

Child Protection Policy

Prague Pride acknowledges as its fundamental duty to protect children engaged within its programs and activities from any forms of abuse and exploitation. By determining PP's commitment to protect children and setting the key thresholds of behavior desired or unacceptable, this Policy has the following objectives:

- To protect children engaged in PP's programs from all forms of abuse and exploitation
- To protect PP staff and volunteers from false or malicious allegations of misconduct
- To protect PP's organizational integrity and reputation, as well as that of its partners, by introducing sound Child Protection Policy that helps to deter from unacceptable behavior

The Child protection policy is reviewed at least every 3 years.

Terminology

Child means person under the age of eighteen (18) years as defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Child protection is an activity or initiative designed to protect children from any form of harm, particularly arising from child abuse or neglect.

Child abuse is the physical, sexual, emotional mistreatment or neglect of a child resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

Applicability

The Child Protection Policy is applicable for all full time and part time PP staff, volunteers, interns, and partner organizations.

PP upholds the rights and obligations of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and so is dedicated to protect children engaged in its programs from harm, exploitation and abuse. Accordingly, PP is committed to implementing and maintaining child protection measures. These include:

- This Policy is introduced and further accessible to all new staff and associates.
- Analysis of child protection risks is included in projects that involve direct engagement with children (see details below).
- Comprehensive child-safe recruitment is in place for personnel directly working with children (see details below).
- Reporting and responding procedures are in place for potential violation of this Policy.

Monitoring and application of this Policy is the responsibility of all PP staff, particularly staff working with children.

Standards of conduct

- Treat children with dignity and respect regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, disability, or other status.
- Behave appropriately; make sure that language is moderated in their presence and refrain from adult jokes or comments that may cause discomfort or offense.
- Respect children's expression of their chosen gender identity.



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- When working in the proximity of children be visible and, wherever possible, ensure presence of another adult.
- While implementing PP programs that may affect children, allow them to be engaged in designing the action, listen to them.
- Raise voice (report) when having concerns about child's protection and safety.
- When collecting data from children (during assessments, monitoring and evaluation, etc.) reduce the risk of potential harm by using sensitive ways of communication, obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality and not asking about painful experiences. If distressing data has to be obtained, try to use indirect data collection methods and be prepared to refer the distressed child to professional care.
- When getting and/or using children's images for visibility purposes (i.e. photographing or filming a child/children):
 - Ensure that the products (e.g. photographs, films, videos) present children in a dignified and respectful manner, with children being adequately clothed and not in poses that could be misleading or seen as sexually suggestive
 - When taking an image of a particular child for a specific purpose (medialization, advocacy, fundraising, etc.), explain how the product will be used and for that obtain legitimate consent from the child, whenever possible also from a parent or guardian of the child
 - Ensure that images of children availed for public use do not reveal any identifying information

Forms of unacceptable behavior

- Touch a child in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive manner.
- Use language or demonstrate behavior that is harassing, abusive, demeaning, sexually provocative, or culturally insensitive towards children
- Misgendering and in any way not respecting children's chosen gender expression
- Engage children in any form of activity that is demeaning, offensive, sexually provocative, abusive or culturally inappropriate or insensitive
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse, discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favor particular children to the exclusion of others.
- Physically assault or punish children
- Engage children in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts
- Access child pornography or any inappropriate pictures of children through any medium

Reporting on child abuse

Reporting of and responding to concerns and/or suspicions regarding child abuse within PP programs is in line with PP safeguarding process. All incidents must be recorded and managed. The Community center manager Veronika Dočkalová acts as a child protection officer/reporting authority.

Responding to child abuse allegations

PP is committed to responding effectively, sensitively and swiftly to all allegations and suspicions of abuse. While PP takes all allegations of child abuse extremely seriously, at the same time it will employ the presumption of innocence while pending an official investigation of the incident. All allegations will be thoroughly investigated.

Specific steps that should be reminded and taken into account while investigating child abuse allegations are:

During the investigation process:

- All efforts will be taken to ensure the confidentiality and rights of the victim and accused person and information related to the incident will only be shared on a “need to know basis”, but where allegations will amount to a violation of laws of a respective country, privacy will no longer be applicable unless deemed necessary to uphold the rights of the victim.
- The views of the alleged child victim will be considered in light of the documented evidence and that children rarely lie about abuse.
- The accused person will be always given an opportunity to express their views/opinions/version of the facts.
- Where appropriate in investigations, PP will obtain the legal advice and/or advice from any responsible authorities.
- If appropriate (e.g. the incident involves a breach of this Policy), the accused person may be suspended pending an investigation.

Where the incident is proven to have occurred:

- Appropriate disciplinary measures will be taken, including, but not limited to: (a) warning; and/or, (b) suspension; and/or (c) dismissal. The disciplinary measure will depend on the nature and severity of the offense.
- Where the allegation involves a violation of either the law the incident will be immediately reported to the appropriate authorities and the person will be suspended from employment pending an investigation.

Where an allegation is found to be false or unfounded, all efforts will be taken to ensure the rights of the accused person is upheld.

Safe recruitment of personnel working with children

- PP will not knowingly employ or engage in its programs, and especially in those including regular and direct engagement with children, persons that could pose a risk to children. In order to fulfill this, PP observes following safe recruitment measures:
- PP will assess the role subjected to recruitment for the type and frequency of potential contact with children or access to child sensitive data.
- Applicants will be advised of their responsibilities towards children. And for roles that are likely to have contact with children, applicants will be assessed on their awareness of child safeguarding and safe practices.

Candidates applying for positions that will include regular direct and/or unsupervised work with children will be – before being appointed by PP – checked as follows:

- Two verbal reference checks with former employers / professional referees. Applicant’s referees shall be specifically asked to provide a view on the candidate’s suitability to be working/in contact with children.



- PP will secure a criminal record check from prospective candidates.

Analyzing risks to children in PP programs

Prior to commencement of activities involving children, PP will analyze potential risks to children that can arise as part of the implementation of PP programs. These activities can include workshops and cultural activities or training, data collections including discussions with children etc. In case risks to children are identified, the project team shall prepare an action plan that will address those risks with the aim to reduce them as much as possible.

Lenka Bártová
Chairperson of the Board

3.10.2022



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