

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

ATHENS NETWORK OF COLLABORATING EXPERTS



A.N.C.E

Athens Network of
Collaborating Experts

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Policy

Introduction

As an NGO promoting Human Rights, ANCE is fully committed to protecting and safeguarding the **rights of the child**. That means ANCE recognizes its responsibility to promote the well-being and development of all children that the organization comes into contact with during the implementation of its programmes, events and activities.

Policy Statement

This policy demonstrates ANCE's commitment to protect children from any form of harm, abuse, exploitation and neglect whilst participating in events and activities of the organisation, and aims to create a **safe and enjoyable environment** for them. ANCE's Child Protection Policy has been developed in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and ensures that ANCE undertakes its responsibility to safeguard all children¹. Thus this policy will be **mandatory for everyone** involved in the organization's activities in order to minimize risks related to child maltreatment and to guarantee that child rights are fulfilled.

A. Main principles

The Child Protection Policy is based on the following guiding principles:

- ▶ *Non-discrimination*. The rights of the child apply to all children without discrimination on any ground. All rights are to be granted without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other status.
- ▶ *Best interests of the child*. In all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.
- ▶ *Right to life, survival and development*. Children have an inherent right to life and to protection from violence and suicide. Development should be interpreted in its broadest sense, embracing the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral, psychological and social development.
- ▶ *The right to be heard*. Involving children in decision-making at individual, family, organisation and policy level in society is key to realising their rights. ANCE is committed to taking a participatory approach to the rights of the child in all dimensions of its activities .

¹ This policy is based on the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) Child Protection Policy.

- ▶ *Do no harm*: In line with the International Child Safeguarding Standards, the “do no harm”² principle refers to minimizing any harm that may be caused inadvertently as a result of activities of ANCE.
- ▶ *Transparency and accountability*: Transparency and accountability are essential to ensure that poor practice is addressed appropriately, potentially abusive behaviour challenged and best practice promoted.
- ▶ *Data protection*: All processing of personal data of children, including in communication and media activities, should be conducted in line with the Regulation outlining a data protection system for personal data files.

B. International Law

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that 'childhood is entitled to special care and assistance'³. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that 'in all actions concerning children...the best interests of the child shall be of primary consideration'⁴ and the child has a right to be protected from all forms of exploitation and abuse.

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the European Social Charter and other Council of Europe treaties also guarantee children's right to protection from harm and violence. On the basis of Article 14 of the ECHR, the rights of children shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.

The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention) and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention) introduce measures to ensure that children are protected against sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and violence.

C. National Legal Framework

The Greek Constitution does not outright guarantee the child protection principle under the meaning of Article 3 par. 1 of the Convention⁵. However, it contains a number of provisions that apply regardless of age as well as a number of proclamations referring to the status of children:

Part I of the Constitution of Greece

Article 2 par.1: protection of human dignity

Part II of the Constitution of Greece

Article 5 par. 1: right to the free personality development

Article 5 par. 2: protection of life, value and freedom without discriminations

² Child Safeguarding Standards and how to implement them, Keeping Children Safe (2014). Available at www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk

³ On 10 December 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

⁴ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

⁵ http://www.buildfuture-stopbullying.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Child_Protection_Policy_KEDDY_en.pdf

Article 5 par. 3: personal freedom

Art. 16: provision of a number of education related rights, including free and compulsory education of at least nine years

Article 21 par. 1: provision establishing childhood under the protection of the state.

Article 21 par 2: orphans and families with many children are entitled to the special protection of the State

Article 25 par. 1: protection of human rights of every person as a member of society.

Definitions

Child: anyone under the age of 18 (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

Child maltreatment: is the abuse and neglect that occurs to children under 18 years of age. It includes all types of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation, which results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Exposure to intimate partner violence is also sometimes included as a form of child maltreatment. (WHO, 2016)

Direct contact with children: Being in the physical presence of a child/children in the context of ANCE's work, whether contact is occasional or regular, short or long-term. This includes all ANCE work and could involve attending meetings and conferences at which children are present.

Indirect contact with children: ANCE has a responsibility to ensure appropriate child protection processes are in place in instances of indirect contact which include having access to information on children in the context of ANCE's work, such as children's names, locations (addresses of individuals or projects), photographs and case studies.

Physical abuse: may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Emotional abuse: is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or valued only so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic materials or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

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

Commercial sexual exploitation: comprises sexual abuse by the adult and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third person or persons. The child is treated as sexual object and as a commercial object. The commercial sexual exploitation of children constitutes a form of coercion and violence against children, and amounts to forced labour and a contemporary form of slavery. Commercial exploitation means exploiting a child in work or other activities for the benefit of others and to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. It includes, but is not limited to, child labour.

Criminal exploitation: children being forced to participate in illegal activities such as forced begging, shoplifting and pickpocketing, cannabis cultivation, drug dealing. A child who is being abused may often experience more than one type of cruelty.

Implementation

As part of its child safeguarding ANCE will:

1. Adopt a **Child Protection Policy** which applies to all staff and activities and ensure that this Policy is widely available;
2. Adopt a **code of conduct** for staff;
3. Work in line with the institutional framework for the rights and protection of children at international and national level;
4. Share information about child protection with children, parents, and staff;
5. Ensure that everyone participating in the organization's activities and being in direct contact with children has **clear criminal record**.

People

General information

ANCE will ensure that all staff are **aware of the policy** of the organization concerning child protection.

As a condition for working with ANCE, all staff, Board members, interns and volunteers and all those acting on behalf of ANCE, such as consultants or trainers are required to accept and commit to the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct (see Annex 1).

Code of conduct

The code below will have to be **understood and signed** by each member of the staff who is going to have an interaction with children.

All people in contact with children **Must not:**

- *have any sexual contact with children*
- *have any form of contact with children that can lead to a physical abuse*
- *use an inappropriate, a crude and impolite language in front of children even if it is not during a formal activity*
- *have obscene, indecent and illegal behaviours*
- *put pressure on, threat and frighten children*
- *develop close relationship which can lead to physical and sexual contact, and/or emotional abuse*
- *discriminate, shame, humiliate, belittle, or degrade children or show specific affection for some persons instead of others*
- *be alone with a child in any circumstances that might be questioned by others*
- *take photos, film or request personal information if not required for ANCE's activities*
- *condone violations of this code by others – staff, interns, consultants, etc.*

All people in contact with children **Must:**

- *be aware of the different definitions of what constitutes an abuse*
- *create a peaceful atmosphere of work which can permit children to be confident and feel safe*
- *provide an enabling environment for children's personal, physical, social, emotional, moral and intellectual development*
- *encourage and respect children's voices and views*
- *be attentive to the problems that children could raise and feel free to discuss about any concern they have, might have or had*
- *at all times respect the confidentiality of children's personal information*
- *obtain written consent from the child and parent/carer when photographing, filming or requesting personal information for activities*
- *Ensure that there is a minimum of two staff members present in*
- *meetings with children (to allow one to go out to deal with any*
- *immediate needs of children).*

- *report any suspicion of child abuse to the supervisor, and adopt a behaviour that can secure and reassure the child potentially abused*
- *be as often as possible visible during activities with children*
- *sign the code of conduct and the policy of the organization, and be a guarantor of their implementation.*

The Child Protection Supervisor

ANCE will name its general manager as **Supervisor of the child policy**. The role of the supervisor is to make sure that the code of conduct and the child policy of the organisation is **respected**. The supervisor shall be responsible for:

- Promoting awareness and implementation of the Child Protection Policy throughout the organisation;
- Monitoring implementation of the Policy and reporting;
- Acting as a source of support and information for staff on safeguarding issues;
- Providing training on the implementation of the Child Protection Policy to new staff (and refresher training to existing staff whenever necessary);
- Developing documents, as part of the Child Protection Policy (referred to in ANNEXES section) which address the implementation of the policy, including reporting procedures.

Recruitment

- All recruitment interviews for staff, volunteers, experts, researchers and consultants should include a discussion on child safeguarding and protection, the candidate's understanding of this and ANCE's commitment.
- Adherence to ANCE's Child Protection Policy shall be part of ANCE's employment contracts and service agreements.
- Signing a personal declaration stating any criminal convictions, including spent convictions. For those working directly with children: Satisfactory clearance through a police check (certificate of criminal record) conducted by the responsible authorities. The certificate needs to provide clearance for having no convictions for working with children.

Procedures

All of ANCE's staff, volunteers, experts, consultants should be alert to signs that may suggest a child is in need of help. Everyone who works with and engages with ANCE has a responsibility to ensure that children are protected.

All witnessed, suspected or alleged violations of ANCE's Child Protection Policy will be immediately reported to the Child Protection Supervisor – using the reporting form (Annex 2).

At meetings and activities where children are directly involved, children will be informed about ANCE's policy, code of conduct, and complaints mechanism in a child-friendly manner.

If a child wants to talk about a concern, all staff members have to give their full attention and make the child feel comfortable and safe to talk. Staff members have to listen and not interrupt the child, and take care so as not to influence the story of the child.

If a child discloses abuse or there is reason to believe that the child has been or is at risk of abuse the following steps must be taken:

1. Details of the statement or suspicion must be recorded as soon as possible after the conversation takes place (Annex 2).
2. The Child Protection Supervisor will decide the appropriate action to take including whether a referral to the authorities is justified (Public Prosecutor for Minors, competent police departments and competent social services).
3. The records must be stored securely with access limited to the Child Protection Supervisor; a report must be made to the Board of Directors.

If allegations or suspicion of abuse of a child is made against a member of staff the following procedure shall be followed:

1. All allegations or suspicion must be reported to the Child Protection Supervisor.
2. The protection of the child is the priority and the Child Protection Supervisor in consultation with the Board of Directors will decide if a referral to the relevant authority is appropriate.
3. The staff member (employee, volunteer, intern, consultant etc.) suspected of abuse shall be suspended pending the outcome of an investigation.
4. The Child Protection Supervisor will investigate discreetly, report and make recommendations to the Board of Directors.
5. ANCE reserves the right to take any disciplinary action against any of the above who have been proven guilty in an investigation, which may include reporting the incident to the police.

Action to be taken shall be determined by the urgency and seriousness of the situation. Where there are serious concerns for the child's safety, immediate action is required. In most cases, this will mean contacting the competent authorities (Public Prosecutor for Minors, competent police departments and competent social services).

If the Child Protection Supervisor is not available, the matter shall be discussed with the staff member's supervisor, as delaying the process may place the child at further risk.

If an activity takes place in a school or children's centre then the Child Protection Supervisor shall discuss the matter with a representative of the institution, so they can take the matter up to their relevant member of staff.

Accountability

The organization has the responsibility to follow and implement this policy as appropriate. The organization is also committed to **review this policy annually** or as a result of any significant changes/events in order ensure good practice.

ANCE will also will regularly monitor the implementation of its Child Protection Policy and procedures. Progress, performance and lessons learned shall be reported by the Child Protection Supervisor to the Board of Directors annually. Monitoring and evaluation will be done by checking whether the standards from the Child Protection Policy are implemented and whether safeguards are working. This will be done by carrying out a survey among ANCE staff, interns and volunteers on how the standards from the Child Protection Policy are being met, how effective they are and what needs improving.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

Statement of Commitment to ANCE'S Child Protection Policy

I,, have read and understood the standards and guidelines outlined in the Child Protection Policy. I agree with the principles contained therein and accept the importance of implementing and promoting the child protection policy, procedures and practices contained within this document while working or associated with ANCE. I understand that any failure to respect this policy may result in the termination of my engagement with ANCE, or further disciplinary or other proceedings as mentioned in the Policy.

Furthermore, I declare that I have no criminal records regarding an offence towards a child (which I have not previously declared) and nor do I know of any reason why anyone would deem me unsuitable to work with children.

(Name)

(Job title/role)

(Date)

ANNEX 2

Reporting Form

If you have knowledge that a child might be at risk of harm, please complete this form to the best of your knowledge. Please note that child protection concerns must be reported (orally or in writing) directly to the Child Protection Supervisor (preferably within the same working day) – depending on the urgency, you may wish to complete this form before contacting the Child Protection Supervisor or you may wish to complete the report afterwards.

Also use this form to report an accident or incident. An accident is an unplanned event that results in an injury or could have resulted in an injury or results in damage to equipment or property or harm to the environment. An incident is an unpleasant or unusual event. The report should be written and signed only by you to guarantee confidentiality. It should be sent only to the Child Protection Supervisor, who will hold it in a safe and secure place and treat it with the strictest confidentiality.

1. About you

Name:

Job title:

Nature of contact with the child:

Contact details:

Tel:

E-mail:

2. About the child

Child's name:

Child's gender/gender identity:

Child's age:

Child's address:

Child's parents/guardians:

Has any treatment been given to the child? If yes, what kind of treatment?

Did you refer the case somewhere? If yes, where?

3. About your concern; Details of incident

Was the incident: Observed by you / Suspected or Disclosed by someone else

If the concern was shared by someone else, please state who and their relationship to the child:

What happened? Give cause (how and why) if known (if you include personal observations please make a distinction between what is a fact and what is opinion or hearsay (e.g. child's emotional state, visible injuries, etc.)):

Did the child or another source say anything to you [if relevant] and how did you respond:

Date of the alleged incident:

Time of the alleged incident:

Location of the alleged incident:

Name of the alleged perpetrator (if applicable):

Were there any other children/people involved in the alleged incident?

Are any other children at risk of harm?

Action taken by you:

Signature:

Date:

For completion by the Child Protection Supervisor

Incident/Accident investigated: Yes No

Written investigation report necessary: Yes No

If interviews with third parties were carried out, please attach witnesses details, statements, etc.

CONSENT FORMS

PERSONAL CONSENT

Name and age:

Address:

Phone number:

Email address:

Are you happy to take part in?

YES NO

Do you have any allergies we should know about?

YES NO

Please give details:

Do you have any additional support needs you'd like us to know about (physical or learning disability, mental health issues, low confidence, difficulties with communication, things you find it hard to talk about)?

YES NO

Please give details:

Is there anything extra we can do to make sure that you can come along and participate fully?

YES NO

Please give details:

Are you taking any medication we should know about?

YES NO

Please give details:

Do you have any dietary requirements?

YES NO

Please give details:

CONTACT PERSONS IN CASE OF EMERGENCY:

Person 1:

Name:

Relationship to you:

Phone number:

Mobile:

Person 2:

Name:

Relationship to you:

Phone number:

Mobile:

MY CONSENT:

Signature:

Location (where you live):

Today's Date:

PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN CONSENT (IF UNDER 18)

My child/young person under 18 (please tick as appropriate):

- is allowed to participate in.....
- is allowed to take part in media activities at
- has been informed about the event/activity goals, the voluntary nature of participation and anonymity in an age appropriate way
- has been informed that they can refuse to participate at any time with no consequences
- is allowed to receive appropriate medical attention from a registered practitioner if at any time my child requires urgent medical attention,

Full name:

Relationship to child/young person:

Signature:

Location:

Date:

ANNEX 4

Helplines for children

1107 – National Child Protection Line

1056 – National SOS Helpline for Children - The Smile of the Child

115 25 – Together for the Child Helpline

116 111 – Child Helpline international (supported by The Smile of the Child)

800 11 32 000 – Children's Ombudsman