child protection into programs.

## **PREVENTION**

In the sphere of recruitment and introduction of new employees, Foundation makes every effort to choose employees and collaborators possessing appropriate skills and competencies, as well as sharing our belief in the values proposed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, specifically the right to protection against abuse. All employees and collaborators are expected to familiarize themselves with the stipulations of Child Protection Policy, rules for upholding children's rights and principles of safeguarding and processing personal data in the Foundation. This is confirmed by the employee's signature on a relevant statement appended to the employment contract. As well as regular training on how to identify and prevent child abuse are made on a steady basis.

In the sphere of risk assessments and safe program design, Foundation is committed to designing and delivering programs that are safe for children. Risk assessments are therefore conducted when designing our projects and activities and safety strategies developed accordingly. Risk mitigation strategies will be developed, which minimize the risks to children and will be incorporated into the design, delivery and evaluation of programs, operations and activities which involve or impact upon children.

In the sphere of selection of partners and contractors: Foundation does not sign contracts with partners or suppliers who cannot respect strict codes of conduct and professionalism. Due diligence procedure applies before the conclusion of the agreement as well as we always include safeguarding clauses in contracts etc.

## **REPORTING AND RESPONDING**

All staff of the Foundation has a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting child abuse, no matter how small and insignificant they may seem. All forms of child abuse are taken seriously, without exception and are responded according to the gravity of the offence. Foundation ensures that there is always a response, regardless of whether the abuse committed is considered large or small.

The report shall be provided to the Child Protection Team of the Foundation.

To ensure that all such situations are handled appropriately and effectively, a reporting mechanism has been created:

- All allegations and concerns of abuse must be taken seriously
- The staff must report any of the following situations in relation to any allegation or concern about actual or suspected situations of abuse involving a child known to Foundation and/or any allegation of or concern about actual or suspected staff misconduct and/or criminal activity involving the abuse of a child or children whether or not they are known to Foundation
- Reports must be made, and decisions and actions taken very quickly
- In all abuse cases, an internal investigation is carried out by a neutral person who is not involved in the case.



- In all cases of suspected or proven child abuse or neglect, the focus is placed on safeguarding and protecting the child. At the same time, healing measures are provided, and the protection of all persons involved is guaranteed
- Foundation is not an investigative authority. Each national association determines what procedures to follow for different levels of abuse and Foundation ensures it's application. It is essential that referrals be made to the relevant child welfare and law enforcement agency to ensure that appropriate protection and support is given to the child, and that any evidence is collected in accordance with the law. Referrals must be made to a specialist of child welfare and law enforcement agency when sufficient evidence exists that an allegation or concern is a serious welfare and/or criminal matter.
- If a report of abuse is made, or concerns are raised, even if the situation is ultimately found to be untrue, no retaliatory action will be taken against the person making the report.
- Confidentiality is of utmost importance when dealing with cases of abuse; information is to be handled with sensitivity. It shall be guaranteed that data protection rules are severely applied and guaranteed.

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY EFFECTIVE DATE AND REVIEW**

This Child Protection Policy was prepared by and for activity of the Stichting Children of Heroes of Ukraine (Chamber of commerce number: 90057724, RSIN: 865197519) and is effective as of 8<sup>th</sup> of May, 2023

This Child Protection Policy is reviewed every three years.

The review will be undertaken by a delegate of the Child Protection Team and will cover an assessment of the implementation and operation of the Child Protection Policy, including:

- the views of staff about the accessibility, relevance, and usefulness of the Child Protection Policy.
- whether any serious incidents have occurred, and how effective the Child Protection Policy was at responding to them
- to what extent the Child Protection Policy needs updating to reflect lessons learned.