



# **Child Protection Policy of the Polish Robert Schuman Foundation**

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*The child protection policy has been prepared based on the document "The International Child Safeguarding Standards and how to implement them" [accessed 25.06.2024], the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the knowledge and materials of other civil society organisations, most notably those involved in the implementation of children's rights.*



## STANDARD I. POLICY

Part of the Schuman Foundation's activities are directed towards children and aim to develop them as conscious, socially and civically active Europeans. The Foundation carries out activities for children, usually in cooperation with educational institutions. The Foundation's team - staff, associates and volunteers - makes every effort to create a friendly environment for children's development, so that its activities are safe for children and do not cause them harm or expose them to harm.

The purpose of this policy is to sensitise all staff, associates and volunteers to the importance of child protection activities, to identify actions to keep children safe and to develop the Foundation's work culture based on children's rights.

The Policy has been prepared in line with the Child Safeguarding Standards introduced by the Act of 28 July 2023 amending the Act - Family and Guardianship Code and certain other acts (the so-called Protection of Minors Act) and based on the four standards developed for the document 'The International Child Safeguarding Standards and how to implement them'.

### § 1.

#### **Explanation of terms**

The **Policy** is understood to mean the Child Protection Policy applied in the course of the activities carried out by the employees and collaborators of the Polish Robert Schuman Foundation.

**The Foundation** and **PFRS** shall be understood to mean the Polish Robert Schuman Foundation.



1. **A child**, under Polish law, is any person up to the age of 18.
2. **An employee of the Foundation** is a person employed by the Foundation under an employment contract.
3. **An associate of the Foundation** is a person who is employed under a civil law contract or who performs unpaid work for the Foundation as part of an internship programme on the basis of an internship agreement, a volunteer agreement, an apprenticeship agreement or another cooperation agreement.
4. **The Foundation Team** is understood to be the staff and associates of the Foundation.
5. **The Co-ordinator** is the person responsible for the Child Protection Policy, the Director's nominated member of staff who oversees its implementation at PFRS.
6. **Harm** is any intentional or unintentional act, or failure to act, by an individual, an institution or society as a whole, and any result of such action or inaction, which violates the equal rights and freedoms of children and/or interferes with their optimal development.

There are 4 basic forms of harm:

- **Physical violence** against a child is violence whereby a child suffers actual physical harm or is potentially threatened with such harm. This harm occurs as a result of an action or inaction on the part of a parent or other person responsible for the child, or on the part of someone the child trusts or has authority over. Physical violence against a child may be a repeated or one-off act.

- **Psychological child abuse** is a chronic, non-physical, harmful interaction between a child and caregiver, involving both actions and inactions. It includes, but is not limited to: emotional unavailability, emotional neglect, a relationship with the child based on hostility, blaming, denigration, rejection, developmentally inappropriate or inconsistent interactions with the child, failure to recognise or acknowledge the child's individuality and psychological boundaries between parent and child.



- **Sexual exploitation** of a child is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that the child is not capable of fully understanding and giving informed consent to, and/or to which the child is not developmentally mature and cannot consent in a legally valid manner, and/or which is incompatible with the legal or moral norms of a given society. Sexual exploitation occurs when such activity occurs between a child and an adult or a child and another child, if these persons, due to their age or stage of development, are in a relationship of care, dependence, authority.

- **Child neglect** is the chronic or incidental failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs and/or to respect his or her basic rights, resulting in disruption to his or her health and/or developmental difficulties. Neglect occurs in a child's relationship with a person who has a duty of care, nurture, concern and protection to the child.

## **STANDARD II. STAFF**

### **§ 2.**

#### **The Foundation's organisational culture in the context of the Child Protection Policy**

1. The Foundation has high ethical and moral standards which are required of the members of the Foundation Team.
2. The team's organisational culture is based on mutual respect, dialogue, shared values and belief in the Foundation's mission.
3. Members of the Foundation Team are required to know the rights of the child.
4. The entire Foundation Team works to protect children from abuse.
5. Educational activities for children are prepared by professionals, adapted to the children's developmental level.
6. Child safety provisions are included in the contracts signed by the Foundation for child-directed activities.
7. The Foundation's partners, where there are volunteers working with the Foundation, are required to train volunteers on the safety rules for children in their establishment.
8. Recruitment of the Foundation's employees shall be carried out in accordance with the obligations of



employers to safely recruit employees, in accordance with the provisions of Art.21, paragraphs 1-11. of the Act of 28 July 2023 amending the Family and Guardianship Code and other acts (PL).

9. The Director of the Foundation is obliged, within the limits of his/her abilities, to verify the veracity of this information, including verifying this information in the Sexual Offenders Register.
10. When recruiting members of the Foundation Team who will have contact with children, the job/volunteer advertisement includes a description of the form of work with children and the competences required for this.
11. Candidates' competence in this area, as well as the attitude towards children and the values on which the candidate bases the cooperation with children, are analysed - through the information provided in the recruitment form and during the interview.
12. Candidates are asked whether they have been convicted of an offence against sexual freedom, morality or an offence of violence against a child and whether they have any criminal proceedings pending in this respect.
13. The information, obtained in accordance with the provisions of Art.21, paragraphs 1-11. of the Act of 28 July 2023 amending the Family and Guardianship Code and other acts (PL) shall be recorded by the employer in the form of a printout and attached to the employee's personnel file or to the documentation concerning the person admitted to Foundation-related activities.
14. The director, in order to identify the employee, must have from the candidate the identifier of information issued from the Polish register if accessing the register online, or his/her data: name, date of birth, PESEL, family name, father's name, mother's name, contact details of the candidate.
15. New members of the Foundation Team receive this policy on commencement, including the Division of Responsibilities for Implementation of the Child Protection Policy attached as Appendix 4 of the Policy.
16. All members of the Team shall make a written declaration that they have read the Policy. The statement is attached as Appendix 3 of the Policy.



## **STANDARD III. PROCEDURES**

### **§ 3.**

#### **Responding to risk factors for child abuse**

1. Staff are aware of, and apply, the Foundation Team and Child-to-Child and Child-to-Child Safe Relationship Rules and Requirements set out in the Foundation. The principles and requirements are attached as Appendix 1 and 2 to the Policy.
2. Any information about suspected child abuse is taken seriously and investigated, whether it comes from a child/carer/professional and whether it concerns suspected abuse by another child, a child's carer, a professional or a member of the Foundation Team.
3. In a situation of child abuse by a member of the Foundation Team, a witness to the incident is obliged to draw the attention of such a person and report the incident to the Director of the Foundation.
4. Child abuse situations observed by the Foundation Team are reported to the Foundation Board. The Foundation Board intervenes with the relevant persons/services, including the Public Prosecutor's Office.
5. In the event of an imminent threat to a child's life or health, the member of the Foundation Team who has obtained such information shall intervene immediately by telephoning the relevant police unit immediately to report the imminent threat or breach to the child's life and health.
6. All intervention activities are documented and communicated to the Policy Coordinator.



#### §4.

##### **Rules on the protection of the child's image**

1. The Foundation ensures standards for the protection of children's personal data in accordance with current data protection legislation.
2. Materials must not show children in an unfavourable light.
3. The recording and making public by a member of the Foundation Team or any other person of the child's image recorded in any form (photograph, audio/video recording) is not done against the child's will and it requires the written consent of the child's guardian.
4. In order to obtain the consent referred to above, the Foundation Team must contact the child's guardian and agree how to obtain consent.
5. If the image of the child is only a detail of a whole, such as a gathering, a landscape, a public event, the consent of the parent or legal guardian is not required for the recording of the child's image.
6. The written consent referred to in paragraph 8 should indicate where the recorded image will be placed and in what context it will be used.



## STANDARD IV. MONITORING

### § 5.

#### **Policy implementation and monitoring**

1. The Child Protection Policy of the Polish Robert Schuman Foundation enters into force upon publication of its full version by the Management Board of PFRS in a manner accessible to all employees/co-workers of PFRS and upon posting on the Foundation's website: [www.schuman.pl](http://www.schuman.pl).
2. The PFRS Board appoints a Coordinator responsible for coordinating the implementation of and compliance with the provisions of the Child Protection Policy. A list of the Coordinator's responsibilities in this regard is available in Appendix 4 of the Policy.
3. Whenever changes to the Policy are made, they must be announced to all employees, associates and volunteers of PFRS.
4. The Director of the Foundation and the Coordinator are responsible for receiving reports of child endangerment incidents.
5. All employees, associates and volunteers shall make a written declaration that they have read the Policy. The statement is attached as Appendix 3 of the Policy.
6. The policy is approved and signed by the Director or the Legal Representative of PFRS.





## **Appendix 1**

### **PRINCIPLES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR A SAFE RELATIONSHIP**

#### **FOUNDATION TEAM - CHILD**

##### **I. Activities with children**

1. Children's contributions to activities should be valued and respected, actively involved and treated equally regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, ability/disability, social, ethnic, cultural, religious status and worldview.
2. Favouritism towards children must be avoided.
3. It is forbidden to enter into a relationship of an inappropriate nature with a child. This includes sexual comments, jokes, gestures and sharing erotic and pornographic content with children in whatever form.
4. It is not permitted to capture a child's image (filming, voice recording, photographing) for private use.
5. Alcohol, tobacco products or illegal substances must not be offered to children or used in the presence of children.
6. It is not allowed to accept money or gifts from the child or the child's guardians expressing some kind of dependence or financial benefit. This does not apply to voluntary, traditional, occasional gifts related, for example, to holidays.
7. The Foundation's staff, associates and volunteers are never left alone with the children - the children are always looked after by a responsible person - a parent or guardian (e.g. a teacher).



## **II. Physical contact with children**

1. acceptable physical contact must be naturally related to play, helping the child with hygiene activities, the need to keep the child safe, the need to reassure the child: it responds to the child's needs at the time, takes into account the child's age, developmental stage, gender, cultural and situational context.
2. However, it is not possible to set a universal appropriateness for all such physical contact, as behaviour that is appropriate with one child may be inappropriate with another. Professional judgement should always be used, listening, observing and noting the child's reaction, asking the child's consent to physical contact (e.g. hugging, helping them to the toilet) and remaining aware that even with good intentions such contact may be misinterpreted by the child or third parties.
3. physical contact with the child must never be implicit or hidden, involve any gratification or be the result of a power relationship.
4. in situations involving grooming and hygiene activities with the child, non-essential physical contact with the child must be avoided.
- 5 Any violent action against a child is unacceptable.
- 6 It is not permitted to hit, poke, push or in any way violate the physical integrity of a child.
7. a child must not be touched in a way that may be considered indecent or inappropriate.
8. do not engage in activities such as pretend fighting with children or violent physical play.
9. you should always be prepared to explain your actions.



### **III. Principles for organising support for children with disabilities and special needs**

1. The Foundation makes every effort to ensure that children with disabilities and special needs are able to participate fully in the Foundation's activities.
2. The Foundation team ensures that these children are not discriminated against in any form by anyone.

### **IV. Online safety**

1. Do not make contact with children by accepting or sending invitations on social media.
2. When the Foundation Team organises activities involving children's use of the Internet, the Team is obliged to take measures to protect children from accessing content that may pose a risk to their proper development.



## **Appendix 2**

### **PRINCIPLES FOR SAFE CHILD-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS**

1. PFRS respects the law as well as the obligations under the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the UN General Assembly.
2. A properly organised educational process involves the formation of mutual relationships between children.
- 3 Relationships between children are formed in a way that is adapted to the child's needs and perceptual abilities.
- 4 Behaviour that is not allowed in relations between children is in particular: physical violence, verbal aggression, destruction of other people's property, extortion, blackmail.



**Appendix 3**

Warsaw, on.....

Name:

place of work:

position:

**STATEMENT**

I, the undersigned, declare that I have read the "Child Protection Policy" of the Polish Robert Schuman Foundation and undertake to abide by it.

.....

signature



## **Appendix 4**

### **Division of responsibilities for implementation Child Protection Policy**

#### **PFRS Board:**

- Approves and publish the Policy, approves amendments.
- Resolves bindingly any doubts regarding the interpretation of the provisions of the Policy.
- Appoints a Policy Coordinator.
- Communicates significant modifications to the PFRS Board for consultation.
- Initiates proceedings in the event of suspected child abuse by a PFRS employee/co-worker.

#### **Child Protection Policy Coordinator:**

- Coordinates the preparation and delivery of initial and refresher training on the Policy.
- Maintains a list of frequently asked questions.
- Conducts monitoring of the application of the provisions of the Policy in the form of a survey and consultation at least once every 2 years by:
  - a) Conduct a survey once every 2 years to check the operation and relevance of the provisions of the Child Protection Policy and the level of awareness of these among members of the Foundation Team;
  - b) Carry out an internal audit once every 2 years of the level of development of the standards introduced by the Policy using tools developed by Keeping Children Safe (e.g. Keeping Children Safe self-assessment tool and the self-assessment web),



- Once every two years, or more often if necessary, make proposals to the Board for changes to the Policy based on the results of the surveys.
- Clarifies, in consultation with the Board, any doubts regarding the application of the Policy.
- Explains, in consultation with the Board of Directors, violations of the provisions of the Policy.

**Human Resources Department:**

- Provides each new employee with the Child Protection Policy for familiarisation and collects in the employee file, in addition to other documents indicated by law, statements of familiarity with the aforementioned documents.

**Foundation team:**

- They are familiar with and comply with the provisions of this Policy.
- Before working with children, they shall make the appropriate declarations to the employer in accordance with the applicable legislation.
- When child abuse is suspected, they report the matter to the Policy Coordinator.
- Raise concerns about the interpretation of the provisions of this Policy with the Policy Coordinator.
- Report violations of the Policy to the Policy Coordinator.

***Child Protection Policy adopted by the Resolution of the Board of the Polish Robert Schuman Foundation on 3.07.2024***