



АСОЦИАЦИЯ РОДИТЕЛИ

Association Roditeli

Child Safeguarding Policy

1. Policy Statement

Children are the ultimate value for any human society. As an organization focused on the wellbeing of the family, Association Roditeli is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all children who come into contact with our organization. We strive to create a safe and secure environment where children can learn, grow, and thrive free from any form of maltreatment. Thus Association Roditeli does not allow any organization-engaged person (officers, governing bodies, partner, supplier, sub-contractor, volunteer, intern, agent or any individual) to engage in any form of violence against children, incl. child maltreatment or poor safeguarding practice.

2. What is child maltreatment?¹

- **Child maltreatment** includes the perpetration of physical, sexual and psychological/emotional violence and neglect of infants, children and adolescents aged 0–17 years by parents, peers, caregivers and other authority figures, most often at home but also in settings such as schools, kindergartens and orphanages. It is a violation of fundamental human rights, including the right to life, right to protection from all forms of violence, and the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health. Child maltreatment can have serious and often lifelong negative consequences for mental and physical health, sexual and reproductive health, academic performance and social life.

- **Violence against children** includes all forms of violence against people under 18 years old. For infants and younger children, violence mainly involves child maltreatment (i.e. physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect) at the hands of parents and other authority figures. Boys and girls are at equal risk of physical and emotional abuse and neglect, and girls are at greater risk of sexual abuse. As children reach adolescence, peer violence and intimate partner violence, in addition to child maltreatment, become highly prevalent². We include the **cyberbullying** to the types of VAC experienced mainly by the adolescents, increased significantly after the COVID19 lockdowns.

¹ Definitions based on "Responding to child maltreatment: a clinical handbook for health professionals", © World Health Organization 2022

² See. WHO, Violence against children



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There are several main types of child maltreatment³:

- **Physical abuse** includes causing injury or harm to a child by the parent, caregiver or peer, for example by hitting, kicking or beating; using a hot object, substance or flame to burn the body; or pushing, punching or inflicting hurt with an object.

- **Emotional abuse** involves isolated incidents as well as a pattern of failure over time on the part of a parent or caregiver to provide a developmentally appropriate and supportive environment. It can include many types of behaviours, such as parents or caregivers 1) telling a child or adolescent they wished he/she had never been born or that they were dead; 2) telling a child or adolescent that he/she is not loved or does not deserve to be loved; 3) threatening to hurt or kill the child or adolescent; 3) telling the child or adolescent that he/she is stupid or useless. A variety of emotional abuse can be also implied by peers.

- **Sexual abuse** refers to the involvement of a child or an adolescent in sexual activity into which he or she has been forced or tricked; which they may not understand is wrong; and about which they may be afraid to tell someone. Sexual abuse involves the intent to gratify or satisfy the needs of the perpetrator or another third party, including that of seeking power over the child. It includes: 1) non-contact sexual abuse (e.g. threats of sexual abuse, verbal sexual harassment, sexual solicitation, indecent exposure, exposing the child to pornography); 2) contact sexual abuse involving sexual intercourse (i.e. sexual assault or rape); 3) contact sexual abuse excluding sexual intercourse but involving other acts such as inappropriate touching, fondling and kissing. Child sexual abuse is often carried out without physical force, but rather with some type of emotional manipulation. Children can be sexually abused by both adults and other children who are – by virtue of their age or stage of development – in a position of responsibility or trust or power over the survivor.

- **Neglect** includes a caregiver's failure to provide for the development and well-being of the child or adolescent (where the parent is in a position to do so) with respect to: 1) health; 2) education; 3) emotional support; 4) nutrition; 5) shelter and safe living conditions. The parents of neglected children and adolescents are not necessarily poor; they may be financially well-off.

³ Online there are plenty of definitions, produced by different official bodies, NGOs and others. Some of them include all types of VAC in the concept of "child abuse", and many different interpretations can be identified. We decided to use those of WHO, since the term "child maltreatment" contains also the concept of "child abuse" and other types of VAC.



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3. Principles⁴

- Safeguarding children is ‘everybody’s business’.
- Children should always be treated with respect, regardless of their sex, ethnic or social origin, language, religious or other beliefs, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or other status.
- All children have the right to freedom from all forms of harm, including violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- All child abuse is an abuse of power and all violence towards children is both unacceptable and preventable.
- Although children may be resourceful and resilient, there is an inherent vulnerability in relation to abuse, given their general lack of status and power, dependence, stage of development, and reliance on adults.
- Children are most at risk from those people they know and often trust. Therefore, adults engaged in positions of trust towards children must exercise the highest levels of integrity and good practice.
- All organisations and professionals working or in contact with children have an obligation to ensure that their organisations, programmes, operations, and staff are ‘child safe’. This means that staff, volunteers, and contractors do not represent a risk to children and programmes, policies, and practices are designed and developed in ways that promote the protection of children.
- The best interests of the child will be the primary consideration in all decisions and actions.
- All children have the right to be protected from harm and exploitation.
- All staff and volunteers have a duty of care towards children and must adhere to this policy and relevant guidelines.

⁴ Based on the Child Safeguarding Policy of the OAK Foundation



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4. Roles and Responsibilities

- The General Assembly of Association Roditeli has the right to require annual reports from the CEO and the staff related to the child safety approach of the staff towards projects, events, initiatives and campaigns which involve or are related to children. The CEO's reports on the annual meetings of the General Assembly must include information related to the actions taken by the AR team to adhere to this Policy and the related Code of Conduct.
- The Managing Board: The board must be aware of this policy and the related Code of Conduct, and as a representatives of Association Roditeli each Board Member must sign declaration that he/she will comply with this Policy in each her/his action involving or related to children.
- Safeguarding Focal Point: Ms. Yana Alexieva, AR's CEO will oversee the Policy's implementation, receive and address concerns, and provide support to staff and volunteers. The CEO may delegate activities related to the implementation of the policy to an employee of his/her choice, but remains responsible for monitoring the policy's compliance.
- Staff and Volunteers: All personnel are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Policy, adhering to the Code of conduct, and reporting any safeguarding concerns promptly.

5. Recruitment and Selection

- Background Checks: All individuals working with children must undergo thorough background checks, including criminal records, prior to engagement.
- Screening: The organization will conduct interviews and assessments to ensure suitability for working with children.

6. Code of Conduct

- All staff and volunteers must adhere to a clear code of conduct that outlines appropriate behavior when interacting with children.
- Prohibited actions include physical punishment, inappropriate language, and engaging in any form of abuse, harassment, or exploitation.



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8. Training and Awareness

- All staff and volunteers will receive comprehensive training on child safeguarding, including recognizing signs of abuse and how to respond to concerns.
- Regular awareness sessions will be conducted to keep personnel informed about child safeguarding issues.

9. Risk Assessment and Mitigation

- At the beginning of each project, an ad hoc assessment of the risks that the actions or inactions of the organization or its partners may create for children is made, taking into account previous documented cases and measures are taken to ensure that both these and possible other risks are prevented.
- Within the initiatives, events and activities conducted by AR, team members, volunteers and partners monitor cases of possible direct and indirect risks for the children participating or affected by the activities, and immediately take measures to stop the relevant risk. All cases are documented and stored on the Parents Association server.
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10. Communication

- AR's Child Sageguarding policy is presented to all its partners, volunteers, beneficiaries or interns involved in projects, events or initiatives that include participation of children, or that involve activities and outcomes that will or can affect children. If AR is the leading organization in the relevant project, initiative or event, each partner should guarantee its compliance by signing a declaration, or present its own policy that meets the requirements set out in the policy of Association Roditeli. In the latter case, the AR and the partner(s) sign an agreement that the respective partner is aware of the AR's Child Safeguarding policy and will comply with its own.



ASSOCIATION RODITELI (PARENTS)

- Association Roditeli supports different channels available, which can be used to submit a signal for child maltreatment, specifically:

- E-mail address: office@roditeli.org
- Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/AsociaciaRoditeli>
- Phone number: +359 878 660 587

Each signal is documented and the AR team is obliged to consider it a highest priority. If the AR team does not have the opportunity and/or expertise and competence to take the necessary measures, the signal is redirected to the competent organizations and institutions:

- State agency for child protection
- National telephone line for children 116 111
- National Safer Internet Center
- National Network for Children

11. Monitoring and Review

- The policy will be subject to periodic review to ensure its effectiveness and relevance.
- Any updates or changes will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Association Roditeli is committed to continuously improving our child safeguarding practices and will work collaboratively with stakeholders to achieve this goal.

Signed,

Ms. Yana Alexieva, CEO

Date: 31.07.2023



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ANNEXES:

ANNEX I. Reporting Mechanism:

1. Purpose:

The purpose of the Reporting Mechanism is to provide a clear and accessible process for reporting any concerns or incidents related to child safeguarding. This mechanism aims to ensure that all staff, volunteers, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders feel confident and safe in reporting any potential or actual child safeguarding issues promptly.

2. Confidentiality and Anonymity:

The Reporting Mechanism ensures confidentiality and anonymity for anyone reporting concerns. Individuals reporting incidents can choose to remain anonymous if they wish, and their identities will be protected throughout the investigation process. However, it is encouraged that individuals provide their contact information to allow for further clarifications and follow-ups, if required.

3. Reporting Channels:

The Reporting Mechanism provides multiple channels for reporting concerns:

a. Internal Reporting: Individuals can report incidents to their immediate supervisor or designated child safeguarding focal person within the organization. This can be done verbally or in writing.

b. External Reporting: In cases where individuals are uncomfortable reporting within the organization, they can use a confidential external reporting channel provided by the NGO. This could be a dedicated email address or a hotline number, operated by an independent party.

4. Responsibilities of Report Recipients:

Upon receiving a report, the designated staff responsible for handling child safeguarding matters will:

a. Acknowledge Receipt: The report recipient will acknowledge the receipt of the report within a specified timeframe.



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b. Assessment: The report will be thoroughly assessed to determine its credibility and the appropriate course of action.

5. Response and Support:

In cases where child safeguarding concerns are substantiated, the NGO will take appropriate action, which may include:

a. Providing Support: The wellbeing and safety of the child involved will be prioritized, and necessary support and care will be offered.

b. Referral to Authorities: If required, the matter will be reported to the appropriate authorities for legal action.

c. Disciplinary Measures: For any staff or volunteers found to have violated the child safeguarding policy, appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer status, will be taken.

7. Record Keeping:

All reports, investigations, and outcomes will be documented and securely maintained in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.



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ANNEX II. Monitoring and Review:

1. Regular Monitoring:

1.1. AR establishes a systematic and regular monitoring process to assess the effectiveness and implementation of the Child Safeguarding policy.

1.2. Monitoring will involve evaluating all activities, programs, and interactions involving children to ensure compliance with the policy's guidelines.

2. Data Collection:

2.1. Data related to child safeguarding incidents, complaints, and concerns shall be collected and documented confidentially.

2.2. AR will maintain an incident register to record all reported incidents, actions taken, and outcomes.

3. Staff Training and Capacity Building:

3.1. All staff and volunteers will be trained on child safeguarding policies, procedures, and responsibilities.

4.2. Training sessions will be conducted regularly to ensure that all personnel are aware of any updates or changes in the policy.

5. Reporting to Management and Board:

5.1. The results of the monitoring process and any child safeguarding incidents or concerns shall be reported to the management and AR's Managing Board

5.2. The CEO will oversee the implementation of the policy and ensure that necessary resources are allocated to maintain a safe environment for children.