



F P R E V E N T I O N Y
L H P O L M E I W A U A
R T I L N C H I L D I T
E C Y R S E P I O N E Y
S A F E G U A R D I N G
P R N P S P R R E Y I L
E E P R O T E C T I O N
C M I N F O R M I A N D
T S T P R T B P R E G Y
W E L L B E I N G E M P
L H A N R C A H O R U A
A D W L E U P O L I C Y
O R I G H T S N P S I T
F R E S P O N S E K E Y

SUMMARY

Who we are	3
Our commitment to children and young people	8
Glossary	10
Prevention	12
1. Scope	12
2. Risk Assessment and Risk management	12
3. Human Resources	12
2. Training	13
5. Partner Organisations	13
6. Volunteers and Interns	14
7. External Collaborators and visitors	14
8. Communication and Media	14
9. The participation of children and young people	15
10. Digital Safety	16
11. Data Protection	17
Protection	18
1. Identification of Violence	18
2. Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer	20
3. Referral System	20
Response	21
1. Reporting	21
2. Response	21
3. Procedures in the Event of Violations of the Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy	22
Application, Monitoring, and Review	22
Awareness Raising and Dissemination	23
Knowing, Doing, and Being: A Global Map of Conduct and Behaviors	25
Annex	35
Appendix	43



WHO WE ARE

Defence for Children International Italia (Defence for Children Italia or DCI Italia) is a non-governmental organisation that has been operating since 2005 to promote social and educational perspectives and opportunities capable of reaffirming the agency of children and young people, and a culture of childhood based on the recognition of their rights.

The Organisation acts autonomously, cooperating with other associations, movements, and institutions to address the numerous issues related to the world of childhood and adolescence, adopting a human rights-based approach that recognises the centrality of the minor through initiatives such as:

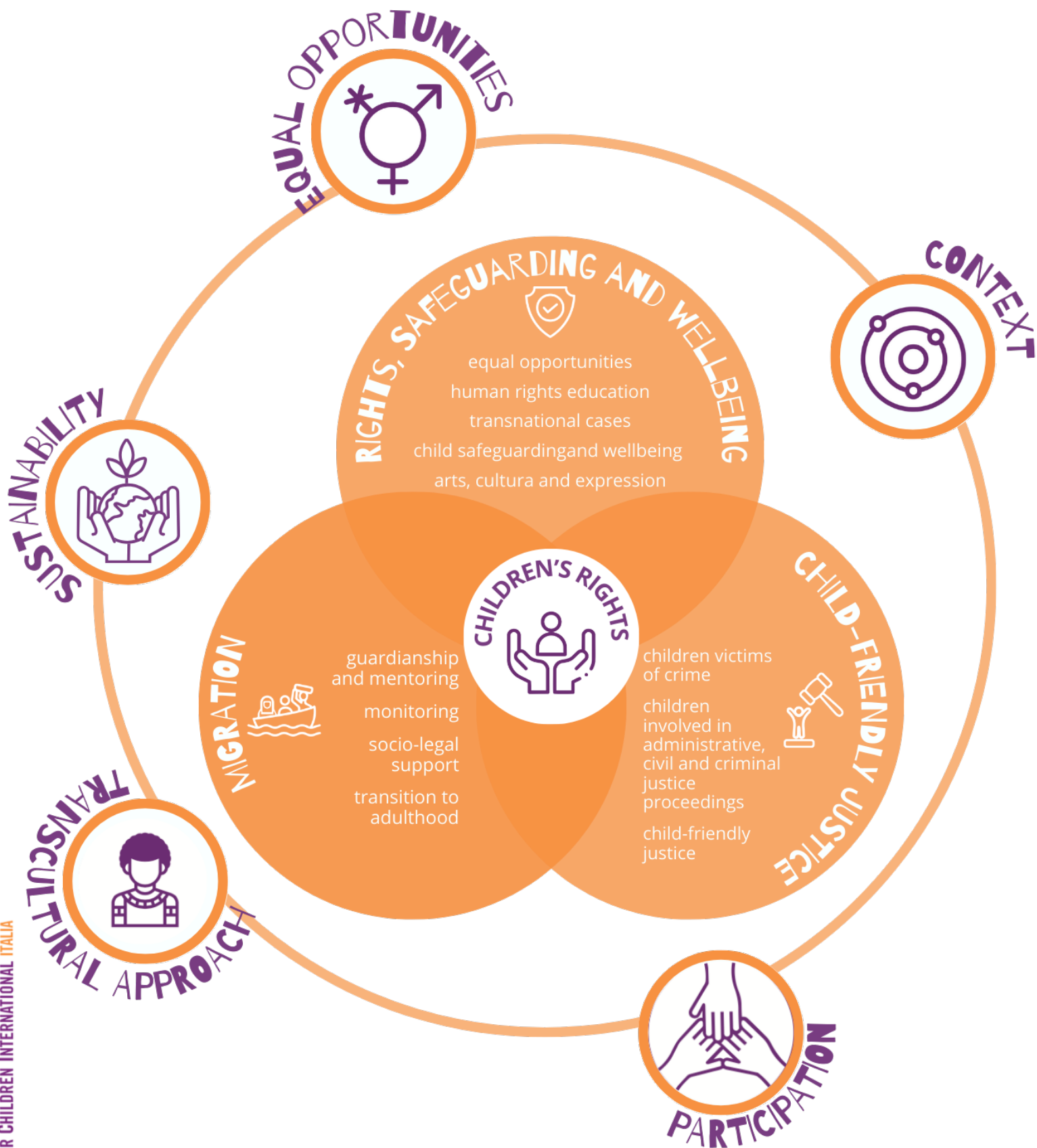
- ➔ **Analysis and research**, to understand the elements that lead to human rights violations and to develop proposals for their protection and to enhance the levels of guarantee for children and young persons;
- ➔ **Training**, to contribute to generating awareness, skills, and abilities useful for supporting adequate protection for the younger generations;
- ➔ **Advocacy**, to inform and raise awareness among children, young people, and adults, to report violations and call for reforms so that laws and policies promote and optimize their protective and safeguarding functions for children and young persons;
- ➔ Support and development of **activities, projects, and programs** to experiment with good practices that can be replicated beyond the Organisation's direct remit;
- ➔ **Management and resolution of individual transnational cases** involving children, as a member for Italy of the International Social Service, in collaboration with the global network of contacts in different countries.

OUR APPROACH

Our movement acts and works for a just world capable of considering children and adolescents as individuals able to fully exercise their human rights. A human rights-based approach, in fact, involves considering the capacities and intrinsic resources of the younger generations, giving full relevance to the concepts of participation and self-determination, two cross-cutting elements that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereinafter CRC) proposes to apply to rebuild a balanced and collaborative transgenerational relationship.

In this perspective, Defence for Children Italia uses the CRC as a comprehensive and open multidisciplinary system capable of helping to redefine the approach towards children and young people and qualify their relationship with the adult world. According to this assumption, children will be effectively protected and will see their rights fully realized when prevention, protection, and intervention are considered dimensions in qualified continuity in a systemic perspective. To this end, Defence for Children Italia has developed a Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy that proposes a series of actions aimed at promoting the integration of these three dimensions.

THE AREAS OF ACTION OF DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN ITALIA



RIGHTS, SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING

This area includes all the general actions aimed at defending and promoting the rights of children and young persons, which are central to our mission. In particular, within this scope, Defence for Children Italia carries out activities and actions related to:

Equal Opportunities

Defence for Children Italia operates in accordance with the principle of equal treatment and is committed to promoting it through actions such as information, awareness-raising, and training for professionals, practitioners, ordinary citizens, and youth. The goal is to contribute to overcoming all types of discrimination, including those based on gender differences.

Human Rights Education

Defence for Children Italia is engaged in actions such as information, awareness-raising, and training for professionals, practitioners, and individual citizens. The aim is to contribute to the development of individual and collective thinking, knowledge, and skills that strengthen the adequate protection and promotion of the rights of children. In particular, Defence for Children Italia uses experienced trainers to develop educational programs in its various areas of action, always considering the principles and norms that protect the rights of children and young persons as the reference paradigm.

Management of Transnational Cases

As an official member of the International Social Service (ISS) since 2018, Defence for Children

Italia provides a group of professionals who voluntarily handle cases referred from Italy or members of the global network. However, as they do not receive any public or private contributions to carry out this activity, requesting entities are required to make a contribution to cover operational expenses and any costs incurred by correspondents.

Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing

For several years, Defence for Children Italia has been engaged in analysing and developing policies for the protection and wellbeing of children based on human rights. Developing a policy for the protection of children and adolescents is an opportunity for every entity to align its strategy and planning with its mandate. Therefore, Defence for Children Italia offers its expertise to public and private organisations to support the development and adoption of adequate Child Safeguarding Policies and procedures. The organisation organises integrated training programs for both public and private institutions and supports legislative proposals at both regional and national levels.

Arts, Culture, and Expression

Defence for Children Italia promotes a human rights-centred paradigm through the use and promotion of alternative forms of expression (artistic mediums, cultural events promotion, the use of video, music, storytelling, etc.) to foster a cultural shift centred on recognising childhood and adolescence along with the specificity of each child and their rights.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

This field of activity encompasses all actions aimed at defending and promoting the rights of children and young people involved in migratory phenomena. In particular, within this scope, Defence for Children Italia carries out activities and actions related to:

Guardianship and Mentoring

Defence for Children Italia promotes the institution of voluntary guardianship for unaccompanied foreign children and young persons through actions such as information, awareness-raising, and training for voluntary citizens interested in becoming guardians (appointed by the Regional Ombudsperson, as provided by Law 47/2017). The association also provides training for reception system staff and, more generally, on the correct application of Law 47/2017.

An important area of action, given the independent nature of the association, involves advocacy activities to ensure that the institution of voluntary guardianship is properly promoted and implemented by the relevant authorities for all unaccompanied children in our territory.

Building on the experience of voluntary guardianship, Defence for Children Italia organises mentoring programs for former unaccompanied children during the transition to adulthood, through the sensitisation, training, and support of voluntary citizens who become mentors for young people in the Genoa area. The mentoring programs are promoted and managed entirely by the association, which collaborates with local resources to support the activation of meaningful and sustainable paths to active citizenship.

Defence for Children Italia also carries out its work at the transnational and European levels and is part of the European Guardianship Network, supported by the European

Commission to promote the institution of guardianship in Europe.

Monitoring

Defence for Children Italia, including through the national networks of which it is a part (National Observatory on Unaccompanied Children and the Migrant Children Roundtable), conducts independent monitoring of the implementation of Law 47/2017 on the protection of unaccompanied children. This monitoring is based on an analysis and research conducted at both the national level, in selected territories, and at the local level, where there is a privileged observation resulting from the management of individual cases by the support unit described in the following paragraph. This monitoring action is carried out based on indicators developed considering the regulatory provisions and maintaining a focus on the child and their best interests in line with the CRC.

Socio-Legal Support

Defence for Children Italia has established a socio-legal support unit for unaccompanied children in the Liguria region, as well as young people in mentoring processes, voluntary guardians, mentors, and reception system staff. In addition to handling individual cases, the socio-legal support unit takes an active role in safeguarding the rights of children and young adults by contacting institutions, emergency services, and other specialised experts. It reports current or potential violations to the competent authorities and offers its experiences and expertise within training and awareness-raising activities.

CHILD-FRIENDLY JUSTICE

This field of activity encompasses all actions aimed at defending and promoting the rights of children and young persons who come into contact with the justice system, from various perspectives and in various ways, promoting a child-friendly and accessible justice system, in line with international, regional, and national standards. Defence for Children operates at the national level in collaboration with the relevant institutions and at the international level as part of the European Network for Child-Friendly Justice (EU Child Friendly Justice Network). Specifically, the areas of specific attention include:

Criminal justice, with a focus on children and young persons who are victims of crime and those involved in proceedings as suspects or accused of crimes.

Civil justice, especially extrajudicial proceedings related to family law, particularly those with a transnational dimension, promoting a mediation-based approach.

Administrative justice and all matters related to administrative procedures involving children and young persons, with particular attention to foreign children and young persons, in connection with the activities of the socio-legal support unit.

CROSS-CUTTING AREAS

Starting from a paradigm based on the recognition and implementation of human rights, at all levels of its initiative, Defence for Children Italia applies the following criteria cross-cuttingly:

Equal Opportunities

The organisation's analysis and actions must be carried out while ensuring the highest level of inclusivity, with a specific focus on individuals,

groups, and variables that generate discrimination in social, economic, and cultural processes.

Context

While having a specific focus on children and young persons, the organisation operates within its areas of intervention by considering and interacting with the causal, dynamic, and contextual elements that determine the possibilities of recognising needs and promoting the rights of individuals.

Sustainability

General dynamics of development related to the environment and the creation of creative, fair, and sustainable social, economic, and cultural contexts constitute a fundamental orientation for the organisation's activities.

Participation

In every area of activity, the organisation considers and promotes the participation of children as a constitutive element of its mission, concurrently fostering the civic and active engagement of citizenship, staff, professionals, and the adult world in general.

Transculturality

Recognising the value and peculiarities of every form of diversity, the organisation's development is creatively characterised by the exchange and interaction between different cultures of origin, valuing both existing characteristics and the potential and generative aspects that can result from encounters with others.

Consistency

The organisation develops its activities with a continuous effort to ensure the highest convergence between theory and practice, goals and means to achieve them, while ensuring the fundamental organisational mission (Defence for Children) takes precedence in determining choices, programs, activities, and collaborations.

OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Defence for Children Italia, as part of the global Defence for Children International movement and as a member of the Child Friendly Justice European Network (CFJ-EN), the European Guardianship Network (EGN), the Keeping Children Safe Network, and the International Social Service (ISS), undertakes concrete actions to promote the rights, wellbeing, and participation of all children and young people. Defence for Children Italia is committed to respecting and promoting the Convention on the Rights of the Child in all its actions and initiatives, working towards a cultural shift that regards all children and young people as full rights holders, fully opposing discrimination of any kind.

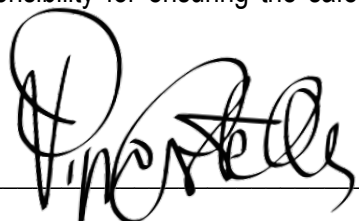
Defence for Children Italia sees the participation of children and young people as a central element of its work and as a cross-cutting issue in all its activities. In all projects and actions, Defence for Children Italia envisages the participation and involvement of children and young people, not only in a consultative manner but also collaboratively and through initiatives led directly by them. We promote rights-based education paths for children and young persons in different situations, involving them in consultations, trainings, events and activities; we support child-led initiatives, engaging children in project and activity planning and implementation. We include children and young persons from a very broad range of backgrounds, and in many cases in situations of particular vulnerability, such as children involved in criminal proceedings, non-accompanied or separated children and children with migratory backgrounds. When consulting or involving children and young persons in activities, projects or initiatives, Defence for Children Italia adopts approaches and methods sensitive to the diversity of the younger generations and their aspirations and needs.

The purpose of this policy is not only to safeguard children and young persons from any harm they may encounter during the activities they undertake but also to actively promote their rights, with a particular focus on their participation rights, and their wellbeing.

This Child Safeguarding Policy is the result of updates and consultations with national and international stakeholders and is informed by girls and boys who have participated in our activities over the years and is in accordance with Defence for Children International Movement's Child Safeguarding Standards and Guidelines.

Safeguarding and wellbeing of children and young people are integral to Defence for Children Italia's mission. For several years, we have been raising awareness, disseminating and supporting the development and adoption of appropriate Child Safeguarding Policies and procedures. We also organise integrated training programs for professionals, and we actively support legislative proposals in this field at both the regional and national levels.

Safeguarding and wellbeing of children and young people is responsibility of every person engaging in Defence for Children Italia's activities, however, the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the safety of children rests with senior executives and the CSO.

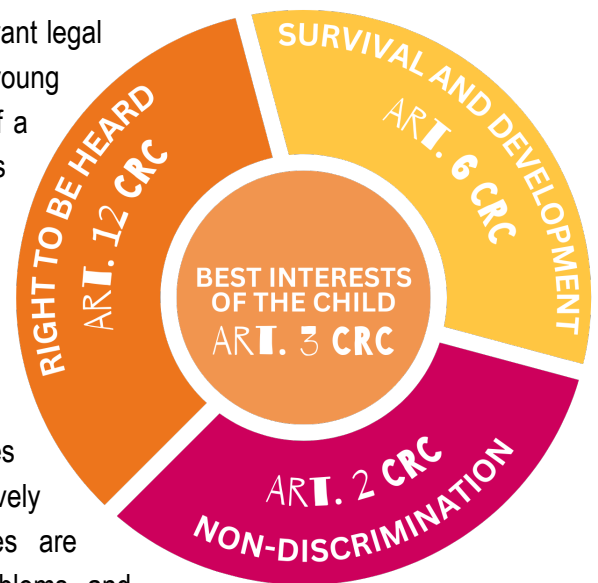


Pippo Costella,
Director

THE CRC, AS A SYSTEMIC AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY PLATFORM FOR PROMOTING THE PROTECTION AND WELLBEING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Defence for Children Italia presents the CRC not only as a relevant legal tool for defending and promoting the rights of children and young people but also as a reference paradigm for the construction of a human development pedagogy based on rights. The CRC thus becomes a platform capable of bringing together, transforming, the various disciplines, purposes, and cultural contexts. In other words, through its principles and provisions, it is possible to conceive an innovative and more effective culture that involves not only children and young people, but society as a whole.

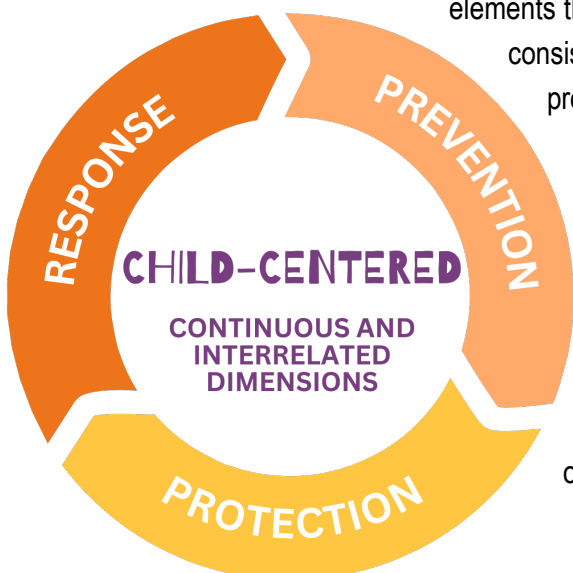
In a sense, the systemic approach to the CRC clearly indicates that the rights of children and young people can be effectively promoted only if the relationships between different parties are considered, without artificially or instrumentally isolating problems and issues. While considering the CRC as a whole, like a map, its cornerstones remain privileged reference points. These are the best interests of the child as the central principle, which can only be recognised and realized in relation to the other three principles recognised as fundamental: non-discrimination, survival and development, and the right of the child to be heard.



PREVENTIVE, PROTECTIVE, AND ADEQUATE WELLBEING MEASURES

Defence for Children Italia promotes an integrated and systemic system with the primary objective of fully realizing the rights of all children and young people and enhancing their abilities and resources. To this end, it is essential to work towards ensuring the wellbeing of children and young people involved, whether directly or indirectly, in all activities of Defence for Children Italia. This involves considering all elements that may pose risks and integrating procedures that encourage the consistent consideration and application of the three dimensions of prevention, protection, and response.

For these three dimensions to function in an integrated manner for the continuous safeguarding of the rights and wellbeing of children and young people, it is necessary to identify a coherent, holistic, and integrated reference system. Defence for Children Italia views this system as a comprehensive institutional framework that connects various entities with well-defined mandates, responsibilities, and powers within a network of cooperation.



GLOSSARY

Child

According with the Convention on the Rights of the Child¹ and the Italian Law a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years.

Child Abuse

According to the World Health Organisation, child abuse has serious physical and psychosocial consequences which adversely affect health. It refers to “any act or failure to act that violates the rights of the child, that endangers his or her optimum health, survival or development”.²

Safeguarding³

“Child Safeguarding is the responsibility that organisations 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 organisation has about children’s safety within the communities in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities”.

Prevention

Prevention includes all elements that can guarantee, in a general or specific way, adequate and protective conditions in relation to the age and developmental capacity of the child.

Protection

Protection includes all general or specific elements that can minimise or reduce a potential or actual risk of violation or abuse. This means that after identifying a potential or actual risk of

harm, specific actions or procedures are activated to protect the child from a potential or actual risk of harm.

Response

This refers in this context to an intervention that includes all actions implemented to counter an established risk or violation of the child's rights immediately and with the aim of re-establishing appropriate conditions of wellbeing, protection and safety.

If action is taken in the event of harm, all designated procedures and the respective referral system must be activated to meet the immediate needs of the child, but also help the child to emancipate from the abuse. In this way, the aim is to break the cycle of violence and re-enter the cycle of protection.

Referral system

A referral system can be defined as a comprehensive institutional framework linking various entities with well-defined and precise (though in some cases overlapping) mandates, responsibilities and powers within a network of cooperation, with the overall objective of ensuring protection and providing support to the children concerned, helping them in their full recovery and empowerment, the prevention of future harm and the prosecution of abusers. The referral mechanisms work on the basis of efficient lines of communication and establish clearly defined paths and procedures with clear and simple sequential steps.⁴

¹ Convention on the Rights of the Child, Art. 1.

² WHO, Report of the Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention, Geneva, 29-31 March 1991, WHO/HSC/PVI/99.1, p. 14-5.

³ This includes both preventive actions to minimise the chances of harm occurring, and responsive actions to ensure that incidents which may happen are appropriately handled. Safeguarding implies a wider duty of care towards children rather than just upholding their right to protection (as defined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989).

⁴ Adapted from: UNFPA and WAVE, *Strengthening Health System Responses to Gender-based Violence in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: A Resource Package* (2014) 95.

Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence "is a form of discrimination that severely inhibits women's ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on an equal basis with men."⁵ It requires close attention because it contains serious elements that go beyond mere physical violence. In fact, according to the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW Committee), gender-based violence involves "violence directed against a woman because she is a woman or that disproportionately affects women. It includes actions that cause physical, mental or sexual suffering or harm, as well as the threat of such actions, coercion and deprivation of liberty."

Health and wellbeing

According to the World Health Organisation, "health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".⁶

The importance of active listening and communication

Defence for Children Italy believes that listening to children and adolescents and their story is a key element in recognising, respecting and

encouraging their participation. Considering the personal history of each child helps to avoid stereotypes, which are nurtured and reinforced through the creation of categories based mainly on needs.

Mentoring

A special type of one-to-one relationship in which a person with specific skills and competences, a volunteer citizen (the mentor) accompanies another young person from the world (the mentee), to develop their skills in order to facilitate their transition to adulthood.

Re-victimisation

Re-victimisation means victimisation that occurs not as a direct consequence of the criminal act, but through the response of institutions and individuals to the victim. Re-victimisation occurs when authorities or persons called upon to repress and/or counteract the phenomenon of violence, by failing to recognise or underestimate it, do not adopt the necessary safeguards towards the victim to protect him/her from possible conditioning and reiteration of violence.

⁵ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, General Recommendation 19, Violence against women (Eleventh session, 1992), U.N. Doc. A/47/38 at 1 (1993), reprinted in Compilation of General Comments and General Recommendations Adopted by Human Rights Treaty Bodies, U.N. Doc. HRI/GEN/1/Rev.6 at 243 (2003).

⁶ Preamble to the Constitution of WHO as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19 June - 22 July 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Official Records of WHO, no. 2, p. 100) and entered into force on 7 April 1948.



PREVENTION

Defence for Children Italia takes measures to implement all necessary strategies and actions to protect and ensure the wellbeing of all children and young people with whom it comes into contact. These measures include specific activity planning procedures, staff recruitment and hiring, continuous training, selection of partner associations, as well as productive awareness-raising initiatives regarding the protection and wellbeing of children and adolescents, including the extensive dissemination of this Policy in all areas and initiatives in which the Association is involved.

1. SCOPE

This policy is to be applied to all operations and activities conducted by or on behalf of Defence for Children Italia. All staff, collaborators, contractors, volunteers, and partners who have contact with children and young people within the organisation's activities or initiatives must commit to respecting the provisions outlined below, in their work-related activities and in their private life.

Defence for Children Italia implements projects and activities that also involve young adults, especially in the fields of justice and migration. In such cases, considering their particular situation, this policy extends to all young adults involved.

The policy must be made available and accessible to all children and/or young adults involved in Defence for Children Italia's activities, including through a simplified version of this document.

2. RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Defence for Children Italia is committed to designing and providing strategies not only to minimize the risk of harm to children and young people with whom it comes into contact but also to actively promote their wellbeing, resources, and participation at all times and stages of development. Risk management is embedded at project level and activity/event level, under the responsibility of the project coordinator, in collaboration with the Child Safeguarding Officer. Therefore, assessments regarding potential risks are conducted holistically from the early stages of activity and initiative planning; safety strategies are developed as a result of specific assessments. Risk mitigation strategies are developed and incorporated into the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs, operations, and activities that involve or impact children and young people.⁷

3. HUMAN RESOURCES

The recruitment, hiring, and selection of staff, as well as other collaborators or volunteers, reflect Defence for Children Italia's commitment to ensuring the protection and promotion of the rights of children and adolescents, by establishing communications, checks, and procedures to exclude anyone who is not suitable to work with children and young persons. At the same time, Defence for Children Italia is committed to conveying this Policy to its staff, ensuring that everyone formally adheres to the

⁷ Keeping Children Safe, *Understanding Child Safeguarding - A facilitator's guide*, www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk (2014).



listed principles and procedures through the signing of a commitment declaration and promotes a culture of openness and accountability among its collaborators, offering them spaces for continuous training, debate, and updates.

The responsible person reviews the received resumes and schedules interviews with candidates considered suitable, who then conduct an interview. During the interview, overall skills, any previous criminal history, suitability for relational roles, inclination to work with children and young people, and any prior work or volunteer experience are assessed. Upon final hiring, this Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy is electronically sent, and the candidate is invited to carefully review it, with the opportunity to ask questions to the personnel manager. At the time of signing the employment contract, formal adherence to the listed principles and procedures is required through the signing of a commitment declaration, included in the text of the contract.

2. TRAINING

Defence for Children Italia promotes an individualised training path for each employee and collaborator, aimed at encouraging personal growth from a multidisciplinary perspective. Each employee receives initial inductive training designed to introduce the approach promoted by Defence for Children Italia for the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and young people. Annual refresher training sessions are provided to all staff, incorporating the principles of Keeping Children's Safe "Understanding Child Safeguarding" and "Developing Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures,"⁸ and child safeguarding and wellbeing is a recurring item in staff meetings, for updating and discussion.

5. PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

In all partnership relationships, close attention is paid to issues related to the protection and wellbeing of children and young people. In the selection process, we consider the potential partner's suitability to work with children and young people, verifying their own specific child safeguarding and wellbeing policy and related procedures. The partner's methodology, values, and vision are considered to generate appropriate synergies. We include specific references to measures for safeguarding children and young people in all agreements within partnership relationships. Defence for Children Italia also actively promotes the adoption and implementation of procedures for the safeguarding and wellbeing of all children and young people by third-party organisations in accordance with international sector standards.

If the partner organisation does not have its own child safeguarding document, it will be offered the opportunity to use Defence for Children Italia's policy in the framework of the specific partnership, by requesting a thorough reading and the signing of a specific partnership agreement template, available in appendix.

⁸ Keeping Children Safe, *Developing Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures - A facilitator's guide* www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk (2014).



6. VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS

All volunteers and interns are adequately informed by their supervisor about this Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy and monitored during their activities. They must also understand the values and vision of Defence for Children Italia, adhering to this Policy document before the collaboration begins.

7. EXTERNAL COLLABORATORS AND VISITORS

In some projects, external individuals, such as photographers, filmmakers, journalists, or others, may be involved. All individuals are adequately informed the project coordinator about this Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy and accompanied by the staff during the activities. The use of art, culture, and languages is intended as a methodology to achieve the association's goals, which must remain paramount over the presence of external collaborators.

8. COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA

Defence for Children Italia is bound by national and regional laws, as well as by the fundamental principles of the CRC, particularly the best interests of the child. Furthermore, it promotes a positive and non-discriminatory image of children and young people in all circumstances.⁹

The following principles must be applied in all of Defence for Children's work, projects, and communication activities:

Dignity

The dignity of the child must be preserved at all times. This means that the image of childhood should never be reduced to simply showcasing the challenges they face, nor should it be manipulated or sensationalized in any way. Additionally, discriminatory, victimizing, or degrading language should never be used when representing children if they are involved.

Context

Communications should avoid making generalizations that do not accurately reflect the nature of the situation, and images should not be taken or used out of the established context. The messages provided should always reference contextual elements aimed at highlighting the causes that led to the specific condition but also the "historical-causal" dimension to which every child has a right, as it is an important part of their identity.

Development and Rights Education

Communication regarding the condition of childhood in the world should always be connected to an approach based on development and human rights education. Public messages must explicitly refer to the context, civil responsibilities, and cultural dimensions of the presented condition. Defence for Children Italia strongly opposes the exploitation of children's images, regardless of the purpose, especially in fundraising and marketing activities.

Informed Consent and Privacy

⁹ In linea con le Linee Guida di Comunicazione di Defence for Children Italia.



In all communication and media activities, information that allows the identification of the child will not be used, and informed consent will be sought from parents or legal guardians and the child themselves in every case.

9. THE PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

In all projects and actions, Defence for Children Italia promotes the participation and involvement of children, not only in a consultative form but also collaboratively and through initiatives led directly by the children themselves. In all participation activities, Defence for Children Italia adopts approaches and methods that are sensitive to the diversity of the younger generations and their aspirations and needs, applying the provisions of the CRC systematically.

In all participation activities, Defence for Children Italia follows the "9 Requirements of the Council of Europe for Effective and Ethical Participation":¹⁰

Participation is transparent and informed

Children must receive, by the project coordinator, clear information about their rights to participate, in an accessible format suitable for their age and developmental capacity. The roles and responsibilities of those involved are clear and well-understood. Children share the objectives and milestones associated with their participation. Furthermore, children must receive complete and impartial information on the topic under discussion, in compliance, inter-alia, with Articles 13, 14, and 17 of the CRC.

Participation is voluntary

Informed consent must be obtained by the project coordinator before any activity involving children and/or young adults. Informed consent involves informing children about how Defence for Children Italia will use their perspectives, ideas, information, voices, or images, specifying that there is no obligation for the child to accept. Informed consent should be developed in appropriate language. It is also important that the child involved knows they have the right to interrupt activities at any time without having to provide explicit justification. In the case of involving children, informed consent must include the signature of a parent or other person exercising parental responsibility.

Participation is respectful

Working methods enhance self-esteem and confidence, allowing children to feel that they have a valid experience and viewpoint to contribute. Children must be treated with respect and have the opportunity to freely express their opinions and make proposals. The team must also respect and understand the family, school, and cultural context in which the participants live.

Participation is relevant

Participation must be based on children's knowledge and focus on issues relevant to their lives and the local context. The activities in which children are involved are genuinely relevant to their experiences, knowledge, and abilities. They are also involved in defining selection and representation criteria, and the methods, levels, and paces are appropriate to their capacities and interests.

Participation is child-centred

¹⁰ Council of Europe, *Listen – Act – Change. Council of Europe Handbook on children's participation, For professionals working for and with children*, Building a Europe for and with Children, 2021.



Child-centred approaches must be used to ensure that children feel well-prepared for their participation and are able to contribute significantly to activities. Participation approaches and methods must be designed or adapted based on the participants' age and abilities, and time and resources are managed in the best interests of the participants. Particular attention is given to places and methods that promote the wellbeing of all participants.

Participation is inclusive

Children must not be discriminated against for any reason, and activities must be flexible enough to respond to the needs, expectations, and situations of different groups of children. Children's participation must offer involvement opportunities even for children in situations of particular vulnerability and must challenge existing discrimination patterns.

Participation is supported by adequate skills

All facilitators must receive appropriate training and tools to promote meaningful participation of children and must be able to engage participants in a trust-based conversation, treating them with respect, showing empathy, and not judging their statements. Facilitators must be able to create a safe space where children can speak openly and feel safe in criticizing or challenging specific aspects without incurring negative consequences.

Participation is safe

This Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy must be shared with children, under the responsibility of the project coordinator, in all participation activities, and the contained procedures respected throughout the process. Children know who they can turn to before, during, or after the activity to raise an issue, make a report, or file a complaint.

Participation is responsible

After their participation, under the responsibility of the project coordinator, children must receive feedback and/or follow-up on their involvement, how their opinions were interpreted and used, how they influenced the outcomes, and the next steps. Children are asked if they are satisfied with the participatory processes and if they have opinions on how they could be improved. Errors identified through assessments are acknowledged, and efforts are made to use the lessons learned to improve participatory processes in the future.

10. DIGITAL SAFETY

Defence for Children Italia recognises that children can be particularly vulnerable in digital interactions and is committed to promoting a safe and ethical digital environment and ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and protection of participants in online activities.

All provisions of this Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy must be applied and adequately adapted to all online activities promoted by or on behalf of Defence for Children Italia. Defence for Children Italia will ensure that access to its online platforms is limited exclusively to participants and authorized personnel. Technical measures are adopted to prevent unauthorized access and protect the personal information of children and/or young adults involved. All communications to participants will be appropriate, respectful, and relevant to the purposes of the activities. In online platforms, DCI representatives will refrain from using, and will remind all participants to refrain from using, any



inappropriate language or content that could cause discomfort or jeopardize the safety of children. Clear guidelines on safe browsing and the use of online platforms will be provided to participants and staff. Additionally, children will be encouraged to protect their privacy and report any inappropriate or suspicious behaviour. The organisation will constantly monitor online activities to ensure compliance with this policy, including regular assessments aimed at improving various practices and ensuring the ongoing wellbeing of participants.

11. DATA PROTECTION

Defence for Children Italia operates in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council, dated April 27, 2016, concerning the protection of individuals regarding the processing of personal data, as well as the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation), along with the guiding principles of the CRC.

In compliance with applicable regulations, Defence for Children Italia will only collect data that is relevant and limited to what is necessary for the purposes for which they are processed, and will retain them only for the necessary duration, deleting them when they are no longer in use. Furthermore, it will adhere to the principle of integrity and confidentiality, ensuring "protection against unlawful processing or accidental loss, destruction, or damage."¹¹

Information obtained, whether formally or informally, will always be managed with consideration for the best interests of children and a commitment to the highest standards of safeguarding and wellbeing.

¹¹ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 Art 5, clause 1(f).



PROTECTION

1. IDENTIFICATION OF VIOLENCE

Signs of mistreatment or abuse in children and young people can often be challenging to detect and acknowledge, and it can manifest in many forms. It is important to bear in mind that no single indicator can be considered exhaustive in itself. Each element must be examined in relation to the individual situation and the circumstances in which the child or young person finds themselves.

The following non-exhaustive list is adapted from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 13, "The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence":

Neglect or Negligent Treatment

Neglect refers to the inability to meet the physical and psychological needs of children and young people, protect them from harm, obtain medical care, birth registration, or other services by those responsible for their care who possess the means, knowledge, and access to services that allow for it. This includes: a) **Physical neglect**: failure to protect children from physical harm, including through lack of supervision, or by being unable to provide children with their basic necessities, including adequate food, shelter, clothing, and basic medical care; b) **Psychological or emotional neglect**: includes a lack of emotional support and affection, chronic inattention to the child by those who should care for them, a lack of consideration for the physical or mental health of children; c) **Educational neglect**: failure to comply with laws requiring adults responsible for ensuring the education of children and adolescents through school attendance or otherwise; d) **Abandonment**.

Psychological violence

"Psychological violence," as referred to in the CRC, is often described as psychological maltreatment, psychological abuse, verbal abuse, and emotional abuse, which may include: a) Any form of persistent harmful interaction with the child or young person, such as contemptuous or violent comments; b) Scaring, terrifying, and threatening, exploiting and corrupting, rejecting and refusing, isolating, ignoring, and favoritism; c) Withholding emotional affection, mental health, medical needs, and educational needs; d) Insulting, name-calling, humiliating, belittling, ridiculing, and hurting the feelings of the child or young person; e) Exposure to domestic violence or not; f) Placement in solitary confinement, isolation, or humiliation or degrading detention conditions; g) Psychological bullying and other acts of bullying by adults or other young people, including cyberbullying.

Physical Violence

This includes: a) **All forms of corporal punishment and all forms of torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment**; b) **Physical bullying** and acts of bullying by adults or other young people.

Children and young people with disabilities may be subject to specific forms of physical violence, such as: a) Forced sterilization or physical restraint; b) Violence disguised as medical treatments (e.g., electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and electroshocks used as "preventive therapy" to control behavior); c) Exploitation for money.

Corporal Punishment

In General Comment No. 8 (para. 11), the Committee has defined "corporal" or "physical" punishment as **any punishment involving physical force intended to cause some level of pain or discomfort, even if slight**. Most involve hitting ("spanking," "slapping," "spanking") children with a hand or an instrument, but it can also involve, for example, kicking, shaking, or throwing the child, scratching, pinching, biting, pulling hair, or punching the ears, whipping, forcing children into uncomfortable positions, causing burns, causing burns or forced ingestion. In the Committee's view, corporal punishment is inherently degrading. Other specific forms of corporal punishment are listed in the United Nations Independent Expert's report on violence against children (A/61/299, paras. 56, 60, and 62).

Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Sexual abuse and exploitation include: a) Inducing or coercing a child or young person to engage in any sexually harmful and unlawful activity; b) Using children and young persons in the sexual exploitation of the commercial sex trade; c) Using children and young persons in visual or audio images of sexual abuse of children and young persons; d) Child prostitution, sexual slavery, sexual exploitation in travel and tourism, trafficking (within and between countries), and the sale of children and young persons for sexual purposes and forced marriage.

Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

This includes violence against children in all its forms for the purpose of extracting a confession, punishing children and young persons extrajudicially for illegal or unwanted behaviour, or forcing them to engage in activities against their will. It is usually perpetrated by the police or law enforcement officers, institutional staff, and individuals with power over children and young persons.

Violence among Children and Young People

This includes physical, psychological, and sexual violence, often in the form of bullying, exercised by children and young people against their peers, often in groups. Such violence not only harms the physical and psychological integrity and wellbeing of the child in the short term but also has a severe impact on their development, education, and social integration in the medium and long term. Although children are the actors, the role of adults responsible for these children and young persons is crucial in all efforts to respond to and prevent such violence appropriately, ensuring that the measures taken do not exacerbate the violence itself through a punitive approach and that violence is countered with non-violence.

Self-harm

This includes eating disorders, substance use and abuse, self-inflicted injuries, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, and actual suicide. In large part, self-harming practices are context-driven and the result of other forms of violence against children and young people.

Violence through Information and Communication Technology

Risks related to the protection of children and adolescents concerning information and communication technology include the following overlapping areas: a) Sexual abuse of children and young persons to produce video and audio materials with images of sexual abuse facilitated by the Internet and other ICT technologies; b) The creation, distribution, viewing, possession, or publication of photographs or pseudo-photographs ("computer-altered") and videos of children and young people; c) Child users of technology and information: i. As recipients of information, children and young people may be exposed

to actual or potential harmful advertising, spam, sponsorships, personal information, and aggressive, violent, hateful, blameful, racist, pornographic, and/or misleading content; ii. In contact with others through information and communication tools, children and young people may be bullied, harassed or stalked ("groomed") and/or coerced, deceived or persuaded to meet strangers offline, may be "prepared" for involvement in sexual activities and/or providing personal information; as active subjects, children and young people may be involved in bullying or harassment against others, using games that negatively influence their psychological development, creating and sharing sexually inappropriate materials, providing misleading information or suggestions, and/or illegally downloading, hacking, cheating, and may be involved in financial scams and/or terrorism.

2. CHILD SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING OFFICER

Defence for Children Italia appoints its own operator to the role of Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer (CSO). The CSO is tasked with:

- ➔ Providing support and assistance in implementing this Child Safeguarding and wellbeing policy and disseminating it both within and outside the Association.
- ➔ Receiving reports concerning the protection and wellbeing of children and young people and taking necessary measures and procedures within the framework of this policy, in coordination with the Director.
- ➔ Identifying, in collaboration with other staff members, an appropriate and responsive referral system in cases of necessity and urgency.
- ➔ Coordinating, in collaboration with other relevant personnel or utilizing a qualified agency, introductory training sessions and updates for employees, associates, and volunteers.
- ➔ Initiating an evaluation every two years, or more frequently if necessary, to determine the effectiveness and adequacy of the current policy provisions and, if necessary, proceed with a document revision.

The current Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer is Caterina Parodi, who can be reached at caterina@defenceforchildren.it.

3. REFERRAL SYSTEM

In order for the three dimensions of Prevention, Protection and Intervention to function properly, it is necessary to build a referral system that integrates all the key players. The referral system is a map that brings together various figures (the public authorities, non-governmental organisations, the third sector and the child's adults of reference, e.g. the educator or caregiver) who, in various capacities and with different roles and mandates, are involved in the protection of that child.

Contacts of relevant referral system actors in Italy are available in Annex.

RESPONSE

1. REPORTING

Concerns regarding suspected, potential, or actual abuse or violence against children and young people can be raised by all individuals involved in Defence for Children Italy's activities: staff, collaborators, partners, volunteers, interns, or the children and young people themselves.

If someone has reasonable grounds for concern, even if it is a suspicion, it is their responsibility to report this matter (immediately or as soon as possible - within 24 hours) in the first instance to the Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer (CSO). If the suspected abuser is the CSO, the issue must be reported directly to the Director.

For reporting, the attached Reporting Form should be preferably used. If this is not possible due to time constraints, the report should be made by phone or in person. The reporting form will be completed afterward in any case.

The CSO and the Director will promptly analyse the received information and decide on how to proceed in accordance with this Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy (as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours). If the decision is not to proceed, the motivation must be documented in writing.

In any case, the reporting party still has the right to submit a report to the competent authority in accordance with national legislation.

2. RESPONSE

The protection and safety of children and young people must be ensured throughout the case management process. At every stage, absolute priority will be given to the best interests of the child.

If the CSO determines that there are reasonable grounds for concern, they must promptly activate the referral system so that the matter is investigated by the competent authorities, and the child or young person receives all the support they need.

The mandate to investigate allegations of abuse and/or violence against children in Italy lies with law enforcement and local social services, who must be involved in every case of suspected, alleged, or proven abuse.

If the matter does not involve the competent authorities but still constitutes a violation of the provisions of this Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy, the CSO, in coordination with the Director, may decide to initiate disciplinary action against the subject of the report for an internal investigation. An internal action plan must also be defined to monitor the progress of the report until it is closed.

If the abuse is confirmed, Defence for Children Italy will take appropriate disciplinary measures, which will also be taken if it is determined that the (unfounded) accusation was intentionally false or driven by personal motives.

3. PROCEDURES IN THE EVENT OF VIOLATIONS OF THE CHILD SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING POLICY

Defence for Children Italy will take immediate disciplinary action and any other action that may be appropriate in the circumstances against any person associated with Defence for Children Italy commits acts that seriously violate the rights of children and young persons or contravene the principles and standards contained in this document, both within and outside the work context. Such actions may include disciplinary action, termination of employment, termination of collaboration, etc.

Depending on the nature and circumstances of the case, Defence for Children Italy will also involve the competent authorities to ensure the protection of children and young persons and take legal action where necessary to ensure the protection of children and young persons even outside its own activities.

APPLICATION, MONITORING, AND REVIEW

The Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy described in this document will come into effect upon its publication on the Defence for Children Italy website: www.defenceforchildren.it.¹²

Safeguarding and wellbeing of children and young people is responsibility of every person engaging in Defence for Children Italia's activities, however, the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the safety of children rests with senior executives and the CSO.

The monitoring process involves periodic checks to ensure that all the principles and procedures of this Policy are implemented and that the procedures are adequate. This can be done in various ways, such as through consultations with staff, collaborators, the children and young people involved in activities, and through evaluation forms (online/offline).

The CSO must establish, once every two years or more frequently if necessary, an evaluation session to determine the effectiveness and adequacy of the provisions contained in the Policy and assess the need for updates.

In each evaluation cycle, a group of children and/or young adults will be actively invited to participate in the entire monitoring and updating process of Defence for Children Italy's Child PSafeguarding and Wellbeing Policy. Through consultation sessions, focus groups, and/or interviews, participants will be invited to assess their experience with this document and their perception of protection and wellbeing, as well as to propose changes and/or updates.

¹² The current document is the result of a review and update process held in the year 2023. Previously, Defence for Children Italia's Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy was reviewed and updated in the years 2018 and 2020.



AWARENESS RAISING AND DISSEMINATION

This Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy, as well as the available complaint mechanisms are consistently disseminated in all activities and initiatives implemented by Defence for Children Italia. Moreover, child-friendly information on the Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing procedures are available during activities and events.

Defence for Children Italia considers raising awareness and disseminating the importance of developing and implementing adequate Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policies as an integral part of its organisational mission.

To this end, Defence for Children Italia offers its experience and expertise to support the development and adoption of appropriate procedures and models of Child Safeguarding Policies, including organising integrated training programs for organisations and practitioners.

The organisation promotes initiatives to support proposals and initiatives aimed at safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children and young people, both within and outside of its network.



SAPERERE
FARE
ESSERE

KNOWING, DOING, AND BEING: A GLOBAL MAP OF CONDUCT AND BEHAVIORS

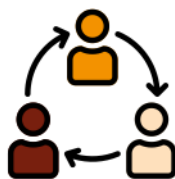
The purpose of this section is to assist all individuals interested in applying the principles of the CRC and this Policy. The proposed methodology, based on the elements of Prevention, Protection, Participation, and Intervention, considers a series of key elements related to the "knowing," "doing," and "being" of the working group.



Sapere

►"Knowing," understood as a reasoned set of theoretical references and guidelines on knowledge, theoretical skills, general information, as well as specific information. Knowledge about children and the context in which you operate.

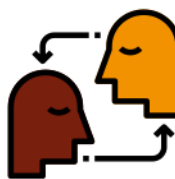
- Know and stay informed..



Fare

►"Doing," understood as guidance on the direct or indirect activities that must be undertaken and facilitated to conform appropriately to your duties. Take action with a systemic and planned perspective.

- Be proactive and consistent with your responsibilities.



Essere

►"Being", understood as guidelines on the relational activities and personal attitudes required to establish a relationship with a child or young person. Furthermore, on behavioural, cultural and gender issues that may interfere in the relationship and with the duty to identify, promote and protect the best interests of children, promote their rights and listen to them without prejudice.

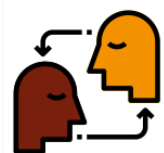
- Be a role model, treating all children respectfully and empathetically, taking a sincere listening attitude!

RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

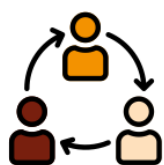
HOW CAN I TRANSLATE THE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ALREADY RECOGNISED IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LAW INTO PRACTICE?



- ✓ I am aware of the legislation concerning children's rights, norms and procedures and the present Safeguarding Policy and I promote them.



- ✓ I act in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy, focused on the child's best interests and welfare, relating to the context.



- ✓ I relate to children through empathic listening, free of prejudice and aimed at understanding the different situations.
- ✓ I am collaborative with colleagues and oppose all situations that may jeopardise the rights of girls, boys and adolescents.

PREVENTION

HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE TO ENSURING THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE?



- ✓ I understand the importance of implementing an integrated and holistic system of substantial prevention, protection, and sustainable intervention while promoting and advancing the rights of every child and young person.



- ✓ I am part of a child and adolescent-centered protection system based on the four key principles of the CRC: non-discrimination (Article 2 CRC), the best interests of the child (Article 3 CRC), survival and development (Article 6 CRC), and the right to be heard (Art. 12 CRC).



- ✓ I recognise, respect, and safeguard the concept of dignity associated with each child and young person as a rights holder and a valuable human being, with a unique personality, distinct needs, specific interests, and privacy.

HOW CAN I ENSURE AND PROMOTE THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION?



- ✓ I am aware of the principle of non-discrimination and the "zero tolerance" policy towards abuse or discrimination within Defence for Children Italia.



- ✓ I treat all persons with respect, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, skin color, language, religion, political beliefs, nationality, ethnic or social background, disability, or any other factor.



- ✓ I always maintain a respectful attitude and never use inappropriate language or suggestions that could provoke, harass, or belittle children and young people or show a lack of respect for their uniqueness.



HOW CAN I MINIMISE RISK SITUATIONS DURING DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN ITALIA ACTIVITIES?



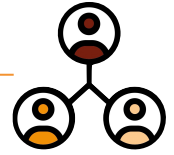
- ✓ I recognise the importance of a culture of openness and transparency among members, collaborators, children, and young people, as well as families and communities. I strive to maintain a culture of communication and trust so that concerns can be shared and discussed.



- ✓ I plan activities and organise the work environment in a way that minimizes the risk of harm, taking into account the age and development of the children and young people involved.



- ✓ I consider potential risks comprehensively (in all programs, projects, and activities) so that I can address and minimize them in the design of initiatives.



HOW CAN I ENSURE THAT I BEHAVE APPROPRIATELY TOWARDS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE?



- ✓ I am aware of the inappropriateness of certain physical contacts, and I will never engage in behaviours that could jeopardize the wellbeing of children, young people, or other vulnerable individuals.



- ✓ I do not act in ways that humiliate, belittle, or stigmatize children, nor do I perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- ✓ I do not react in a judgmental or negative manner towards children and young people, insinuating or openly questioning the credibility of their stories.
- ✓ I always use non-violent and positive attitudes with children and young people, and my interactions with them never go beyond the professional scope.
- ✓ Whenever possible I do not remain alone with any child or young person. If I am alone with a child or young person, the other team members are informed and I am available adhere to the principles of this Policy, paying particular attention to the wellbeing of the child.



- ✓ I am attentive to how children and young people feel during activities, and I review the project if I notice any discomfort or disinterest on their part in the proposed activities.
- ✓ I provide children with the opportunity to express their objections regarding the project/activity to a third party

HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF POSITIVE PEER RELATIONSHIPS?



- ✓ I recognise the importance of peer relationships in the development of children and young people.



- ✓ I closely observe peer relationships during activities and take action to prevent negative, violent, or abusive dynamics.
- ✓ I encourage peer relationships, with particular attention to situations of exclusion.



- ✓ I am aware of the influence that peer relationships can have on behaviour, dynamics, role models, and lifestyle.

HOW CAN I HAVE A POSITIVE ROLE IN THE CHILD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR FAMILY AND/OR SIGNIFICANT ADULTS?



- ✓ I understand the importance of the role of significant adults in the life of the child.



- ✓ I support the child's opinions and listen to their stories without judgment.
- ✓ I ensure that information concerning children, families, and communities remains confidential, following the principle of the child's best interest.
- ✓ I establish a network with the team responsible for the child.



- ✓ I am attentive to any changes in the child's behaviour in the presence of family members or other adults.
- ✓ I encourage, where possible and appropriate, the creation/maintenance of the child's relationship with their family of origin.

PROTECTION

HOW CAN I ENSURE CONSISTENT PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE?



- ✓ I am aware of situations that may pose risks to children and young people, know how to manage them, and how to report my concerns.



- ✓ I encourage children and young people to see themselves as rights holders on an ongoing basis.

- ✓ I inform children and young people about their rights while explaining to them, in age-appropriate language, what acceptable behaviour from adults towards them entails and the mechanisms for making complaints and reports available to them.



- ✓ I promote the empowerment of children and young people with my behaviour so that they can protect themselves to the best of their ability.



HOW CAN I ENHANCE PROTECTION THROUGH MY BEHAVIOUR?



- ✓ I am aware of the necessary balance of power between adults and children and young people.

- ✓ I commit to never abusing the power and influence I have due to my position and role.



- ✓ I show respect to all children and young people and take note of their reactions, adjusting my tone of voice and behaviours accordingly.



- ✓ I embrace a culture of support, respect, and tolerance, attentive to the needs of children and young people, and respond to them positively.

- ✓ I strive to be a positive role model for children and young people in every way.



HOW CAN I ENSURE PROPER USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA?



- ✓ I am aware that what is posted on social media must align with the values and principles of Defence for Children Italy and adhere to this Policy for the Protection and Wellbeing of Children and Adolescents.



- ✓ I do not post or share photos and/or articles that compromise the dignity of children and young people.
- ✓ I do not use social media to personally interact with children and/or their families or adults of reference without a clear and appropriate reason and/or within the scope of a specific project.



- ✓ I am aware of the role of social media today and so I make sure that I am also a positive role model in this respect.



HOW CAN I ENSURE THAT THE PRIVACY RIGHTS OF CHILDREN ARE RESPECTED?



- ✓ I am aware that some projects and activities collect sensitive information that is relevant to the privacy rights of children.
- ✓ I am aware that every person has a private life and acknowledge this aspect for children and young people as well.



- ✓ I respect and protect the privacy of children both during and after the activity and/or project, following the principle of their best interests.
- ✓ I securely store, as required by law, all paper and digital documents related to sensitive data of children.



- ✓ I handle any disclosures with respect and discretion, avoiding intrusiveness and following procedures based on the principle of the child's best interests.

RESPONSE

HOW TO ENSURE AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO ISSUES RELATED TO THE SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN?



- ✓ I am aware that to create a holistic intervention system around children and young people, the response should never be isolated and must aim to prevent the recurrence of a particular problem, focusing on restoring adequate conditions of safety and wellbeing for the child.



- ✓ I raise any doubts I may have regarding the Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy by sharing them with the service coordinator or the designated Child Safeguarding Officer.



- ✓ I commit to creating a culture of openness and mutual responsibility in the workplace to allow issues related to child safeguarding to come to light and be discussed, ensuring that any violations are addressed and countered.



HOW CAN I ENSURE THAT MY CONCERNS ARE ADDRESSED APPROPRIATELY?



- ✓ I am aware of situations that may pose risks to children, and I know how to handle them if they arise and how to report my concerns.

- ✓ I promptly report any suspicions to the designated Child Safeguarding Officer if I become aware of behaviour contrary to the principles of the Policy or this Code of Conduct.

- ✓ I remain vigilant and attentive, reporting any concerns or suspicions regarding a possible violation of the Policy or Code of Conduct to the designated Child Safeguarding Officer.

PARTICIPATION

HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE TO THE EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE?



- ✓ I understand that adequate and active listening is an essential element for protecting and promoting the rights of children, and that providing them with accurate information is important to assist them in making decisions that concern them.



- ✓ I prioritize moments and spaces for listening and dialogue between adults and children, asking them open-ended questions and welcoming their perspectives.



- ✓ I am mindful of my listening skills and am willing to improve them when necessary, actively contributing to the creation of more participatory contexts.



HOW CAN I ENSURE THAT CHILDREN ARE ADEQUATELY INFORMED ABOUT THE CHILD SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING POLICY?



- ✓ I am aware that children must be informed - in an age-appropriate language - about their rights, the existence of a Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy dedicated to them, and the procedures it contains.



- ✓ I make sure that communications and information provided about projects and activities are fully understood by the participating children.
- ✓ I inform children about their right to report incidents, raise concerns, or express discomfort.



- ✓ I am aware that adequate information is essential to ensure effective and genuine participation of the child.
- ✓ I am available whenever the child or their adults of reference want to talk to me and encourage them to do so.

HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE TO THE AUTONOMY AND EMPOWERMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE?



- ✓ I am aware of the resources and abilities of each child and young person.
- ✓ I understand that everyone is responsible for creating a supportive environment in which children are encouraged and able to express themselves and raise issues and difficulties that concern them.



- ✓ I try to involve children as much as possible in decision-making processes that affect them.
- ✓ I have regular exchanges with children and young persons about their wellbeing and encourage them to promptly communicate any concerns in an atmosphere of openness and transparency.
- ✓ I ensure children and young people can make decisions regarding matters that concern them.



- ✓ I strive to preserve children's autonomy and make sure not to take over tasks they can do on their own.
- ✓ I contribute to creating and/or supporting an environment in which children are heard and respected as individuals.

ANNEX

REFERRAL SYSTEM: USEFUL CONTACTS

WHO	WHEN	CONTACTS
Child Safeguarding Officer	In all circumstances where there is a suspicion, concern, or even a doubt about a child directly or indirectly connected to Defence for Children Italia.	Caterina Parodi Defence for Children Italia caterina@defenceforchildren.it † +351 914 955 515
Local Authorities, Police	Whenever there is reasonable suspicion, a report should be made to the local police authorities.	Tel. 113
Public Prosecutors, District Courts	Whenever there is reasonable suspicion, a report should be made to the competent authorities. The Public Prosecutor's Office will work in connection with local police authorities.	To be found at the local level
Juvenile Court	Whenever there is reasonable suspicion, a report should be made to the competent authorities. The Prosecutor at the Juvenile Court is responsible for the protection of the child and encourages the adoption of all necessary measures to restore their wellbeing and access protective measures.	To be found at the local level
Local Social Services	When there is a concern about abuse, local social services may conduct a psychosocial investigation to gather further information and assessment elements. However, if there is suspicion of danger to the child, it is also necessary to contact the police authorities.	To be found at the local level
Pediatric Emergency Department	Cases not only of physical and sexual abuse but also severe neglect, suicide attempts or self-harm, running away from home, domestic violence, drug and alcohol-related incidents, catastrophic events (accidents, earthquakes, floods, kidnappings),...	Tel.114 www.114.it
Emergency Room	Whenever there is a medical emergency.	Tel.118

REPORTING FLOWCHART



WHO CAN REPORT?

Everyone involved in Defence for Children Italy activities: staff, collaborators, partners, volunteers, interns and/or children.



WHAT TO REPORT?

Concerns about suspected, potential or actual abuse or violence against children or any violation of the provisions of this Policy.



WHEN AND HOW TO REPORT?

As soon as possible, no later than 24 hours through the Reporting Form. If this is not possible for expediency reasons, the report should be made by phone or in person.



TO WHOM?

To the CSO: Caterina Parodi (caterina@defenceforchildren.it). In case the suspected abuser is the CSO the matter should be reported to the Director, Pippo Costella (costella@mac.com)



WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

The CSO analyses the information received immediately or as soon as possible (no later than 24 hours), involving, if necessary and appropriate, the person who reported the matter and always acting in the best interests of the child.

GUIDELINES FOR RECOGNISING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN¹³

The ability to recognise violence against children can depend both on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence and on the knowledge and information possessed. There are commonly three stages in the identification of violence against children:



Phase 1: Considering the Possibility

The possibility of violence or abuse should be considered if a child appears to have suffered suspicious harm for which no reasonable explanation can be offered. It should also be considered if the child seems distressed without an obvious reason or exhibits persistent or new behavioural problems. The possibility of abuse should also be considered when unusual behaviours emerge or the child appears fearful in the presence of parents/adults of reference or other children, or if the child reports it naturally. Neglect may be present even when there are brief periods of improvement.



Phase 2: Remaining Attentive to Signs of Mistreatment or Abuse

Signs of violence or abuse can be physical, behavioural, or developmental and can exist in relationships between children and parents/adults of reference or between children and other individuals, including family members. Testimonies should always be taken very seriously and acted upon accordingly, following the procedures of this policy. In the presence of subtle signs, careful investigation should be conducted, avoiding direct interrogation. Play activities such as drawing or storytelling, for example, may reveal useful information.



Phase 3: Recording Information

If dealing with a case of violence or abuse, it is necessary to gather as much information as possible to get an overview and inform the CSO. Observations must be accurately recorded and, if possible, include details such as dates, times, names, places, context, and any other relevant information (reporting form). Furthermore, attention must be paid to how such information is stored and who can access it.

¹³ Department of Children and Youth Affairs, *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (Government Publications Dublin 2011) 10-1.



HOW TO HANDLE A DISCLOSURE FROM A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON?

When a child discloses abuse, it is essential to take the matter very seriously and be prepared to address it promptly and appropriately. The attitude of the person receiving the disclosure is crucial for both the child's wellbeing and to ensure that their future actions do not jeopardize any legal action to be taken against the perpetrator. First and foremost, it must be clear that it takes a great deal of courage for a child to come forward and disclose abuse, as the fear that no one will believe their words, among other factors, often inhibits this act. Therefore, throughout the disclosure phase, attention must be paid to remaining calm and showing support. The following guidelines can help reduce the risk of causing further trauma and/or compromising the actions of the relevant authorities during the disclosure phase:¹⁴

Listen:

- ✓ Move to an appropriate environment for listening to a child. Ensure that the situation is confidential and comfortable.
- ✓ Listen carefully and attentively.
- ✓ Make eye contact with the child, without showing shock or disbelief.
- ✓ Convey trust and respect by taking what is disclosed seriously.
- ✓ Allow the child to use their words to explain the issue and avoid asking overly complex or leading questions (ones that induce a particular response).
- ✓ Communicate with the child in a manner appropriate to their age, maturity, and understanding.

React:

- ✓ Ask open-ended questions like "Is there anything else you want to tell me?"
- ✓ Let the child know what you will do next and ensure they understand the procedures that will follow.
- ✓ Record everything that is disclosed, using the child's words. Also, take note of what you have seen and heard. Distinguish between what was told to you and what you perceived/saw/heard. Accuracy is crucial at this stage of the procedure.
- ✓ Do not take any actions that may compromise any future investigation or disciplinary procedure, such as interviewing the alleged victim or potential witnesses, or informing the alleged perpetrator, parents, or other adults of reference for the child.
- ✓ Complete the report as soon as possible, reporting the issue to the CSO.

Reassure:

- ✓ Let the child know that they did the right thing by disclosing the incident. This can have a significant impact, especially on children who had kept the abuse a secret.
- ✓ Assure them that it is not their fault. Reassure them that what happened is not their fault and that you will do your best to help them.
- ✓ Do not promise to keep the testimony secret, explaining that you will need to tell some people what happened, but they are trustworthy individuals whose role is to protect children.
- ✓ Be supportive, non-judgmental. Do not express negative opinions.
- ✓ Do not express opinions about the subject or the person who perpetrated the abuse.



¹⁴ British Council, *Guidance on Handling Disclosure from a Child* <https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/handling_disclosure_from_a_child_0.pdf>





What to Say During a Disclosure:

Ask open-ended questions.

Repeat the last words in an interrogative manner.

"I believe you."

"I will do everything I can to help you."

"I'm glad you told me."

"You are not to blame. It's not your fault."

"You did the right thing by telling me."



What Not to Say During a Disclosure:

"You should have told someone earlier."

"I can't believe it! I'm shocked!"

"Oh, this explains a lot."

"Oh no, it's impossible, they are my friend."

"I won't tell anyone else."

"Why didn't you tell me earlier?"

"What were you doing there?"

"Why didn't you stop it?"

"What did you do to make it happen?"

"Are you telling the truth?"

"Why? How? When? Where? Who?"

ETHICAL RESEARCH INVOLVING CHILDREN¹⁵

Alongside the rights-based and holistic approach to the CRC, Defence for Children Italia shares and adheres to the philosophy, principles, and charter of the project "International Charter for Ethical Research Involving Children."

In this section, you can find the general guidelines and underlying philosophy promoted by Defence for Children Italia. More information can be found on the website www.childethics.com.

Respect extends to all children involved in the research, not just those directly involved in the process.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION FOR RESEARCH:

- ➔ Always clearly define the purpose and aim of research involving children.
- ➔ Indirect research, which is less likely to have a direct impact on children, is preferred but must still be conducted following ethical guidelines.
- ➔ Ensure maximum protection for child participants and their communities involved in the project.
- ➔ In accordance with sections 2.1 and 2.5 of Defence for Children Italia's Policy, conduct risk assessment for all research involving children, considering the possibility of inappropriate use of research and its potential negative effects on the lives of children involved.
- ➔ Defence for Children Italia fully supports the International Charter for Ethical Research Involving Children.

¹⁵ Based on UNICEF's Office of Research, Innocenti and others, "ERIC: Ethical Research Involving Children", www.childethics.com.



INTERNATIONAL CHARTER FOR ETHICAL RESEARCH INVOLVING CHILDREN

As a community that promotes research activities involving children and adolescents, we are committed to supporting high-quality ethical research that respects their dignity, rights, and wellbeing. The following seven intentions guide our work:

Anyone undertaking research involving children must follow strict ethics.

The research community, including all those involved in funding and reviewing research, must ensure the highest ethical standards are met in all research involving children, regardless of the approach, topic, or research context.

Respect for the dignity of children is fundamental to ethical research.

Ethical research is conducted with integrity and is respectful of children, their opinions, and their cultures. Thoughtful involvement requires research to recognise their unique status, evolving capacities, and appreciate their different contributions.

Research involving children must be fair and equitable.

Children and young persons involved in research have the right to fair treatment, meaning they should be treated the same way, with benefits and burdens distributed equally. There should be no unjust exclusions, and any discrimination leading to exclusion should be strongly opposed.

Ethical research benefits children and young persons.

Researchers must ensure that research maximizes benefits for children, either individually or as a social group. The researcher is personally responsible for assessing, even before undertaking the research process, whether their activities will benefit children and young persons and whether it is appropriate to proceed with the work.

The Principle of "Do No Harm."

Researchers must work to prevent any potential harm and assess whether involving children and young persons is justified.

Research must always obtain informed and ongoing consent from child participants.

Consent must always be sought from child subjects, along with that of parents or guardians, and comply with any other necessary requirements for ethical research to proceed. Consent must be based on a balanced and fair understanding of the purpose of the activities during and after the research process. Any dissent and subsequent withdrawal by children and young persons must always be treated with respect.

Ethical research requires continuous reflection.

Research activity involving children and young persons is important and requires researchers to carefully reflect on their practice, beyond the formal requirements imposed. This, therefore, requires constant attention to the assumptions, values, beliefs, and practices that influence the research process and its impact on children and young persons.¹⁶

¹⁶ ERIC: Ethical Research Involving Children, <https://childethics.com/charter/>



APPENDIX

COMMITMENT STATEMENT TO DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN ITALY'S CHILD SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING POLICY

Staff, collaborators, volunteers, interns, visitors, and contractors

"I, the undersigned, _____, have read and understood the rules and guidelines outlined in Defence for Children Italia's Childhood and Adolescence Protection and Wellbeing Policy. I agree with the principles contained therein and am aware of the importance of their application in all the Association's activities and initiatives.

I also commit to embracing Defence for Children Italia's systemic framework for prevention, protection, and intervention, guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Lastly, I commit to respecting 'Knowing, Knowing How, and Knowing Being - A Map of Conducts and Behaviours of Defence for Children Italia.'

Name _____

Title / Role _____

Signature

Date

CHILD SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Project/activity/event title:

Duration of this partnership agreement:

Project/activity/event scope:

(briefly describe the activities and in particular the direct or indirect actions with children, including advocacy)

Partners' roles within the project/activity/event:

(Delineate these as precisely as possible to identify possible safeguarding gaps)

Description of child safeguarding responsibilities among the partners from conception and design through to implementation and follow-up:

(Discuss exactly who does what, and when, in terms of child safeguarding. Ensure child safeguarding is a routine agenda item for partnership meetings, you may wish to appoint a focal point common to all partners, and communicate that to all involved, ensure shared understanding of when a concern or incident needs to be reported to the relevant authorities.)

This agreement foresees partner's obligation to report any child safeguarding concerns within the partnership. If, in the course of a partnership, it comes to light that the partner acted in violation of this child safeguarding and wellbeing policy, this constitutes grounds for termination of contract and/or interruption of the partnership. Defence for Children Italia cannot be liable for any unreported concerns and this agreement does not impede Defence for Children Italia or the partner(s) from meeting its/their own reporting obligations and referring any issue to relevant authorities in case of a disagreement on the appropriate course of action.

Dated and signed by all partners:

REPORTING FORM

If, during your activities with Defence for Children Italia, you become aware of risks to the protection and safety of child or young person, please complete this form as accurately as possible for reporting the case. Naturally, any concerns, in line with the principle of the child's best interests, must be immediately reported to the designated person in charge using any means (phone, in-person, email, etc.). This form can be completed within the next 24 hours.

The report must be completed, signed, and delivered to the Child and Adolescent Protection and Wellbeing Officer or the Director, who will analyze the issue in accordance with this Childhood and Adolescence Protection and Wellbeing Policy and national laws.

Please note that the mandate to investigate allegations of abuse and/or violence against children and young persons in Italy lies with the police and local social services, which should be involved by the responsible person in every case of suspected, alleged, or proven abuse or violence against children and young persons.

This reporting template must be kept in a secure location and treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Case Number

202__ - 0__ (To be filled in by the Child Safeguarding officer)

Reporting Person's Information

Name and Surname _____

Role _____ Organisation _____

Relationship with the child _____

Contact Information _____

Information about the Child

Name and Surname _____

Gender _____ Age _____

Parents or adult references _____

Reasons for the Report

What is the reason for the report? _____

Is this concern based on information you have directly observed or reported by someone else?

_____ If yes, who? _____

Date of the alleged abuse _____ Location of the alleged abuse _____

Name of the alleged perpetrator _____

Any relationship with the child (if applicable) _____

Nature of the suspicions _____

Personal observations (visible injuries, emotional state of the child, etc.)

[N.B. Please make a clear distinction between facts, opinions, and hearsay].

Actions Taken

Where does the child live/where is the child now, and who is responsible for the them?

Is the child safe? If not, alternative solutions need to be arranged.

Are other children or young persons involved in the alleged abuse?

Who else is aware of this? _____

Any other information

I declare that the information I have provided on this form is true:

Signature

Date

Received by the Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer

Signature

Date

If a concern is not reported to the authorities or the Child Safeguarding services, by the CSO, the following steps must be taken:

- ➔ The reasons for not reporting are logged within the template below;
- ➔ If any other actions are taken as a result of the concern, these must be logged;
- ➔ The person who raised the concern should be given a clear written explanation of the reasons why the concern is not being reported further;
- ➔ The person should also be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to make a report to the authorities.

FOLLOW-UP TO REPORTING:

Role:

Signature:

Date:

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN ITALIA'S ACTIVITIES

Thank you for your participation in this project and welcome* to this activity! Your participation is really important to us! Before we start, we have to make sure that you understand what is required of you.

DATE:

PROJECT:

	YES	NO
I have been explained the entire activity in a way that I understood.		
I was given the opportunity to ask questions, and I understood the explanation without difficulty.		
I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I can leave at any time without having to explain why if I don't want to.		
I understand that the results of my participation may be used in documents, articles, or presentations by the association.		
I understand that my name will remain confidential and will not appear in any document, article, or presentation.		
I accept to have photographs taken and used for the activity without showing my face		
I accept to have the activities recorded for research purposes.		
I want to take part in this activity.		

If you answered "yes", you are ready to sign below and start the activity!

If not, you can talk to the staff of Defence for Children Italy.

I UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING AND I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE PART IN THIS ACTIVITY.

NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

CONSENT FROM PARENT / GUARDIAN / RESPONSIBLE ADULT

NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

DCI ITALY'S STAFF CONDUCTING THE ACTIVITIES

NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

*Defence for Children International Italia acts in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data (General Data Protection Regulation). We keep your personal data safe and protected from unauthorized or unlawful processing, as well as from accidental loss, destruction, or damage. We will use your data only for the purposes of the project and will delete them upon its completion.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN CAMPAIGNS AND COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES OF DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN ITALIA

Your participation is truly important to us, thank you! Before we begin, we need to make sure that you understand what we will be doing and how we will use the collected materials.

DATE: _____

PROJECT: _____

	I WANT THIS	I DON'T WANT THIS
To be photographed and have these photos used in the project without showing my face.		
To be filmed and have these videos used in the project without showing my face.		
To potentially be interviewed by a journalist (e.g., for radio, television, newspapers, etc.).		
To use material created by me, such as drawings, texts, art, songs, etc., within Defence for Children Italia's projects to amplify the voices of children.		
To use phrases spoken by me within Defence for Children Italia's projects to amplify the voices of children.		
I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I can choose not to participate at any time. Defence for Children Italia has informed me about how and when the materials will be used.		

I UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING AND I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE PART IN THIS ACTIVITY.

NAME
SIGNATURE
DATE

CONSENT FROM PARENT / GUARDIAN / RESPONSIBLE ADULT

NAME
SIGNATURE
DATE

DCI ITALY'S STAFF CONDUCTING THE ACTIVITIES

NAME
SIGNATURE
DATE

*Defence for Children International Italia acts in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data (General Data Protection Regulation). We keep your personal data safe and protected from unauthorized or unlawful processing, as well as from accidental loss, destruction, or damage. We will use your data only for the purposes of the project and will delete them upon its completion.



membro in italia
del Servizio Sociale
Internazionale

Defence for Children International Italia OdV

Operational Headquarters: Via Bellucci 4-6, 16124 Genova
Social Headquarters: Piazza Don Gallo, 5-6-7, 16124 Genova
Tel.010 0899050 | Fax 010 0899051 | Fiscal Code 97457060586



www.defenceforchildren.it