

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

2017

*POLICY GUIDELINES, PROCEDURES AND PRINCIPLES*

*ON CHILD PROTECTION AT CESIE*

Version: 2 (revision of version 1)

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## **CESIE**

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[www.cesie.org](http://www.cesie.org)

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

CESIE affirms its belief in the rights of all children, including the right to be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence, as set out in the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and in the Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention, 2007).

Children with whom CESIE staff, volunteers, interns, external collaborators and associates come in contact will assured the rights expressed in the UNCRC.

CESIE takes the prevention of child abuse very seriously. CESIE understands that child abuse and inappropriate contact of children is a pervasive problem throughout the world that must be managed in proactive manner. Therefore the writing of this manual and guidelines shows the commitment to taking proactive steps to protect children in CESIE programs and facilities.

CESIE is committed to making decisions and taking actions that are guided by the principle of the “best interest of the child”.

## 2. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Child Protection Policy document outlines policies within the four elements of screening and hiring, training, supervision, and feedback systems:

**1. Screening and Hiring:** CESIE establishes and sustains proper hiring and volunteer, internship selection practices, including completed applications, reference checks, Criminal Background Checks, Social Security checks and documented personnel files, and inserts a special article about Child Protection in Its code of conduct.

**2. Training:** The rules and expectations will be shared with each new employee/volunteer and intern and will be regularly reinforced with existing staff and volunteers. This will be done in new employee training, abuse prevention training, the use of a comprehensive Code of Conduct and an employee handbook.

**3. Supervision:** Through day-to-day interaction, announced and unannounced visits, regular audits and performance reviews, staff and volunteers’ understanding and commitment to following all of the association protocols will be monitored by Supervisors.

**4. Feedback System:** Staff/volunteers will be instructed to report anything they notice regarding a gap between protocols and practices. Staff and volunteers working with or coming in contact with children will be also instructed, through training, on the procedures to apply in case they suspect or have knowledge of a situation of child abuse. Moreover, whenever CESIE staff or volunteers come in contact with children, they will commit to sharing the Code of Conduct with the children’s parents or legal guardians, so that they can support the supervision of the protection of their own children.

## 3. SCREENING AND HIRING PRACTICES

a. Applications:

- i. All prospective staff members/volunteers/interns will complete an application to work or volunteer or

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intern that includes questions regarding past work history, volunteer experience, and education.

- ii. All Application will include a statement that CESIE has a zero tolerance standard for abuse and inappropriate behaviour by staff members.
- iii. All applications will be completed 100%, signed by the individual and maintained in their personnel file.
- iv. The Application will have a question about previous Criminal records for all applicants.
- v. All staff/volunteers/associates who may be involved in working with children and young people, or who are deemed likely to come in contact with children in the fulfilment of their duties, will be requested to provide a certificate of their national criminal record.

b. Social Security checks:

- i. A social security address trace will be performed to identify applicant's previous history, through reference checking, or other methods CESIE finds convenient.
- ii. The candidate should not begin working until this step is completed and results are approved.
- iii. Applicants who are returning staff will receive a new check if they have been away from CESIE for more than 90 days.
- iv. It is also recommended that a HR Responsible will distribute at least biannually to all staff a reminder of this policy along with a short questionnaire in order make sure that it's a common understanding and that it is taken care of it among the staff members/volunteers/interns, which is advised to be signed and completed again.

c. Reference checks:

- i. CESIE will contact a minimum of three references for all prospective staff and volunteers, one of which must be a close family member to the applicant.
- ii. The reference's responses will be documented on an association-approved form that specifies questions for uniformity of evaluation.
- iii. Previous employers will be asked if the person is eligible for rehire, as well as specific questions about the ability of the applicant to work with children.
- iv. If the applicant lists prior child-related volunteer experience, these agencies should be contacted for references as well.
- v. Written references will be accepted only with verbal verification by CESIE. If the written reference did not address the questions recommended, those questions will be asked during the telephone contact.
- vi. Reference checks must be completed by the hiring supervisor or human resources, and all forms must include the date and the printed name and signature of the supervisor/HR employee who completed it.

d. Interviews:

- i. Prospective staff members should be interviewed by at least two separate staff members. A 'Realistic Job Preview' or 'Working Interview' meets this requirement; it is important that the candidate is assessed by more than one staff member.
- ii. All interviews will be documented on an association approved interview form that ensures the consistency of the questions asked. CESIE interview evaluation forms may be used during the interview process.

e. Web Search:

CESIE will take steps to research a candidate online and check for red flags for working with children (i.e. Google Search, any national sexual predator web sites, and social networking sites).

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## 4. CODE OF CONDUCT

- a. Staff members/volunteers will sign and date a copy of the Code of Conduct prior to performing any work duties and annually thereafter.
- b. All new staff/volunteers/interns will have the code of conduct reviewed with them at the time of signing.
- c. The code of conduct will be maintained in the personnel file and is considered integral part of their employment contract.
- d. The Rights and Justice Unit at CESIE will review the Code of Conduct annually, and share it with the Human Resources, all Department Coordinators and all Unit Coordinators, who will share it with all staff/interns and volunteers. The Code of Conduct will be available electronically and in its printed version.
- e. All external collaborators and associates will be provided the Code of Conduct and will be requested to sign it if they work or may come in contact with children and young people of less than 18 years of age.
- f. The Code of Conduct includes the procedures for data collection and treatment of data about children and young people. Data privacy and protection issues should comply with relevant EU rules (especially the Directive 95/46/EC on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data), as well as with the Italian national regulations (specifically, legislative decree no. 196 of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2003, titled “Code of Personal Data Protection”). If personal data about children and young people needs to be collected, written informed consent will be sought from their parents/legal guardians.
- g. In the case of conducting research which involves acquiring personal data from participants, CESIE submits a notification to the Italian Data Protection Authority. Moreover, staff who may come in contact with personal data of research participants is required to sign a declaration of confidentiality before engaging in research. The declaration of confidentiality is specific to each case/project.
- h. Disclosing of information that identified children who come in contact with our staff, volunteers, associates, and anyone having a role within CESIE, is restricted by the terms of international, European and Italian regulations and legislation. Written informed consent of the parents/legal guardians shall be sought. In accordance with article 3 of the UNCRC, the best interests of the child will be the fundamental principle applied in all cases. This includes disclosing any type of information (including images) regarding the children we come in contact with, on any media, including printed, online or other.
- i. All members of staff, volunteers, interns, external collaborators and associates have the obligation to report any child abuse concerns they may have or suspect.
- j. Any member of staff/volunteer/intern/external collaborator or associate found in breach of the Code of Conduct, or of the Child Protection Policy on which the code draws, will be immediately suspended from their position, pending investigation, internal or by statutory authorities depending on the specific case. In case of an alleged or certain crime, the staff will be immediately removed from their position and their contract terminated.

## 5. CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION TRAINING

- a. All staff members (at minimum, all staff members/volunteers/interns working directly with children and youth) will participate in a comprehensive children’s rights and child abuse prevention training within 30 days of being hired and in further training throughout their employment period, that includes

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information on the Rights of the Children (UNCRC, Lanzarote Convention, National regulation), Communicating with Children, Sexual abuse, Prevention, Early Identification, Responding, Documenting, and Reporting. The training programmes are inspired by existing resources and are developed by building on the programmes already developed through our relevant projects.

- b. External collaborators and associates who may come in contact with children and young people in the fulfilment of their tasks as assigned by CESIE will participate in the same child abuse prevention training.

## 6. TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROCEDURES

- a. Youth exchange Staff must go through training prior to the start of it.
- b. Any staff member who does not complete the training as required may be suspended and/or terminated.
- c. All staff members will undergo a review of the Child Protection manual & Guidelines on an annual basis. All publications must comply with the child protection manual and guidelines, before being publicised or shared.

## 7. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDINGS (MOU) WITH PARTNERS:

- a. The selection of partners should take into account the child protection history of the Partner Organization.
- b. CESIE will conduct a reference check on the Partner's previous history related to child protection and its policies towards children.
- c. CESIE will not tolerate any inappropriate communication towards children.
- d. A clear statement related to child protection should be written in all MOUs.
- e. CESIE must take a serious action towards any partner convicted for child abuse during the implementation of its projects/programs.

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