



Approved by the General Assembly of January 17, 2022 and in line with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Optional protocols, and the relevant national legislation, **Svjetski Savez Mladih Jugoistočna Europa** (hereinafter: The Organization) brings the following

Children Safeguarding Policy

Child safeguarding policy displays the commitment of the Organization in making sure our 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.

The policy is guided by "Do no harm" principle and refers to our organisations' responsibility to minimise the harm we may be doing inadvertently as a result of their organisational activities. This policy is to be followed in all direct and indirect dealings with children. This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of The Organization (hereinafter: stakeholders).

The purpose of this policy:

- to protect children and young people who receive our organisation's services. This includes the children of adults who use our services;
- to provide the stakeholders with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection;

The Organization believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

General principles

The policy is based on the following set of principles:

- All children have equal rights to protection from harm
- Everyone has a responsibility to support the protection of children
- Our organisation has a duty of care to the children with whom we work, are in contact with, or who are affected by our activities and operations
- We are committed to help all partners that we work with to meet minimum requirements on child protection
- All actions on child safeguarding are taken in the best interests of the child, which are paramount

**We recognize that:**

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare. We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:
 - valuing them, listening to and respecting them
 - adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
 - developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures
 - providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
 - recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
 - sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
 - sharing concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately.

What is child abuse?

Child abuse can take the form of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect. Child abuse can have long term and significant effects on a child or young person's development. Our organization is committed to responding without delay to any suspicions of child abuse or neglect. See Appendix 1 for definitions of different types of abuse.

Legal requirements

The Organization is aware of its legal and moral obligation to protect the children and young people in its care. It recognises that it could be legally liable for any abuse that may occur while a child or young person is in its care. Therefore, we are committed to keeping all stakeholders, aware of their legal obligations in relation to child protection.

A child safe organisation

The Organization is committed to protecting the children and young people in its care and will promote itself as a child safe organisation in any materials published whether in hard copy or on electronic media, using the following Child Protection Statement:

Our organization is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people accessing our service. We support the rights of the child and will act without hesitation to ensure



a child-safe environment is maintained at all times. We also support the rights and wellbeing of our staff and volunteers and encourage their active participation in building and maintaining a secure environment for all participants.

Child/Youth Safety Officer

As a further sign of our commitment, we have a designated Child/Youth Safety Officer. The Child/Youth Safety Officer is supported in this role by the President of the organization.

The Child/Youth Safety Officer for 2022 is Antonia Klepić, Expert for Children and Youth Development and Rights.

The Child/Youth Safety Officer must:

- Have undergone at least one day's training on child abuse and creating a child safe organisation to fulfil this role.
- Attend further training as appropriate and take proactive steps to be kept informed of developments in the field of child abuse prevention.
- Be the first contact point for anyone involved with our organization who has a concern about a child or young person.
- Confidentially document minor concerns about a child or young person that could build into an overall concerning picture. Make sure any records are kept strictly confidential and include date and signature.
- Report any concerns to police or Child Protection or support a fellow staff member/volunteer who is making a report.
- Ensure all those involved with our organization are aware of all policies and procedures connected with the Child Protection Policy.
- Monitor any concerning emails, messages or images on the Internet or via other technology that arise in the course of our programs.
- Proactively promote a culture at our organization that is a welcoming, secure and supportive environment so children and young people will feel comfortable in expressing any difficulties or concerns they may have.
- Oversee the annual review and changes to the policies and procedures connected with the Child Protection Policy.
- Arrange training needed in relation to child protection or protective behaviours for staff, volunteers,
 - children or young people involved with our organization
- Coordinate follow up that may be required after a report of abuse to the police or Child Protection.
- Liaise with the President of the organization who is responsible for handling any media enquires that arise.



Reporting Procedures

The Organization has the following guiding principles in relation to responding to concerns about a child or young person's safety and welfare. The Organization recognises that any allegation of abuse involves:

- The right of the child /young person to be listened to, protected and supported
- The right of the child/young person and their families to have their concerns acted on
- The right of the alleged perpetrator to a fair process
- Everyone's right to privacy
- The responsibility of The Organization to ensure all concerns are dealt with promptly and in a respectful manner.

Procedures for all stakeholders:

- The Child/Youth Safety Officer must be immediately informed
 - If a child or young person is displaying signs indicating they are being abused or may have been abused. This includes when a child or young person has disclosed any information that they have been abused/neglected or that they know of another child or young person who has.
 - Of any behaviour by staff (paid or voluntary), parents, visitors to the program or between children/young people and their peers that is concerning e.g. someone seeking to be alone with a particular child or group of children.
- At all times the confidentiality and privacy of those involved must be respected.
- Debrief with the Child/Youth Safety Officer as required.
- It is the responsibility of any stakeholder who has raised a concern about a child or young person's welfare to ensure their concerns have been acted upon.

Procedures for Child/Youth Safety Officer:

- Once notified of a concern the Child/Youth Safety Officer will then proceed to manage the case confidentially.
- Steps should be taken to immediately ensure the child or young person's emotional and physical safety. If appropriate the child or young person's parents or caregivers will be notified.
- If necessary, prior to formally reporting the incident, the Child/Youth Safety Officer may consult with the Government Child Protection Unit for advice and information.
- When a decision is being made to report to the police or the Government Child Protection Unit, the Child/Youth Safety Officer, if feasible, will do so in consultation with the President of the Organization. Any notification must happen promptly, and the child or young person's safety/welfare should be the top priority.
- The Child/Youth Safety Officer will keep confidential written documentation of any concerns raised including steps taken in follow up. All documentation should be dated and signed.



- Any support required by the child, young person, their family or staff of The Organization is to be arranged by the Child/Youth Safety Officer.
- If the alleged perpetrator of the abuse is a staff member (paid or voluntary) of The Organization, the Child/Youth Safety Officer must initially remove this person from contact with the children and young people. This may include “standing down” the person until investigations are complete.
- Consultation with the President of The Organization needs to occur prior to the “standing down” or as soon as possible afterwards. Formal follow up in relation to a staff member being stood down is to be managed by the President of The Organization.
- Throughout the whole process the Child/Youth Safety Officer must keep the President of The Organization informed of any developments in the situation.
- The Child/Youth Safety Officer must ensure their concerns about a child or young person’s welfare are being acted upon, this may mean in some circumstances reporting again to police or the Government Child Protection Unit.

Procedures for the President:

- Support the Child/Youth Safety Officer and the Organization as required.
- Is responsible for the formal follow up of a staff member being “stood down”.
- Will respond to any media and external enquires to the situation.

See Appendix 2 for Indicators of abuse.

Risk Management:

All programs and activities at The Organization are required to undergo regular child protection risk analysis. This will be carried out by Child/Youth Safety Officer and the President. The risks are evaluated, and strategies developed to minimise the likelihood of harm occurring.

Recruitment, Screening, Training and Supervision of Staff and Volunteers

The Organization is committed to ensuring all staff and volunteers undergo comprehensive screening to create a safe environment for the children and young people accessing its services.

Recruitment Procedures

In all advertisements and material promoting positions, the organisation’s commitment to child protection and screening mechanisms should be made clear

Written position descriptions must be developed for all positions, which include key selection criteria and promote The Organization’s commitment to child protection.



Applicants should be encouraged to self-assess their suitability for the position and be provided with further information about the organisation and position.

All volunteer applicants must complete a volunteer application form, which includes a requirement to provide at least one professional and one personal referee

Interview and Background Check Procedures

- **STAFF:** Applicants meeting key selection criteria will be selected for interview. Panel interviews should be conducted with behavioural and situational based questions. The Organisation's commitment to child protection should be reiterated, including mention of the Child Protection Policy and outlining of screening mechanisms.
- **VOLUNTEERS:** Face to face interviews must be conducted on prospective volunteers to understand volunteer motivations and to inform prospective volunteers about the volunteer role, program operations, screening mechanisms and compulsory training.
- Two forms of identity must be checked at volunteer and staff interviews, including one with a photograph.
- Working With Children Checks must be conducted on all staff and volunteers – receipt should be sighted before volunteers commence and volunteers must only work under direct supervision until check arrives
- Police Checks must be conducted on all staff and volunteers
- All applicants must be provided with a copy of the Child Protection Policy.
- Two reference checks should be conducted by phone for preferred applicants (volunteer and staff) and should include verification of applicant's identity and employment history.

Procedures for Induction, Training and Supervision of Staff

- Adherence to The Organisation's Child Protection Policy is required by all staff as part of the Contract of Employment. New staff must be given a copy of the Child Protection Policy and asked to sign a clause acknowledging they have read, understood and agreed to abide by the policy.
- During the probationary period of 3 months all new staff will be oriented in relation to:
 - understanding, recognising and responding to abuse and neglect;
 - understanding the Child Protection Policy; and
 - other important aspects of their role related to protecting the wellbeing of children and young people
- Staff should participate in education and training programs to improve their knowledge of child protection and best practice in responding to allegations of abuse and neglect.
- Staff should be supported and supervised as positive role models to children and young people. Any concerns in relations to their suitability to work with children and young people should be addressed in the Performance Management process.

**Induction, Training and Supervision of Volunteers**

- As part of the induction process, The Organisation will discuss the Code of Conduct with volunteers and ensure the volunteer understands the responsibilities and boundaries of the role. The Code of Conduct includes a clause acknowledging the volunteer has read, understood and agreed to abide by The Organisation's Child Protection Policy.
- Volunteers should be trained about the Child Protection Policy, including learning about understanding, recognising and responding to abuse and neglect.
- Volunteers should have the opportunity to participate in additional workshops and training to improve the protection of children and young people.
- Volunteers should be supported and supervised as positive role models to children and young people. Any concerns in relation to their suitability to work with children and young people should be addressed by the President, involving the Child/Youth Safety Officer, in private discussion with the relevant volunteer.
- The Organization will evaluate the volunteer program regularly.

Child and Young People participation and empowerment

The Organization is committed to assisting children and young people to gain skills in self-protective behaviours. We are committed to the President being trained in Protective Behaviours so they can promote this with the children, young people and staff at The Organization.

As a part of the annual review of this policy The Organization will informally consult with the children and young people using our program for their feedback.

Internet Safety

The Organization recognises that the internet, mobile phones and other forms of information technology can be used as an avenue for child abuse. At the same time information technology can have a wonderfully positive, informative and creative part to play in a child or young person's education.

The Organization works to teach children and young people of safe and respectful ways to work with information technology. During their time at The Organization all children and young people's use of information technology is monitored and conducted in an open space.

Any indication of inappropriate activity either against a child or young person or initiated by them, in any form of media must be reported to the Child/Youth Safety Officer immediately. It is the responsibility of all members of The Organization including students, staff (paid or voluntary) or parents to report concerns in this area.



Drugs and Alcohol

The Organization recognises that the use of alcohol and drugs by staff and volunteers can impact on:

- the safety and well-being of the children and young people accessing the program
- the integrity and professionalism of the program, and
- the degree to which staff and volunteers behave as appropriate role models

As such staff and volunteers should not attend the program under the influence of alcohol or any recreational drugs. Individuals taking prescription drugs that may affect their ability to carry out their duties in a responsible and professional manner should discuss this with the President.

The Organization acknowledges that the use, supply and possession of recreational drugs, and the use of alcohol for people under the age of 18 is against the law. The Organization also recognises that the use of recreational drugs and and/or alcohol can have negative impacts on a young person's physical health, and their social and emotional wellbeing. The program does not allow the possession, supply or use of drugs or alcohol to anyone on the premises or during the running of the activities. This includes the possession of drug paraphernalia.

Code of Conduct

The Organization seeks to clarify acceptable behaviour in order to enhance the safety and wellbeing of the children and young people accessing its program, and to protect staff, volunteers and the organisation.

The code of conduct must be explained and discussed with all new staff and volunteers, who need to read and sign the code before commencing.

Review and monitoring

The policies and procedures outlined in this document are to be formally reviewed at least annually. Policies and practices will be formally evaluated by an external evaluator/auditor every three years. Feedback on the policy will be sought from: staff and volunteers; children and young people attending; and from anyone else involved with the program.

The review will assess:

- whether all parts of this policy and related procedures are being successfully adhered to and
- whether any alterations are necessary
- which staff member will be the Child/Youth Safety Officer for the coming year
- any training needs for the coming year
- changes or updates in information and/or law related to Child Protection

