

## THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY OF CONNECT INTERNATIONAL

**CONNECT International A.I.S.B.L** actively implements Child Protection Policy in its work, which aims to ensure that employees, activists and volunteers act in accordance with the highest standards of collegial and constructive behavior. The provisions of this document are binding to all members of the network. The implementation and compliance with this act is guaranteed by the Board of Directors and the President of the network.

Child Protection Policy consists of standardization on People involved in our work with children, Procedures how child protection is provided and Accountability measures, how we review the existing policy and its effects.

### Principles and values when working with children

**CONNECT International gathers organizations and individuals governed by the following values:**

**The best interests** of the child defined in the General Comment 14 of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child above all interests of adults, organizations and other stakeholders;

**Participation of children** - we believe that children should actively participate in decision-making processes and policy formulation related to them, and accordingly, the Network will take into account participation of children within its activities.

**Children's voluntariness** - the participation of children in activities of the Network as well as activities of member organizations is voluntary, and their presence and participation can in no way be conditioned or be abused;

**Non-discrimination** - we respect children and work with them and their families and communities in which they live and work regardless of sex, their ethnic, racial or religious affiliation, beliefs, sexual orientation and other personal qualities.

**The right to life, survival and development** - we believe that every child deserves the same starting position in life, and the ability to develop in accordance with their abilities and respect for the rights of the child is an essential value of the Network.

**Comprehensive Approach** - we believe that every child has the right to a comprehensive approach to health and social care, as well as education, and the right to have access to mechanisms of support and care that will be adapted to their individual needs in order to achieve the maximum potential of a child.

**Solidarity, empathy and humanity** are represented in mutual relations of members and with beneficiaries we work with, which means that we cherish an approach that reconciles professionalism and humanity and becoming familiar with beneficiaries while building and preserving their trust.

**Children's wellbeing and family environment** - we believe that family is the best environment for a child and that each child has the right to a family, and that a society has an obligation to participate actively in preserving family and strengthening capacities and empowering parents or caregivers, as well as health, safety and well-being of children, both in terms of material and any other kind of assistance, as well as in the sense of caring for the adequate atmosphere in which a child grows up.

**Social responsibility** - we believe that a society and all those who represent key-players in a society, those who make decisions and are in charge of policy making and implementation have a significant impact on children, their future and their families, and that their actions should always be in the best interest of children and families with children.

## Children protection standards

***The basis of the standards of all CONNECT International activities is to protect children from any form of abuse, violence and exploitation. Staff, volunteers and member organizations are obliged to never allow:***

- Physical, psychological or sexual abuse of children;
- Beating or kicking children under no circumstances, especially under the pretext of a disciplinary measure;
- Taking advantage of or abusing children for any purposes;
- Acts that could lead to child abuse or represent a risk of maltreatment and abuse of children;
- Sexually provocative behaviour and/or behaviour that could embarrass, degrade, underestimate or cause harm to children or in any other way lead to a form of emotional abuse;
- Participating in behaviour or practices that are illegal, dangerous or may lead to abuse and exploitation of children;
- Discrimination and discriminatory behaviour towards children, as well as favouring certain children in relation to others;
- Photographing or recording children without a consent of their parents/caregivers and without giving information about the purpose of use documented material.

## PEOPLE

### Child Protection Officer

**Connect International** has appointed a child protection Officer, whose name is displayed *in*

*the Annex 1 of this document and decided by the Board. He/she will have the following responsibilities:*

- Ensuring that the policy is being put into practice;
- Being the first point of contact for child protection issues;
- Keeping a record of any concerns expressed about child protection issues;
- Bringing any child protection concerns to the notice of the Board of CI and contacting the Local Authority if appropriate;
- Ensuring that paid staff and volunteers are given appropriate supervision;
- Ensuring that everyone involved with the organization is aware of the identity of the Child Protection Representative.

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it is meeting its aims.

## **Personal/Personnel Safety and Responsibility**

- A group of children or young people under sixteen should not be left unattended at any time.
- Avoid being alone with an individual child or young person for a long time. If there is a need to be alone with a child or young person (e.g. first aid or he/she is distressed) make sure that another worker knows where you are and why.
- At no time a volunteer or worker from any external organization should arrange to meet a young person away from the activity without someone else from the team being present.
- Such meetings should be planned and have the approval of a member of the team (this must be someone other than the organizer themselves).
- Teenage assistants should always be supervised.

### **New Workers**

Workers and assistants are by far the most valuable resource the group has for working with young people. When recruiting and selecting paid workers and volunteers the following steps will be taken:

- Completion of an application form;
- An interview by three people from the Committee, who will take the final decision;
- Identifying reasons for gaps in employment, and other inconsistencies in the application;
- Checking of the applicants' identity (passport, driving license, etc);
- Taking up references prior to the person starting work;
- Ensuring criminal record checks have been carried out through relevant local agencies approved by the Criminal Records Bureau;
- Taking appropriate advice before employing someone with a criminal record;
- Allowing no unaccompanied access to children until all of the above have been completed;
- A probationary period of 3 months for new paid workers and volunteer
- On-going supervision of paid workers and volunteers;
- Ensuring good practice is followed in working with children and young people

- by providing appropriate training and guidance;
- A nominated child Protection representative on the Management Committee.

It is a great benefit if workers undertake regular training for this type of work. The Committee should keep workers informed of relevant courses.

## PROCEDURES

### Children's Safety

#### What is child protection?

**Child protection is the response to the different ways in which a young person's or child's physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual health are damaged by the actions of another person.**

#### Practical notes and instructions

1. Make sure that the area you are using for activities is fit for the purpose, e.g. remove furniture, which could cause injury in energetic games and take care of any other kind of obstacles.
2. Make sure that all workers and assistants know
  - Where the emergency phone is and how to operate it
  - Where the first aid kit is
  - Who is responsible for First Aid and how to record accidents or injuries in the incident book
  - What to do in case of fire or another emergency
3. Once a year, members of CI working with children should attend a fire practice exercise
4. Do not let children go home without an adult unless the parent has specifically said that they may do so. Never let a child go with another adult unless the parent has informed you that this will happen.
5. If private cars are used for an outdoor activity, the drivers must be approved by the CI team members, be properly insured, have rested before driving, and should have clean licenses. There should always be at least one other responsible person in each vehicle. All vehicles should be fitted with full seatbelts, not just lap belts. Full seatbelts should always be used.
6. Under normal circumstances, workers should only give a lift home to a young person from group activities if the parents of the young person have specifically asked for them to do so. (If workers are asked to give a young person or child a lift home, they are not obliged to do so, it is left to their discretion).

7. In the case of trips or outings, it should be made clear if workers' cars will be used and where the children or young people will be returned to.

## Trips and Outdoor Activities

1. When organizing a trip/outdoor activity make sure a trip/outdoor activity form for Consent for participation is completed. This includes details about the trip and a section for parents to give their consent. These documents must be returned before the event takes place and must be brought on the trip with the completed group information/consent forms. (If a group information/consent form has not already been completed for a child or young person, child cannot participate in activities until the form is completed). Form should consist of data protection clausal also.
2. Ensure that there is adequate insurance for the work and activities and conditions.

## How to communicate with children and young people

### What you should do

1. Listen to the child/young person
2. Look at them directly and do not promise to keep any secrets before you know what they are, but always let the child/young person know if, and why, you are going to tell anyone
3. Look at them directly and do not promise to keep any secrets before you know what they are, but always let the child/young person know if, and why, you are going to tell anyone
4. Take whatever is said to you seriously and help the child/young person to trust his/her own feelings. Take notes of exactly what is said to you avoiding assumptions and conjecture.
5. It is not the role of the worker to investigate any allegations (this would contaminate evidence if a situation went to court). Any disclosure by a child/young person must be reported to the named child protection officer.
6. Speak immediately to the Local Authority or other relevant institutions for further advice and guidance.

### What you should *not* do

1. Project workers/volunteers should not begin investigating the matter themselves.
2. Do not discuss the matter with anyone except the correct people in authority.
3. Do not form your own opinions and decide to do nothing.

### Things to say or do:

- 'What you are telling me is very important'
- This is not your fault'
- 'I am sorry that this has happened/is happening'
- 'You were right to tell someone'
- What you are telling me should not be happening to you and I will find out the bestway to help you'
- Make notes soon after the event. Try to write down exactly what the young person orchild said. Avoid assumptions or conjecture.

**Things *not* to say or do:**

- Do not ask leading questions – Why? How? What?
- Do not say 'Are you sure?'
- Do not show your own emotions e.g. shock/disbelief
- Do not make false promises

## ACCOUNTABILITY

### Child Protection Policy Review

Every year during regular General Assembly meetings of the network, Child Protection Officer will present the report of its work and members organization will need to approve it. The review of its mandate and work is covered with this report and GA will confirm the changes made in the policy.

This policy was adopted by Board of Connect International on 6/12/2021

Signed on behalf of the Board by:



  
JELENA SPASOVIĆ,  
President