

## CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PROTECTION POLICY

### 1. CIES ONLUS VISION, CORE VALUES AND MISSION

CIES Onlus works for the promotion of civil society participation in a dimension of global citizenship.

Our commitment is based on the right of all peoples of the world to pursue their social and economic development independently. We believe that current development is based on peace, respect for human rights and democracy, and we therefore oppose any form of racism, discrimination and xenophobia, promoting dialogue between diverse cultures and religions.

Regarding children's rights, we offer educational, recreational, cultural and socialisation services for children, adolescents and young people to enhance their skills and expressive and creative resources, supporting both their artistic vocation and their sense of entrepreneurship. We also carry out actions aimed at fostering the participation of minors in decision-making processes, encouraging the development of critical thinking skills, socialisation, involvement in school, participation in the community and family life.

The core values on which our actions are based are solidarity, cooperation, sustainable development, active Citizenship, interculturalism, responsibility and integrity.

Our mission is represented by local and international activities, carried out by the four departments of the organisation: 1. International Cooperation, 2. Intercultural Mediation, 3. Education and Training, 4. Events and Communication. We operate in several fields with the aim of raising awareness on the value of diversity and coexistence between different cultures and on issues related to global citizenship, to encourage and promote the processes of equity, economic and social inclusion and respect for human rights.

### 2. OUR ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Children, adolescents and young people, both Italian and from abroad, are the target of most of the projects and initiatives organised by CIES Onlus, in Italy (Intercultural Mediation, Education and Training) and abroad (International Cooperation). In particular, CIES Onlus implements projects and initiatives for children, adolescents and young people in the following areas of action:

- Social inclusion: social, educational, recreational and cultural services;
- Formal and non-formal education;
- Health Care and Education;
- Economic inclusion: vocational training, guidance and integration into the world of work.

In 2010, CIES Onlus opened the MaTeMù Youth Centre and Art School, where boys and girls from different cultures and countries can express their creativity, spend their free time in a different way, find support and advice. Within the Centre, young people - Italians, migrants and second generations - can engage in different types of artistic, educational and recreational activities: dance, music and theatre, handcrafts, spray art, art and film workshops, concerts, training, photography, graphics courses, school support, L2 (Italian language) courses and much more.

### 3. PURPOSE AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY

The main purpose of this Policy is to prevent any condition that may lead to the commission of criminal offences against children or to prejudice to them, by defining and disseminating the procedures to which CIES Onlus adheres in order to increase its capacity to manage and reduce the risks of mistreatment or abuse in the realisation of its activities. CIES Onlus is aware that it is not possible to eliminate risks entirely, but believes it is nevertheless its duty to do everything in its power to minimise them, by preventing, reporting and responding to such problems and promoting awareness in all those who, in whatever capacity, collaborate with the Organisation.

In doing so, the CIES Onlus Policy conforms to the principles and values underlying the main International Treaties concerning the rights of children and adolescents (1948 - Universal Declaration of Human Rights; 1989- UN Convention on the Rights of Children and Adolescents; 1996 - European Convention on the Exercise of the Rights of Minors; 2000 - Convention on the Fundamental Rights of the European Union) and the Constitutional Charter of the Italian Republic (in particular art. 3). The Policy also takes into account the duties set out in the European Good Practices for the treatment of children, as well as adopts the principle of full recognition of the subjectivity of the child as a subject of rights that underlies the existing national legislation.

CIES Onlus firmly believes that every child, girl and boy has the right to develop emotionally, intellectually and physically and that all children have the same rights to be protected against any form of violence, abuse or neglect. The protection therefore refers to all minors considered individually, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic background or religious belief. CIES Onlus also believes that the protection of minors is further enhanced by constant work aimed at valuing, listening to and welcoming their ideas and opinions. This is why it favours a preventive and participative approach in the protection of children and adolescents.

### 4. COMMITMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION CRITERIA

- CIES Onlus is committed to **promoting the protection and well-being of** children and adolescents with whom its collaborators and partners come into contact during the provision of educational and training activities and social welfare services they are addressed to. In particular, it undertakes to ensure their protection from any form of mistreatment, neglect, exploitation, discrimination and violence, as well as to recognise their needs arising from

special conditions of fragility. It also undertakes to remove any obstacles that children may encounter in communicating their desires, needs and requirements.

- CIES Onlus aims to be a safe Organisation for children and adolescents during **all phases of its work**:
  - analysis of needs
  - project designing
  - delivery/implementation of programmes, projects and individual activities
  - communication and awareness-raising activities
  - monitoring and assessment activities.

To this end, CIES Onlus undertakes **to train and inform** all those who collaborate, in any title, with the Organisation, with the aim of making them aware of the following aspects:

- existence of risks of abuse and exploitation of children and adolescents
- modes of prevention
- behaviour to be implemented and boundaries to be kept within when working in contact with minors

The ultimate aim is to ensure that the responsibility of collaborators and partners promotes and safeguards the well-being of children and adolescents at all times.

- CIES Onlus' staff members, its representatives and the Partner organisations' staff shall always demonstrate the **highest standards of behaviour** towards children and adolescents, as set out in this Policy. These standards apply to both the private and professional lives of staff and anyone else working in the organisation.
- Anyone working, in any capacity, with the Organisation is **responsible for reporting suspicions or evidence** of risk of child abuse to the designated person, according to the procedures to be adopted for their protection described in this document. CIES Onlus is committed to ensuring effective intervention in response to any report of abuse by supporting, preserving and protecting the child involved.
- **Recruitment and selection of staff**, other collaborators or volunteers must reflect CIES Onlus' commitment to the protection of children and adolescents, ensuring that communications, controls and procedures are in place to exclude anyone unsuitable to work with minors. Successful applicants are warned of the binding nature of this Policy, the related procedure of the Code of Conduct and the fact that these apply to both professional and private life.

To this end, CIES Onlus assesses in the recruitment phase:

- The working references
- motivation to work on child and adolescent issues
- an attitude of respect for the rights of children and adolescents
- the ability to understand material and emotional needs
- knowledge of international debates on sensitive issues
- some core values (loyalty, reliability, non-discrimination, honesty...)



## 5. WHO THE POLICY IS ADDRESSED TO

- to Board Members and volunteers;
- to staff employed under any contract
- to all those who come into direct contact with CIES Onlus projects and services (donors, journalists, testimonials...)
- to staff and partner organisations' representatives and any other individual, group or organisation that has relations of a formal/contractual nature with CIES Onlus and that involve direct contact with children or adolescents

## 6. DEFINITIONS

For the main definitions, CIES Onlus resorts to the terminology used by most International Agencies, the United Nations and other organisations concerned with the protection of children and adolescents.

**Child abuse and mistreatment** shall be understood as "all forms of physical and/or emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect or negligence or commercial or other exploitation that result in actual or potential harm to the health of the child, his/her survival, development or dignity within a relationship characterised by responsibility, trust or power" (WHO, 2002). **Abuse** is therefore everything that prevents the harmonious growth of children and adolescents, not respecting their needs and not protecting them physically and mentally. It therefore includes not only commissive behaviour, which includes physical, sexual or psychological ill-treatment but also omissive behaviour, i.e. the more or less pronounced inability of parents to provide adequate material and emotional care for their child.

## 7. PROCEDURES

In order to ensure children and adolescents' right to protection, CIES Onlus chooses to adopt a simple and transparent procedure for reporting any suspicions of abuse.

To this end, the Board of Directors (CD) appoints a Child Protection Officer (CPO) within the organisation, both at the head office in Rome and in all countries where it operates through International Cooperation projects, who is responsible for handling, in co-ordination with the members of the Board of Directors, any reports of abuse against children and adolescents. The CPO has the duty to report suspected abuse to competent authorities, local services and specialised resources locally available for the protection of children and adolescents.

The reporting procedure ensures respect for the best interests of the child and is based on two fundamental values:

- **confidentiality:** the names of the persons who made the report, the subject of the report and the identity of the person accused will not be made public, unless the case goes to court and witnesses are asked to be heard.
- **loyalty:** the accused person who is a member of CIES Onlus' staff, volunteers and members of the Board of Directors will be supported by the organisation to the maximum of his or her abilities and possibilities and, by virtue of the legal principle of presumption of innocence, will be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

**WHO MAY REPORT:** the report may be made by a child or adolescent, a parent, a family member, a member of staff, a volunteer, a member of the Board of Directors, the partners, all those who collaborate, in any capacity, with the CIES Onlus.

Anyone working within the Organisation, or collaborating with it, in any capacity, has the obligation to report suspicions of child abuse or exploitation of which the alleged perpetrator is a member of staff, whether in the form of specific or unconfirmed suspicions. The priority of any staff member to whom abuse is reported is always and in all cases the protection of the child.

CIES Onlus Procedure gives staff the opportunity to report abuse even when the alleged perpetrator does not work within the organisation. All reports should be made immediately and in any case within 24 hours, unless it is impossible or unfeasible to do so due to exceptional circumstances.

**WHAT TO REPORT:** Any suspicion of conduct detrimental to the right of children and adolescents to protection, any concern about the safety of the child or adolescent, any violation of CIES Onlus' Code of Conduct

**HOW TO REPORT:** a report can be made by a written report or document, by phone call, email, interview, letter and any other valid manner. The choice of the validity by any means was made to ensure that even children and adolescents are enabled to report.

**WHO TO REPORT TO:** Reports should reach the Child Protection Officer (CPO), specifically designated by CIES Onlus for each Country in which it operates.

CIES Onlus undertakes to evaluate annually, through a participatory approach, the application of the Policy.

## 8. CODE OF CONDUCT

### WHAT NOT TO DO

CIES Onlus staff, volunteers, partner organisations' staff and their representatives and all those who, in any capacity, collaborate with the organisation must never be involved in:

- 1) beating, physically assaulting or physically or psychologically abusing a child;
- 2) having attitudes towards children that may negatively affect their harmonious and socio-relational development;

- 3) Acting in ways that set a negative example for children;
- 4) engaging in sexual activity or having sexual intercourse with individuals under the age of 18, regardless of the definition of majority or the manner of consent legally recognised in different countries. A mistaken belief about the age of a child is not an acceptable defence;
- 5) having relationships with minors that can in any way be considered of exploitation, mistreatment or abuse;
- 6) acting in ways that may be abusive or that may place children at risk of exploitation, mistreatment or abuse;
- 7) using a language and making suggestions or giving advice which are inappropriate, offensive or abusive;
- 8) behaving inappropriately or sexually provocative;
- 9) establishing or maintaining "continuous" contact with child beneficiaries using personal online communication tools (e-mail, chat, social networks, etc.).
- 10) allowing one or more minors you work with to sleep in your home without supervision and prior authorisation from your direct supervisor, except exceptional circumstances;
- 11) sleeping in the same room or in the same bed with a child with whom you work;
- 12) doing things for children that they can do for themselves;
- 13) giving money or goods or other benefits to a child outside the parameters and scopes established by the project activities or without the knowledge of the supervisor;
- 14) tolerating or participating in conduct by minors that is illegal or abusive or that put their safety at risk;
- 15) acting in such a way as to shame, humiliate, belittle or despise a child, or perpetrate any other form of emotional abuse;
- 16) Discriminating against, treat differently or favour some children to the exclusion of others.

This list is not exhaustive or exclusive. The basic principle is that one should avoid actions or behaviour that may be inappropriate or potentially abusive towards the children.

## WHAT TO DO

It is also important that CIES Onlus' staff, volunteers, Partner Organisations' staff and their Representatives and all those who, in any capacity, collaborate with the Organisation:

- 17) are vigilant in identifying situations that may pose risks to children and know how to handle them;
- 18) report any concern, suspicion or certainty about possible abuse or mistreatment of a child as set out in this Policy;
- 19) organise their work and workplace in such a way as to minimise risks;
- 20) are always visible to other adults, as far as possible, while working with minors;
- 21) ensure the dissemination and maintenance of a culture of openness that allows staff, volunteers, children and tutors to raise and discuss all kinds of issues and concerns with ease;
- 22) ensure that staff members develop a sense of responsibility regarding their actions so that inappropriate actions and behaviour or behaviour that may lead to child abuse are not underestimated or are tolerated;
- 23) inform children what kind of relationship they should expect to have with the staff or representatives and encourage them to report any concerns;
- 24) value children's skills and competences and discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and what is not, what they can do if any problem arises;
- 25) maintain a high personal and professional profile;
- 26) respect the rights of children and treat them fairly, honestly and with dignity and respect;
- 27) Encourage the participation of children so as to also develop their self-protection ability.