

Child protection policy

(Institute of Research and Training on European Affairs – I.R.T.E.A)

Introduction

This child protection policy has been developed by the Institute of Research and Training on European Affairs (hereby I.R.T.E.A) regarding CERV funding programmes, which include the participation of underage individuals. IRTEA will respect, protect, and promote the Rights of Children as they are stated by the European Union documents.

In General

We believe that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind,
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe, and to practice in a way that protects them

We recognize that:

- the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers, and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them

- appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people, a deputy, and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding
- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures, and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training, and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures, and behaviour codes confidently and competently
- recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- recording, storing, and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance (including GDPR guidelines)
- sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions
- making sure that children, young people, and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- using our child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families, and carers appropriately
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff, and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance

- building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people, and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

The policy is centered around five goals or areas for action that should underpin all the partner's work to prevent any risk of harm to children during the Project's implementation and to appropriately respond. While the child protection policy aims to be comprehensive, given the diverse range of settings and levels at which our Project will be implemented, it is likely that there may be circumstances that are not covered or where there is question about the application of the policy. In such situations, the spirit of the policy should guide any actions, with the basis of these being the children's best interests.

The five goals

GOAL 1: Laying the foundations for protection and safeguarding

GOAL 2: Ensuring organizational preparedness and prevention

GOAL 3: Raising awareness

GOAL 4: Working with others and reporting concerns

GOAL 5: Measuring success in safeguarding

GOAL 1: Laying the foundations for safeguarding

1.1 Accountability

1.1.1 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

1.1.2 Everyone who works for or on behalf of IRTEA and the consortium of this Project at whatever level and in whatever capacity, should acknowledge their duty to safeguard and promote children's welfare and interests, as well as their responsibility to take appropriate steps to implement this policy.

1.2 Definition of safeguarding

1.2.1 For the purposes of the child safeguarding policy, safeguarding is defined as the responsibility that organizations have to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children, that is that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the

organization has about children's safety within the communities in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities. (Keeping children safe)
[European Commission website]

1.2.2 Child safeguarding includes both preventive actions to minimize the chances of harm occurring and responsive actions aimed at ensuring that, if concerns arise, they are handled appropriately. This reflects the need to promote children's interests and comply with both international standards and domestic legislation, particularly about concerns relating to potentially criminal acts.

1.2.3 For the purposes of this safeguarding policy, and in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years.

1.3 What is meant by harm and abuse?

1.3.1 Everyone who works for and on behalf of the proposed Project's consortium at whatever level and in whatever capacity, should be aware that 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.

1.3.2 Harm can occur in many ways and generally means that the safety and well-being of a child is being compromised. This may be because someone is deliberately choosing to misuse their authority or trust and abuse a child, or it may be because of poor practices, potentially caused by a lack of awareness and training, such as an inability to properly supervise children or a failure to act.

1.3.3 Abuse is the mistreatment of a child that causes, or is likely to cause, harm to the child. A person can abuse a child by inflicting harm themselves or by failing to prevent harm from being inflicted by someone else. Children may be abused by people who are known to them, either in a family environment or in an institutional or community setting. Alternatively – but more rarely – they may be abused by strangers, e.g., over the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

1.3.4 Abuse can take various forms and includes all kinds of physical, emotional/ psychological, and sexual abuse, neglect and negligent treatment, violence, and exploitation, whether it is inflicted in person or online.

1.3.5 Although safeguarding issues are typically thought of as involving an adult mistreating a child, children can also be the perpetrators. This normally occurs when one child is in a position of power or influence (e.g., because they are older or have authority, such as because they are the team captain) and is often referred to as bullying.

1.3.6 In cases of bullying, it is necessary both to support the child being bullied and to think how best to deal with the child doing the bullying, to ensure that neither child is harmed, and the welfare and interests of both children are promoted.

1.4 Links with national and European legislation or policies

1.4.1 This policy sets out minimum requirements. All action taken as part of this safeguarding policy must follow relevant legislation where there may be local statutory requirements that must be fulfilled.

1.5 Key principles underpinning this child safeguarding policy

1.5.1 This Project aims to be of educational value to children and further enhance their knowledge and skills to actively engage and participate in our modern society. The Project should be a safe, positive, and enjoyable experience for all children.

1.5.2 All children have an equal right to protection (safeguarding) and promotion of their well-being and participation, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or social background, religion, and level of ability or disability.

1.5.3 All child safeguarding actions must be taken in the best interests of children.

1.5.4 Everybody has a responsibility for safeguarding. Children can also play a role in helping to safeguard themselves and other children, although ultimate responsibility for safeguarding remains with adults.

1.5.5 Safeguarding measures should be inclusive and non-discriminatory, recognizing that some children (such as those with a disability) may be at increased risk of abuse.

1.5.6 Transparency and openness is essential when it comes to child safeguarding. Abuse and harm can flourish when staff, volunteers, partners, children, families, and community members do not feel able to raise their concerns.

1.5.7 All concerns regarding the safety and protection of a child should be taken seriously. Where necessary, appropriate steps must be taken to safeguard the child, potentially including referral to law enforcement and child protection agencies.

1.5.8 No single organization can safeguard children by working in isolation, so it is necessary to work with other organizations, government agencies (e.g., departments and ministries with a mandate to protect children) and other groups as appropriate.

1.5.9 Confidentiality should be maintained, and the personal details of those involved (including the name of the person raising concerns, the child in question and the alleged perpetrator) should not be disclosed, unless it is necessary to pass on information to ensure that a child is protected, such as when a criminal offence may have been committed.

1.4.10 All safeguarding actions should take place within the framework of relevant national and international laws and policies.

GOAL 2: Ensuring organizational preparedness and prevention

2.1 Adoption of a safeguarding policy

2.1.1 IRTEA has decided to adopt this child safeguarding policy together with tools and guidelines. A template protection policy is made available to its partners on this Project and the latter are encouraged to apply it as well

2.1.2 IRTEA will help its partners to this Project tailor the template protection policy to the needs of their organization, and these clubs commit to implementing its provisions and certain minimum requirements

2.1.3 This child safeguarding policy will be available in English. A copy will be provided to everyone working for this Project.

2.2 Identification of safeguarding focal points

2.2.1 IRTEA will identify a safeguarding focal point at administrative level to ensure that this safeguarding policy is implemented and followed within IRTEA. This person will also liaise with safeguarding focal points at partner organizations

2.2.2 All affiliated amateur and professional clubs will be encouraged to identify at least one person to act as a safeguarding focal point.

2.2.3 The role of the safeguarding focal point is to act as a point of contact, and to advise, support and assist the organization in the implementation of the safeguarding policy and associated procedures, including in response to specific cases and concerns.

2.3 Safer recruitment

2.3.1 Safer recruitment procedures will be introduced to help ensure that applicants who could pose a risk to children are identified and prevented from working with them.

2.3.2 Safer recruitment procedures may include pre-selection, selection, and post-selection actions to ensure that there are as many safeguards as possible in place.

2.3.3 To prevent unsuitable people from working with children, no one should start working with children until all safer recruitment processes, all background checks and all inductions and training sessions on the safeguarding policy have been completed.

2.4 Codes of conduct

2.4.1 Clear codes of conduct apply to people working for and on behalf of IRTEA. These set out clear expectations in relation to child safeguarding and detail expected and prohibited behaviour.

2.4.2 All involvement with IRTEA and activities organized by IRTEA will be dependent on the individual in question signing and agreeing to the provisions of those codes of conduct, which will be linked to all employment contracts.

2.4.3 All breaches of codes of conduct will be responded to without delay, with information kept strictly confidential and, on a need-to-know basis, in accordance with due process in relation to employment and legal requirements.

2.4.4 If a breach of code of conduct is suspected or reported, investigation by an independent, neutral person with the necessary expertise in safeguarding may be requested through the IRTEA child safeguarding team, which will follow up in accordance with the formal procedure in place.

2.4.5 As part of any such response, IRTEA will take the necessary measures against the offender for harming children's rights or non-compliance with the IRTEA regulations.

2.4.6 Consideration must be given to assessing the risk for the children and whether the offender or offenders concerned should be suspended from the organization pending the outcome of the relevant investigation.

2.4.7 Codes of conduct will include specific disciplinary measures for non-compliance. These could range from a warning or a suspension, potentially combined with additional training and awareness-raising measures, through to dismissal.

2.4.8 Codes of conduct apply without prejudice to any criminal sanction that may be imposed.

2.5 Supervision and lone working

2.5.1 In general, lone working should be avoided. At least two adults should always be present when working with children. It is acknowledged that this is

not always possible, but adults should always work in an open manner where they can be observed by others, preferably working with groups of children, rather than individual children on a one-to-one basis.

2.5.2 Enough adults must always be present to ensure proper supervision of children, bearing in mind the context and the ages and capacities of the relevant children. Issues regarding supervision and lone working should always be considered as part of any risk assessment.

2.5.3 If medical or other intimate care is provided, children should be entitled to have another child or adult of their choice present.

2.5.4 Children should not be given personal care (such as washing) if they are able to do it themselves.

2.5.5 Necessary actions will be taken to ensure that children's privacy is protected.

2.5.6 During overnight stays (e.g., in the context of transnational activities), children should not sleep alone in the same room as supervising adults, unless the child is related to the adult, or the adult has been tasked with acting as the child's guardian by the child's parents or carers.

2.5.7 Clear procedures should be established to deal with situations where a child becomes lost or goes missing or a parent or carer fails to collect a child.

2.5.8 If children can travel to and from activities alone, written permission for them to do so must be given by the parent or another person with the authority to give such permission (e.g., a legal guardian).

2.6 Visitors, including media representatives, at the Project's events and activities

2.6.1 IRTEA and everyone tasked by IRTEA with performing a role at the Project's activities should ensure any visitors for whom they are responsible (including media representatives) are made aware of and understand the principles of this child safeguarding policy and agree to its terms and conditions before the visit takes place.

2.6.2 Visitors (including media representatives) should always be accompanied and should only be left unattended with children in exceptional circumstances (e.g., if conducting research). In such cases, additional precautions must be taken to ensure that the visitor or observer does not pose a risk to children.

2.6.3 The safety and well-being of children must not be compromised in dealings with the media. Private information such as addresses must not be given to media representatives.

2.6.4 Permission for the media and others to use images and stories should also be sought from both the child and a person who is responsible for them, such as a parent.

2.7 Online protection and safety

2.7.1 A risk assessment will be undertaken on how the use of technology and media affects the safety of children and the steps that should be taken to eliminate or minimize those risks.

2.7.2 IRTEA will provide guidance on the appropriate use of technology (the internet, mobile phones, social media, etc.) in relation to child safeguarding and the implementation of its safeguarding policy.

2.7.3 Wherever a child can access the internet, filters and blocking software will be installed to ensure that unsuitable, including offensive, material cannot be accessed. Sites that promote the abuse of children or contain images and information that are harmful to children will be blocked on all devices provided by IRTEA.

2.8 IRTEA's partners

2.8.1 Considerable attention should be devoted to issues relating to child safeguarding. Specific references to child safeguarding measures should be included in partnership agreements and contracts, and there should be clarity regarding the actions that will be taken in the event of any child safeguarding concerns arising.

2.8.2 If concerns about child safeguarding arise in relation to a partner of IRTEA, consideration should be given not only to whether the concerns need

to be reported to the appropriate authorities, but also to whether to suspend the partnership. The procedures agreed to in the contract should be followed.

2.8.3 The raising of a child safeguarding concern in relation to a partner does not automatically mean that the partnership must be terminated. Any decision on whether to continue with a partnership must consider the reaction of the partner and their commitment to addressing the situation.

GOAL 3: Raising awareness

3.1 Awareness raising and training

3.1.1 Everyone working for and on behalf of IRTEA, including associated partners, as well as communities, families, children, and other stakeholders, should be made aware of the child protection policy and understand how to recognize child abuse and report concerns.

3.1.2 Special consideration will be given to how to increase children's awareness of the policy and the various ways that they can help to keep themselves safe. This may involve developing a child-friendly version of the policy and the training modules in cooperation with children.

3.1.3 IRTEA will provide regular updates on child safeguarding, either formally, e.g., in the form of training or supervision, or more informally, e.g., through discussions at team meetings.

3.2 Risk assessments

3.2.1 Risk assessments are an important element of any safeguarding process. They form the basis for preventive action by making sure that activities are safe, and any risks identified are eliminated or minimized, and they also determine the specific action that should be taken in the event of any safeguarding concerns.

3.2.2 When organizing activities (such as workshops or simulations), a risk assessment should be undertaken to identify any potential dangers, with a plan put in place to minimize those risks. The responsibility for ensuring a risk

assessment is undertaken rests with the person with ultimate responsibility for the activity.

3.2.3 Emergency contact details and medical information must be collected for children before they participate in physical activities, and that information must be available to everyone who has a duty of care for those children at those events.

3.2.4 Risk management measures are reviewed on a regular basis, both during and at the end of activities, so that lessons learned can feed into future activities and necessary adjustments can be made.

3.3 Creating a safe channel for raising concerns

3.3.1 A clear procedure for reporting concerns must be established and communicated to everyone working with the organization, including children, families, and communities.

3.3.2 IRTEA will allow for concerns to be raised (including anonymous reporting).

3.3.3 IRTEA guarantees the total confidentiality of the process and the documents to which it would gain access as part of the informal procedure.

3.3.4 All concerns raised will be taken seriously and responded to in accordance with this safeguarding policy and the procedures established under this policy. See also Goal 4 below.

GOAL 4: Working with others and reporting concerns

4.1 Creating an open working environment

4.1.1 If support or advice is sought regarding child safeguarding, this must be taken seriously. The seeking of advice or support should never be regarded as indicating that someone lacks ability or knowledge or is spreading rumours, etc.

4.1.2 If people working for or on behalf of IRTEA are involved in child protection incidents – either as the subject of an investigation or as a witness – appropriate support must be provided. This may involve additional supervision or counselling.

4.2 Reporting of incidents and follow-up measures

4.1.4 All reporting, investigation and management of safeguarding incidents must be in line with national law. When considering whether to refer a child to an outside agency for protection, the legal framework in the relevant country and the best interests and wishes of the child must always be considered.

4.1.5 Therefore, only people whose participation is necessary for investigating concerns or supporting the child, be it medically or psychologically, may be involved. A record of each intervention must be drawn up, signed by the people involved and sent to the IRTEA child protection team.

4.1.6 Referrals to local child protection and law enforcement agencies should be made in the manner prescribed by the agency; agencies may, for example, have a preferred format for reporting. If a referral is made verbally, it must also be confirmed in writing.

GOAL 5: Measuring success in protection

5.1.1 Ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the child protection policy lies with the IRTEA team.

5.1.5 This child safeguarding policy is a living document and will be reviewed if deemed necessary.

Final Provisions

This policy was adopted by the I.R.T.E.A. in the framework of submitting a Project proposal to receive funding by the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV) and specifically Citizens' engagement and participation (CERV-2022-CITIZENS-CIV). The IRTEA empowers the IRTEA administration to adopt any guidelines or other documents deemed necessary to implement this policy.



For questions regarding this policy, please contact our organization in the following ways:

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