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Child Safeguarding

Children, their participation and wellbeing, as well as their exposure, should always be safeguarded and protected in public or private events and any occasion where they are involved.

This document, grounded on experience developed in the past by the Council of Europe, aims at outlining the core child safeguarding elements to be considered in all events and initiatives involving children.

Generally based on the core principles and provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, this protocol builds on international and Council of Europe standards and instruments, including keeping children safe.

PRELIMINARY NOTES ON CHILD SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING DURING EVENTS INVOLVING CHILDREN

The right of the child to be heard in all matters that concern them is one of the basic principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and an essential condition for children to fully exercise their rights and develop their evolving capacities and potentials.

When children participate in events, child safeguarding concerns may arise. These concerns may depend on the context, the modality of children's participation, and on the other participants involved in the event. In order to ensure informed, safe and appropriate participation in the best interests of the child, it is key to consider all the elements that may present risks to children during the whole process and to ensure measures for prevention, protection and empowerment are consistently considered and applied.

Events which include children as participants ought to be carefully designed following a child-centered approach, as well as protocols for child safeguarding and seeking the informed consent of the participating children and their parents or guardians. A child-centered approach – based on the rights of the child – requires on the one hand, the recognition of the inherent resources, evolving capacities, aspirations and specific needs of each child and the impact the surrounding context can have in each one of these dimensions, on the other.

Language and communication should always be child-friendly and inclusive and participants should be aware of the necessity to adapt their language to children and their specific needs. Children should be given adequate time to prepare, in accordance with the objectives, nature and extent of their participation, which should be defined previously. The agenda should be organised taking into consideration the wellbeing and needs of children and include, where appropriate, frequent pauses. Facilitators and moderators have a key role in ensuring that children are feeling at ease during their participation and make sure each child has adequate time to express their views, opinions or ideas, avoiding time and/or performance pressure.

Potential risks should be assessed and – to the possible extent – addressed previously. All participants should be made aware previously of the participation of children and, if possible, should read and agree with the child safeguarding protocol when registering for the event.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING PROTOCOL

CP4EUROPE MID-TERM CONFERENCE

This document outlines the Child Safeguarding Protocol applying for the full duration of the following event, including any preparatory or follow-up meetings:

Name of the event: CP4Europe mid-term Conference

Place of the event: On 23 May 2022 at University College Cork, Aula Maxima;
On 24 and 25 May at Metropole Hotel, MacCurtain Street, Victorian Quarter, Cork, Ireland.

Date(s) of the event: 23-25 May 2022

This Protocol was developed to guarantee the highest standards of personal behaviour and professional practice of all participants, to minimise any risks for the children present at the event, to ensure a positive and meaningful experience for all participants and to prevent and respond appropriately to any child safeguarding suspicions, cases, or concerns that may emerge in relation to the event, i.e. before, during and after the child's participation in the event.

Safeguarding children requires everyone to be committed to the highest possible standards of respect, integrity and accountability. The Council of Europe and, where applicable, the partner organisations, institutions and/or hosts of the event, are committed to encouraging and maintaining a culture of mutual respect, and an attitude where people feel able to raise any safeguarding concern being confident that it will be taken seriously and followed-up in an appropriate way and, where applicable, reported in accordance with national law.

SCOPE

This document applies to all staff, consultants, volunteers, participants and other persons involved in the organisation of or attending the event indicated above, including any preparatory or follow-up meetings.

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone involved in the event, in whatever capacity, should acknowledge their responsibility to respect and safeguard the rights and wellbeing of participating children, as well as their responsibility to take or support appropriate steps to implement these principles and procedures.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Council of Europe and everyone involved in and attending the event are bound by national law, Council of Europe and international standards, and the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The "best interests of the child" as one of the fundamental principles of the CRC, should be a primary consideration at all times. To promote a positive and non-discriminatory participation of children, the following principles should be taken into due consideration:



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Dignity: The child's dignity must be preserved at all times. Expressions or representations that discriminate against, victimise, intimidate, ridicule or degrade a child or children or groups of persons must never be used. Where images of a child or children are used, they should represent the child in a dignified, respectful and empowering manner.

Right to private and family life: Children have a right to respect for private and family life. Any information or image that could be used to identify a child or put the child at risk must not be used or shared. In any reporting and communication about the event, personal data, information and images of the participating children can only be gathered, used and shared with the informed consent of the child and the child's parent or guardian, in accordance with national law, Council of Europe standards and other applicable regulations.

Child-friendly information: Children have a right to seek, receive and impart information in a language they understand. Child-friendly information is adapted to the child's age, maturity, language, gender and culture.

Right to say no: Ensure the child understands his or her right to interrupt, withdraw or stop their participation at any time without the need to provide a justification.

VISITORS, INCLUDING MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES

All visitors - including media representatives - should be made aware of and understand the principles of this child safeguarding document prior to their participation in the event or any related activity and agree to abiding with it upon registration.

Media representatives and other visitors to the event should be accompanied by the Child Safeguarding Officer or an appropriate delegate when having contact with a participating child and should not be left unattended in the presence of the children.

All requests for interviews with children or media reporting on children participating in the event have to be submitted to the organisers of the event and the Child Safeguarding Officer. Authorisation for interviews with children must only be granted where in compliance with the rights and the best interests of the child and with the prior informed consent of the child and the child's parent or guardian. Any authorisation of an interview with a child has to ascertain that the right of the child to the protection of personal data and respect for private and family life are upheld in accordance with national law, Council of Europe standards and other applicable regulations.

COMMUNICATION AND REPORTING ON CHILD PARTICIPATION IN EVENTS

Any communication and reporting about the involvement of children in the event, including the portrayal of children in this context, should be based on facts and should present empathic and respectful language.¹

Reporting and imaging children participating in an event must not be manipulated or sensationalised in any way. Communications should avoid making generalisations, which do not accurately reflect the nature of the situation and pictures should not be taken and used out of context.

¹ See UNICEF, Ethical reporting guidelines: Key principles for responsible reporting on children and young people <<https://www.unicef.org/media/reporting-guidelines>>.



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IDENTIFYING VIOLENCE AND ABUSE AND ANY RISKS

“Violence” is understood to mean “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse”.²

Violence, abuse, harm and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another. There are several forms of violence against children, such as: neglect or negligent treatment, mental violence, physical violence, corporal punishment, sexual abuse and exploitation, violence among children, self-harm, harmful practices, violence in the mass media, violence through information and communications technologies.³

CHILD SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

The Child Safeguarding Officer designated for the event is responsible for ensuring that all the necessary steps are being taken to protect the people that they work with and support, providing an essential point of contact between child protection authorities and the organisations that their regulations apply to. The Child Safeguarding Officer provides support and assistance in implementing this child safeguarding and wellbeing policy whenever necessary. Moreover, s/he receives any reports on child safeguarding and wellbeing and takes the necessary measures and procedures. It is advisable to appoint a “next appropriate person”. This person is responsible to receive any safeguarding concerns in the absence of the child safeguarding officer.

REPORTING CHILD SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

If someone has any grounds for concern even if it is a suspicion, it is his/her responsibility to bring this fact to the attention of the designated Child Safeguarding Officer immediately, or as soon as possible, without putting the child at any further danger. If a child discloses or reports an experience of violence inform them that you will need to tell someone who can provide support.

RESPONDING TO CHILD SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

All reporting, investigation and management of safeguarding incidents and concerns must comply with national law. Reports or referrals to a competent authority or service for child protection, such as local child protection or social services or law enforcement agencies, should be made in accordance with national law and other applicable regulations.

The Council of Europe acts in a transparent and ethical manner regarding any raised concerns ensuring support both to the person raising the concern and the one/s subject of concern.

Concerns about suspected, potential or witnessed incidents of violence and/or abuse, either physical, sexual, emotional, bullying or neglect, can be identified by everyone present – staff, volunteers, visitors, participants or children. These should be brought to the attention of the Child Safeguarding Officer immediately, without putting the child at any further danger and avoiding the risk of reiteration.

² UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19(1).

³ For definitions please consult: UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), General comment No. 13 (2011): The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence, 18 April 2011, CRC/C/GC/13.



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If a child safeguarding concern is brought to the attention of the Child Safeguarding Officer (or the next appropriate person), s/he is responsible for taking appropriate action. This may require to promptly activate the referral system, in order for the matter to be investigated by the competent authorities and for the child or children concerned to receive all the support s/he needs. In other cases, for example cases where there is no violence, the Child Safeguarding Officer may act as a mediator.

CONSEQUENCES OF MISCONDUCT

If it comes to light that anyone involved in the Conference commits acts in relation to children, which are criminal, grossly infringe children's rights, or contravene the principles and standards contained in this document, the organisation will take immediate disciplinary action and/or any other action which may be appropriate to the circumstances, including involving authorities such as the police to ensure the protection of children and criminal prosecution where this is appropriate.

ONLINE EVENTS

Online events can represent several opportunities to enhance children's participation and inclusion. Nevertheless, during such events, there are also several risks that can be harder to identify. The Council of Europe "Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment" enshrine both fundamental principles and operational measures to respect, protect and fulfill the rights of the child in the digital environment.⁴

The agenda should be organised taking into consideration the wellbeing of children and/or young people, including frequent pauses with appropriate meals and refreshments as well as opportunities to play and relax. During moments of exchange, children and young People should be put at ease and the facilitator/moderator should make sure children are given adequate time to share their ideas, avoiding time or performance pressure.

Potential risks should be assessed and - to the possible extent - mitigated against prior to the event or activity commencing. All participants should be made aware previously of the participation of children and will be required to have read and agreed with the child safeguarding protocol and code of conduct prior or during their registration at the event.

All users should take responsibility for their own use of technologies, making sure that they use technology responsibly, safely and legally. During online events, all participants have a responsibility to support fellow participants, especially children. All participants have a responsibility to protect their own private personal information including passwords and any attempts to access, corrupt or destroy another person's information is unacceptable.⁵

⁴ Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)7 of the Committee of Ministers, Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment, 2018.

⁵ Keeping Children Safe, Keeping children safe online - A guide for organisations.

RELEVANT CONTACT INFORMATION

In every event involving children a list with relevant referral system contact information should be made available to all participants.

Child Safeguarding Officer (for in person participants)

Name: Anna Bracco

Mobile: (+33) 664404898 - active from Sunday 22 May to Wednesday 25 May.

E-mail: anna.bracco@coe.int

Child Safeguarding Officer (for online participants)

Name: Laura Wright

E-mail: laurahv.wright@gmail.com

Child Safeguarding focal points:

Katie Reid

E-mail: krreid19@gmail.com

Contact Person

Name: Stephanie Burel

Mobile: (+33)6 88 82 15 46

E-mail: stephanie.burel@coe.int

First aider

Name: Talia Kaufman

E-mail: kaufman.talia@gmail.com

Police Station

Address: Anglesea St, Ballintemple, Cork, Ireland

Tel: +353 21 452 2000

Hospital/Health Facilities

1) Name: Cork University Hospital

Address: Bishopstown Road Cork, Cork County, Cork.



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Tel: 021 454 6400

Web: www.cuh.hse.ie

2) Name: Mercy University Hospital

Address: Grenville Place, Cork, T12 WE28, Ireland

Tel: [00353 \(21\) 427 1971](tel:00353(21)4271971)

Emergency numbers:

There are two emergency numbers in Ireland — **112 and 999**. Both are free of charge to call. Call the emergency services by dialing 112 or 999 from a mobile or fixed phone line.

Out-of-hours family doctor service for urgent medical needs

Address: SouthDoc Southside, South Ring Business Park, Unit 17/18, Kinsale Rd, Ballyphehane, Cork, T12 N6KR

Tel: +353 818 355 999

Embassies:

A list of foreign embassies can be found [here](#).