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# Child Protection Policy

## 'Hope For Children' UNCRC Policy Center (hereinafter "The Organization")

**Whereas** the Organization is a humanitarian organization with its headquarters in Cyprus,

**And,**

**Whereas** the Organization is entirely dedicated to the promotion, protection and respect of the rights of the child,

**And,**

**Whereas** the Organization aims to advocate and to protect children's rights based on the standards and principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and European Union law and principles,

**And,**

**Whereas** the Organization bases its vision and mission on the principle of ensuring the best interests of the child in all actions affecting children,

**And,**

**Whereas** the Organization fully endorses the principle of no discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth, sexual orientation or other status,

**The Organization adopts the following policy on child protection,**



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## **PREAMBLE:**

The Organization is determined to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to protect children and young people from harm and/or any other impairment and/or damage that affects children. This policy establishes the Organization's position, role and responsibilities and clarifies what is expected from everybody involved in the Organization. It clearly highlights and emphasizes the importance placed by the Organization in the protection of children and young people, which are the focal point of the Organization's activities.

Every child and young person who participates and/or is otherwise involved in the Organization's activities should be able to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm and/or any other impairment and/or damage. This is the responsibility of every adult involved in the Organization. The Organization recognizes that child abuse can be an emotive subject. It is important to understand the feelings involved and not to allow them to interfere with judgment about any action that needs to be taken.

The Organization recognizes its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

The United Nation's (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as anyone who has not reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital, in prison or in a Young Offenders' Institution does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection.

The Organization adheres to the principles enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the Council of Europe Convention on Human Rights and all relevant international, regional and domestic instruments on human rights and the rights of the child and expects all adults involved in the Organization to fully encompass and realize the principles enshrined therein.



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## PART I:

### The Organization will ensure that:

**Article 1:** The welfare of the child and/or vulnerable adult is paramount and it is our utmost concern. Within the context of this policy 'child' and 'children' can also be taken to cover vulnerable adult(s), namely those persons who lack the absolute most basic human life skills.

**Article 2:** All children whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/ or sexual orientation have the right to be protected from harm and all adults involved in the Organization should be fully respect, protect and promote this right.

**Article 3:** All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately in accordance with the Organization's policies and guidelines and in full compliance with the vision and aims of the Organization and the relevant laws.

**Article 4:** All staff, including volunteers and any other person involved in the Organization (paid/ unpaid) working in the Organization have a responsibility to report concerns to (their supervisor/head of their department) as soon as those concerns are being raised or as soon as possible after those concerns have being raised.

**Article 5:** All concerns regarding individuals' practice/s should be reported to your supervisor or head of your department as soon as those concerns are being raised or as soon as possible after those concerns have being raised.

**Article 6:** Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by adults and often by people they know and trust. It refers to the damage done to a child's physical or mental health. Children can be abused within or outside their family, at school or in a sports or community environment. Vulnerable adults may also be subject to similar abuse. The Organization expects all persons involved in the Organization to fully understand and acquaint themselves with this term.



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## PART II:

**The Organization is committed to the following values and principles, which should be fully promoted, protected and respected by all persons involved in the Organization,**

**Article 7:** The Organization values children and their protection.

**Article 8:** The Organization is committed to protecting the personal data of children.

**Article 9:** The Organization wants to safeguard children through the provision of courses/presentation/workshops and other activities that the Organization implements.

**Article 10:** The Organization wants to fulfill its duty of care and provide a safe assessment environment or safe training or work placement, with full respect of human rights and with full endorsement of the principle of non-discrimination.

**Article 11:** The Organization wishes to give clear direction to staff in situations that may be distressing to all people, including children, involved in the Organization.

**Article 12:** The Organization wishes to address and reduce to the fullest possible extent any harm to which a child is being or may be subjected to.

## PART III:

**The Organization notes the following in relation to what it is expected from all persons involved in the Organization to do in cases that a child / young person reports abuse:**

**Article 13:** If someone discloses that they are being abused, then upon receiving the information you should,

- (a) React calmly.
- (b) Reassure the child that they were right to tell and that they are not to blame and take what the child says seriously.
- (c) Be careful not to be deemed as putting words into the child's mouth, the easiest way of doing this is by asking questions.
- (d) Do not promise confidentiality.
- (e) Inform the child/ young person what you will do next.
- (f) Make a full and written record of what has been said as soon as possible and do not delay in passing on the information.



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**Article 14:** The report should include:

- (a) The child's known details including name, date of birth, address and contact numbers where possible.
- (b) Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- (c) The nature of the allegation, including dates, times, specific factors and any other relevant information.
- (d) Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- (e) A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioral changes.
- (f) Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- (g) The child's account if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- (h) Accounts from others, including colleagues and parents.

**Article 15:** Things to be aware of:

- (a) Staff/associates and any other person/s involved in the Organization should not undertake any investigations themselves, referring evidence instead to the appropriate authorities, such as Social Welfare Services and/or the Police.
- (b) Staff/associates and any other person/s involved in the Organization may make preliminary enquiries, if the incident concerns the child's school. The school has the principal responsibility for dealing with child protection issues and will involve the appropriate authorities.

## **PART IV:**

**The Organization reiterates and understands that,**

**Article 16:** The majority of the staff/interns/associates/chairs of the UNCRC Policy Center come in contact with children and young people. This contact may be direct, such as provision of counseling services, answering telephone calls to the Helplines and Hotlines, working in the Organization's children's shelter or indirect for example through an email report/social media message where the child asks for help.



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**Article 17:** Additionally, staff and associates will have occasional contact with children in schools or on work placements and may be privy to information or situations which give cause for concern.

**Article 18:** Wherever staff/associates are required to have contact with children, the Organization will only recruit or appoint staff who are deemed suitable to work with children, based on objective criteria.

**Article 19:** Staff/associates coming in contact with children are requested to submit to the Organization a certificate of clean criminal record and a certificate of clean criminal record in relation to crimes against children.

**Article 20:** Staff/associates are required to sign a declaration of confidentiality upon the initiation of their cooperation with the Organization.

**Article 21:** Staff/associates should acquire a written consent of parents or legal guardians for all activities with children.

**Article 22:** Staff and visitors must conduct themselves appropriately in the presence of children and always in line with the Organization's policies.

**Article 23:** Staff/associates working with children, will be issued with a copy of this policy and this policy will be also available in an electronic form. Any member of staff found in breach of the guidance will be subject to immediate removal from their position/contract, as this policy forms an integral part of such a contract

**Article 24:** Staff/associates who engage in external placements for work experience and training programmes are required to ensure that placement providers are aware of child protection issues and obligations when seen to be violated based on the UN Convention on the rights of the Child (UNCRC).

## **PART V:**

**Article 25:** The Organization notes that all provisions of this Policy are material and that all persons involved in the Organization need to adhere to these.



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