

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Child Protection Policy ensures legal and professional guidelines for all employees, volunteers and others who come in the contact with children due to their association to Udruga za promicanje aktivnog građanstva – ECHO (further referred as Association ECHO) with the purpose of protecting children (any person under the age of 18) and youth from any form of physical or emotional violence, harm or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, always taking into consideration their best interest.

Association ECHO is a non-profit, non-governmental organization founded in 2016. with the aims of promoting of civil society and protection of human rights, especially of children and young people; migrants and women, raising awareness of target groups by promoting the values of the society of equal opportunities for all citizens, especially the promotion of gender equality, affirmation of rights and integration into society of persons with disabilities and to combat all forms of violence, especially gender-based violence and all forms of social exclusion, discrimination and stereotypes; provision of media services and electronic publications; production of audio-visual and radio program; raising awareness of young people and promoting quality of life through sports, commitment to ecology and sustainable development and the fight against all forms of addiction; encouraging the development and strengthening of local and regional communities; increasing public awareness of the role of civil society organizations in society; promoting the idea of active involvement of citizens in community life and to support civil initiatives; promoting cross-sectoral cooperation in society; Non-formal education and employment of young people and marginalized groups, promoting of health for marginal / vulnerable groups; promoting the rights of persons with disabilities and other marginalized / vulnerable groups; establishing a platform of civil society organizations; networking with existing civil society organizations at local, regional, national and international level, to work on common goals; organizing and implementing of education, trainings, workshops and lectures that will be implemented by members of the association and the transferring knowledge acquired through years of work and experience in the areas of the association; promoting social inclusion of all marginalized / vulnerable groups; implementing of EU cohesion policy; protecting and promoting of EU values; encouraging, coordinating and organizing various events and cultural events with the aim of preserving cultural heritage and the development of civil society; creating and producing of media campaign; socialization and personal development of children and young people through cultural (audio / visual) activities and workshops; Work with children and young people with various disabilities and behavioural disorders; Organizing ecological and recreational camps and trips to the nature in which will be the environmental, recreational, creative and other group activities to implement prevention programs with young people.

The applicable national and international laws protecting the rights and welfare of children and youth are as follows:

- Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;
- European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights;
- Directive 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography;
- Directive 2012/29 / EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards for the rights, support and protection of victims of crime
- Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, as well as a number of laws dealing with the rights and welfare of children (Act on the Protection against Domestic Violence, Family Law, Criminal Code, Criminal Procedure Act, Juvenile Courts Act, Psychological Activity Act, Personal Data Protection Act)
- Law on Associations and the Statute of the Association ECHO;
- Rules of Procedure in cases of sexual violence
- Protocol of the Government of the Republic of Croatia on the Procedure in case of Abuse and Neglect of Children,
- Rules of Procedure in Cases of Domestic Violence,
- Rules on the Procedure of Peer Violence among Children and Youths
- Protocol on the Treatment of Unaccompanied children - Foreign Nationals

Purpose of the Child Protection Policy

The purpose of Association ECHO Child Protection Policy is to ensure guidelines for all employees, volunteers and others who come in the contact with children due to their association to Association ECHO, in order to ensure that children are protected at all times from any form of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or other exploitation, including prescribing guidelines on reporting suspected child abuse.

In actions concerning children and youth Association ECHO will always adhere to the fundamental international standards guaranteed by the Convention of the Right of Children whereby the best interests of the child will be of paramount consideration, especially when proposing and implementing projects.

The values and principles protected by Child Protection Policy are as follows:

- Ensuring that all activities involving children and youth are guided by their best interest;
- Ensuring that children and youth are treated with respect and dignity without discrimination on any grounds such as gender, race, colour or ethnic origin, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, socioeconomic status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other grounds;

- Ensuring that employees, volunteers and others who come in the contact with children are accountable for the safety, health and well-being of children and youth;
- Ensuring respect of children and youth privacy and the confidentiality of all information;
- Ensuring that all actions and activities concerning children and youth are respected with the principles of the Convention of the Rights of Children, including other international and national standards which promote respect for the rights of children;
- Ensuring the right of children and youth to be heard and to have their views taken into account;
- Ensuring that employees, volunteers and others who come in the contact with children report any form of child abuse;
- Ensuring that partner organizations, as well as other persons with whom the Association ECHO works and cooperates, respect and meet the minimum standards for the protection of children and young people in their programs or work.

Code of conduct:

Association ECHO prescribes the obligations and responsibilities of its employees, volunteers and others who come in contact with children due to their association to Association ECHO.

Employees, volunteers and others who come in contact with children due to their association to Association ECHO, must always:

- Report and record any form of child abuse or concerns relating to the safety of child or youth;
- Plan and organise the work and the workplace so as to eliminate risks to children and youth and to always be aware of situation that may present a risk for children and youth;
- Be involved and transparent whilst working with children;
- Ensure that personal data of children and their families are confidential and fully respected, which includes respecting the signed Statement of confidentiality;
- Respect Child Protection Policy and be aware of procedures for reporting and their responsibilities in reporting;
- Encourage and empower children and youth to feedback on their experiences, to share their opinions and concerns, including raising awareness about their rights and acceptable and unacceptable behaviour;
- Disciplining children's behaviour by using non-violent methods that do not degrade or humiliate.

Employees, volunteers and external associates shall never:

- In any form abuse (physically, emotionally, sexually) a child and young persons, that is exploit and neglect the needs of children and youth, more precisely:
 - A. To hit or otherwise physically injure children and young persons, including the potential risk of physical injury, the consequences of which may or may not be apparent;
 - B. Humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise apply any form of emotional abuse;
 - C. Conduct a sexual intercourse or equalized sexual deed with a child, or induce a child to perform sexual intercourse or equalized sexual deed with a third party or over him/herself, including other forms of sexual exploitation of children and youth, such as a number of acts related to child prostitution and child pornography, child participation in pornographic performances, luring and recruiting children for sexual purposes and helping or inciting any of these acts;
 - D. Physically behave in an inappropriate or sexually provocative manner;
 - E. Develop relationships with children and youth that could in any way be offensive or considered as exploitation;
 - F. Have unnecessary physical contact with children and treat children too personally;
 - G. Develop such a relationship with children that could in any way be considered exploitative or abusive;
- Use language expressions, make suggestions, or offer advice to children which are inappropriate, offensive or in any way degrading;
- Not to report or participate in the unlawful, dangerous or abusive behaviour of children;
- To discriminate, treat differently or favour certain children, excluding other;
- Participate in the behaviour of children and youth which are considered illegal, unsafe or considered as abuse.

In order to ensure that the above mentioned rules of conduct are met, the Association ECHO undertakes the following obligations:

- Ensure that their employees and all other persons (volunteers, external associates, etc.) who come into contact with children are familiar with the contents of the Rules of Procedure for the Protection of Children and, before commencing their work, familiarize them with regulations relevant to the work of the Association ECHO and acts thereof, including any other legal provisions governing the rights and protection of children;
- Employees, volunteers and external associates working with children and youth shall sign a Data Privacy Statement;
- The procedure for hiring and engaging in volunteer activities also includes checking the suitability for work with children and youth, part of which will be the checking of information from criminal records at the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Croatia;

- Prior to the start of their work, employees, volunteers and external associates will receive instructions and information on where, how and to whom they can report the possibility of abuse and exploitation of children and youth with the aim of establishing an efficient and operational procedure that will ensure a quick and coordinated process of protecting the child from further abuse and neglecting of children and young persons;
- To enable employees and all other persons working with children and youth to attend professional seminars / roundtables / conferences and trainings for the purpose of professional development and acquiring new skills and knowledge related to child protection.

Association ECHO will take all necessary measures to protect the rights of the children and youth from all forms of physical or emotional violence, harm or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse by superiors, business associates and persons with whom children and young people regularly come in contact.

Employees of the Association ECHO, as well as all other persons who come into contact with children and youth on the basis of a contractual obligation, are obliged to report any form of abuse, neglect and exploitation of the child to a person authorized by the employer to receive applications in accordance with the internal acts of the Association ECHO, in order to sanction any unlawful conduct and, if necessary, to legally request protection of the rights of the child in accordance with the provisions of criminal law.

Association ECHO is not law enforcement agency and does not have the expertise to investigate or deal with allegations of child abuse.

The responsibility of Association ECHO is to take action to ensure the safety of the child by passing relevant information to the appropriate authorities.

Application process:

- In writing to the e-mail address: info@echo-udruga.hr (with the subject: Rules of procedure for the protection of children - violation) or to the address: Association ECHO, Fallerovo šetalište 22, 10000 Zagreb, by describing in detail the facts on which the complaint is based, according to whom the violation of the child's rights was committed and against whom, with the date of filing and the name and surname of the person filing the application.

The application can also be submitted anonymously.

- Orally to the telephone number +385 1 5101 120. An official note will be made on the oral application.
- The person authorized to receive the application is obliged to immediately, and within three working days the latest, examine the allegations from the application and take all necessary measures to prevent further violations of the child's rights.

Employees of the Association ECHO, as well as all other persons who, on the basis of a contractual obligation, work with children and youth, may contact the competent authorities directly in case of suspected violation of a child's rights:

- The Police - by calling 192 or submitting a written application;
- To the competent State Attorney's Office directly, by telephone or in writing by e-mail or to the address of the seat of the competent State Attorney's Office.
- Given that child abuse represents a serious violation of children's rights and often has long-term consequences on the child's future emotional and physical development, urgent action should be taken to provide counselling and support to children and youth without delay. Therefore, the employees of the Association ECHO, as well as all other persons who work with children and youth on a basis of a contractual obligation, are obliged to provide children and youth with information on where to seek help and advice related to abuse, harassment and peer violence.

The Association ECHO monitors, assesses and reviews its security measures so that the implementation of child and youth protection policies and procedures is monitored on a regular basis. Learning from practical cases / experiences influences policy control and changes in child and youth safety measures.

The Association ECHO shall carry out an internal audit once a year using an audit tool to check progress in achieving child and youth safety.

In Zagreb, 6.1.2020.

Vicepresident of Association ECHO,

Melanija Mežnarić

UDRUGA ECHO
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