



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. Introduction

Europe House Vukovar (EHVU) was founded in 2000 with the aim of affirming the European idea in the Republic of Croatia, presenting the cultural and national heritage of Croatia in Europe, informing citizens about the process of European unification, developing a sense of belonging to Europe, and developing a culture of understanding, tolerance and dialogue with other European nations and to the states. Young people and minors are one of the target groups of EHVU's activity.

This policy aims to provide all members of staff of EHVU, all volunteers involved in the organization's work and all people involved in EHVU's activities with a clear framework for ensuring that all children who they come in contact with during EHVU's work are protected from harm.

Europe House Vukovar believes in supporting all aspects of children and young people's development and learning, and keeping children safe. Therefore, in all its activities involving minors, EHVU ensures a safe space, where they are protected from injuries and enabled to actively participate in the activities. EHVU's staff and its representatives will always maintain the highest standards of safeguarding children, as stated in this "Child Protection Policy".

2. Safeguarding

Definition of safeguarding

- Protect children from abuse and maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care.
- Take steps to ensure the best outcomes for all children.

Safeguards may be needed to protect children and learners from:

- neglect
- physical, sexual, emotional abuse
- bullying, including online bullying
- Racist, disability-related
- gender-based violence/violence based on sexual orientation

- radicalization and/or extremist behavior,
- sexual exploitation and child trafficking,
- substance abuse,
- Issues specific to a local population, e.g. B. group violence,
- other problems that pose a risk to children.

Safeguarding involves aspects of care, including:

- Children's and learners' health and safety and well being.
- Meeting the needs of children and learners with medical conditions.
- Meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Providing first aid.
- Care for emotional well being.
- Online safety and associated issues.
- Appropriate arrangements for children while on field trips, excursions etc.,

3. Abuse

Recognising Abuse

In accordance with Croatian law a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

All staff will be made aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. Abuse or neglect can take the form of inflicting harm to a child, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger, for example via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Definition of physical abuse

- Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.
- Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Definition of emotional abuse

- Emotional abuse may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- Emotional abuse may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
 - Emotional abuse may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.
- Emotional abuse may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another – for example where there is fighting or violence in the home.
- Emotional abuse may involve serious bullying (including online), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger.
- Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Definition of sexual abuse

- Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.
- The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.
- They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Definition of neglect

- Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Special Circumstances

Special circumstances in child protection cases, include:

Bullying, including cyberbullying, child sexual exploitation, domestic violence, drugs, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, gangs, serious youth violence and violent extremism and radicalisation, 'Honour'-based violence (HBV), not attending school, parental lack of control, parental mental illness, parents who misuse substances, pregnancy, self-harming and suicidal behaviour, sexually active children, trafficked and exploited

children, young carers, gender-based violence/violence against women and girls, hate, relationship abuse.

4. Responsibilities

Lead responsibility for child protection

The Executive Director of EHVU takes the lead responsibility for child protection, including support for other staff and information sharing with other agencies, developing policies and staff training. They are also the first authority to respond to allegations made against members of staff. They cannot delegate this overall responsibility, which are defined as followed:

- Report all suspected abuse and neglect as well as allegations made against members of staff to the local authorities
- Develop and update the Child Protection and other safeguarding policies, ensuring that staff and children/families/parents are aware of them.
- Provide support and advice to all members of staff within the setting regarding child protection concerns.
- Ensure that cover is provided for the role when absent from the setting.
- Ensure that all staff receive appropriate Child Protection and Safeguarding Training
- Cooperate with any requests for information from the local authority

Responsibilities of other staff members

- It is the responsibility of all other members of staff to ensure that all safeguarding concerns, both minor and serious, are reported to the Executive Director of EHV as soon as reasonably possible, because minor concerns may take on greater significance within the wider context of knowledge of a child or family that the DSL may have.
- All staff members should be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and should always act in the best interests of the child.
- All staff members receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated.
- All staff should be aware of EHVU's frameworks and procedures which support safeguarding and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction.

5. Safe Practice

Safer Recruitment procedures are enforced, in order to:

1. Deter potential abusers by setting high standards of practice and recruitment.
2. Reject inappropriate candidates at the application and interview stages.
3. Prevent abuse to children by developing robust policies and agreeing on safe practice.

Any new staff member, before starting to work in EHVU will be checked to ensure they are not prohibited from working with children. Volunteers are appropriately supervised.

Allegations Against Staff

Allegations of abuse can be made by children and young people and they can be made by other concerned adults. All allegations against staff or volunteers should be immediately brought to the attention of the Executive Director.

If an allegation is made against the Executive Director, this should be brought to the attention of the managing board of EHVU.

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in safeguarding procedures and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the Executive Director.

The Executive Director should take the following actions:

- Ensure that the child reporting the allegation is safe and away from the member of staff against whom the allegation is made.
- Contact the parents/carers of the child.
- Review the member of staff's working arrangements, and if no safe alternative identified suspend the member of staff pending the investigation.
- Any disciplinary investigation should be carried out once the child protection investigation has been completed.

Suspension should be considered when:

- There is a cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm; or
- The allegation warrants investigation by the police; or
- The allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.

Visitors

- No visitors should be allowed to wander around the premises unaccompanied when children and young people are present.
- Children should not be collected from attending activities with EHVU by people other than their parents unless written notification has been received in advance.

Use of Force, Restraint and Positive Handling

- The law forbids all members of staff from using any degree of physical contact that is deliberately intended to punish a child, or that is primarily intended to cause pain or injury or humiliation.
- Staff is only allowed to use reasonable force to control or restrain children, in order to protect them and others.
- Any concerns or allegations that a member of staff may have acted inappropriately should be brought to the Executive Director immediately.

6. Conduct of appropriate behavior

Appropriate behavior

In order to protect children, young people and members of staff, we encourage staff to follow our professional code of conduct. This covers appropriate dress, the use of appropriate boundaries, social contact outside the setting (including on social networking sites), the receiving and giving of gifts and favoritism, and the safe use of technology.

Consideration needs to be given to:

- Being alone with the child / young person.
- Physical contact / restraint.
- Social contact outside setting / appropriate boundaries.
- Gifts and favoritism.
- Behavior management.
- Safe use of technology (Security / Internet / mobile phones / digital images of children, etc).
- Appropriate use of social networking sites.

Appropriate and safe staff conduct is supported in the following policies:

- Allegations Against Staff Policy.
- Central record of recruitment and vetting checks Policy.
- Disability and Equality Policy.

7. Commitments

All staff and volunteers included in the work of EHVU who work with children will read this policy within the framework of:

- EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Regulation on Measures for the Protection of Personal Rights and Child Welfare by the Croatian Vice President of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and Minister of Social Policy and Youth

This policy should be understood alongside EHVU's core values, therefore all staff will work to ensure that:

- Children and young people feel listened to, valued and respected.
- Staff are aware of indicators of abuse and know how to share their concerns appropriately.
- All staff, volunteers and people involved in EHVU's work are subject to rigorous recruitment procedures, and are given appropriate support and training.

EHVU is committed to ensure children are adequately protected:

- We are sensitized to recognizing situations that may pose a risk for minors and know how to manage them;

- We are committed to referring concerns, suspicion or awareness of possible abuse or mistreatment of minors, as defined in this policy, to local authority children's social care, contributing to the assessment of a child's needs and, where appropriate, to ongoing action to meet those needs.
- All staff have read and understand the Child Protection Policy and are aware of the indicators of child abuse and how to respond to concerns or disclosures of abuse by children.
- The Executive Director of EHVU takes responsibility as governor for safeguarding, and reviews this child protection policy on an annual basis.

This policy has been reviewed and approved by:

Dijana Antunović Lazić
Executive Director

Vukovar, 27.06.2023