



Child Protection Policy

1. Scope

Staff

These guidelines apply to any person who is employed by (*organisation*) in Switzerland or any other country, or who work for (*organisation*) as volunteers.

2. Definitions

Children

are any minors who have not yet reached the legal age of adulthood in their respective country.

Physical abuse

denotes any actual or attempted violation or any failure to provide protection from any violation of a child's physical integrity.

Emotional abuse

denotes the continued emotional abuse of a child which leads to lasting damage to his or her emotional development and violates his or her emotional integrity.

Sexual abuse

violates a child's sexual integrity. This is the case when an adult approaches a child by overstepping his or her personal boundaries with the purpose of achieving sexual arousal or satisfaction for themselves, even if the child might have agreed.

Neglect

denotes a continued severe neglect of caring for a child or protecting it from danger.

Non-assistance of a child

means becoming a witness of some kind of abuse or exploitation and not doing anything to avoiding or stopping it.

3. General guidelines

(1) The protection and well-being of children in our environment has the highest priority for us, independent of the organisation or ethnic group they belong to. We expect all our staff to be aware of their responsibility for children and to behave accordingly in order to protect the children as well as the good reputation of (*organisation*).

(2) Each adult is responsible for drawing healthy, clear boundaries in their contact with children.

(3) Before a work contract with a new staff is signed, (*organisation*) checks, whether the person has been involved in any kind of child abuse in that:

- a) the new staff person signs a declaration to that effect.
- b) the new staff person presents a copy of their Criminal Record.
- c) this topic will be openly discussed during the job interview.
- d) references have to comment about the new staff persons relationship with children and teenagers.

All documents, references and notes referring to the interview will be kept with the new staffs personnel file.

(4) Employed staff who work mainly with children are given special training concerning body contact which is acceptable and permissible, behaviour in delicate situations, and child protection, corresponding to training provided to childcare professionals in Switzerland.

(4a) For voluntary staff the regulations according to paragraph 3 and 4 of (*organisation*) will be applied likewise.

(5) We encourage our staff to discuss suitable behaviour openly with each other, and to be constructively critical of each other where necessary.

(6) Anybody notifying us of any kind of assault or violation will be protected from any negative consequences as far as possible.

(7) We strictly adhere to the procedures outlined in these guidelines (see paragraph 5 below) in dealing with any specific hints about any kind of misdemeanour. In particular, we always make use of external help in clarifying the situation. This way we avoid taking wrong measures or being accused of ignoring any such cases due to loyalties. We preserve the highest possible degree of confidentiality.

(8) We ask of all our staff to request professional help if they repeatedly notice in themselves erotic impulses towards children.

(9) The protection of victims has the highest priority for us. We take measures to protect potential victims even if there is only the danger of potential abuse.

(10) (*Organisation*) is only sending staff to partner organisations which guarantee suitable child protection according to these guidelines.

4. Behaviour towards children

(1) All our staff are responsible for the safety of the children in their care.

(2) Contact with children is organised in such a way that the risks for the children are reduced as much as possible. This means e.g. that rooms where children are staying are accessible to third parties at any time, and that doors remain open.

(3) Staff may only spend time alone with a child if this has been agreed in advance with the supervisor and/or the child's parents.

(4) Children must not be taken to stay into a co-worker's own accommodation without prior consent of the parents.

(5) If a confidential conversation with a child is necessary, the doors must remain open, and at least one other person must be in the same building and must be informed of this confidential conversation.

(6) Children's programmes are usually carried out by at least two adults.

(7) Usually only staff of the same sex have access to the sleeping quarters of children.

(8) Responsibility for children is usually only given to adults.

(9) Staff must never

- beat a child or use any other corporal punishment
- let a sexual or abusive relationship develop with any child
- make sexist, insulting, abusive or demeaning remarks to any children, or behave in any such way
- make any erotically stimulating material available to children (e.g. via the internet)

(10) Adults are always responsible for their behaviour towards children. This is particularly the case if some sort of eroticisation is developing. The children concerned must never be accused of having behaved in a provocative or seductive way.

Particular aspects of touching

(11) Touching a child must be in accordance with the needs of the child, not the adult.

(12) Touching a child who is not one's own should only be done in public, as far as possible.

(13) Children must determine the degree and kind of touching with others. Any touching should usually be initiated by the child.

(14) In case of hygiene measures, the sexual integrity of the child has to be specially considered.

(15) Any touching has to be appropriate to the child's age.

(16) If a child is approaching an adult in an unsuitable way, the adult must insist on healthy boundaries.

5. Proceeding in case of suspicion and accusation

(1) (*Organisation*) is making every effort to clarify any suspicion. These clarifications are the responsibility of the (*person/function*), who gets help from external specialists where necessary. (*Organisation*) takes all the measures necessary to ensure the protection of privacy of all those involved.

(2) If any suspicion is substantiated, or cannot be clarified, (*Organisation*) takes the necessary measures to protect the individuals involved. In particular, suspected co-workers who are working abroad are summoned back to Switzerland.

(3) If it is established, substantiated or suspected that any kind of abuse has taken place, or if there are credible allusions to any kind of abuse, this must be reported to (*person/function*); the suspected person must not be questioned personally. The (*person/function*) coordinates the further proceedings.

(4) Reports of any suspicion are treated confidentially. Only people who are involved into the clarification and checking of such a report receive the necessary information. Any violation of secrecy results in disciplinary measures or punishment.

(5) The protection of the child involved has the highest priority. We will respond to the needs of the victim individually and with sensitivity, e.g. with respect to the victim's family situation. The needs of any others involved indirectly (such as other children in a group) are taken into consideration as appropriate.

(6) Any conversations with the victim are held in their mother tongue, if necessary with the help of an interpreter. Their statements are believed until the opposite is proven or until they entangle themselves in contradictions which cannot be resolved. The conversation is recorded in the form of notes, but may be recorded on video. This must be explained to the victim in advance in a way that is suitable to their age. They are also informed if other people have to be informed.

(7) The victim and the accused person have to be given access to legal counsel, qualified pastoral care, and - where necessary - therapeutic treatment as quickly as possible.

(8) In grave cases the perpetrator has to be urgently advised to report themselves to the police; if this does not happen, they must be reported by (*person/function*). (*Organisation*) always adheres to any applicable laws, in particular to the criminal law.

(9) If any abuse is proven, the accused co-worker is released immediately and the work contract terminated as soon as possible.

(10) In the reference or testimonial, the abuse has to be mentioned appropriately after consultation with external experts.

Links

www.mira.ch

www.limita-zh.ch

www.lilli.ch

www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk

www.globalconnections.co.uk/resources/codesandstandards/childprotectionpolicyguidelines

(These guidelines are based on the child protection guidelines by Wycliffe Switzerland)