

Child Protection Policy

Introduction:

The purpose of this Child Protection Policy is to outline Esplai Social's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children who come into contact with our organization. The policy provides guidelines and procedures for all staff, volunteers, contractors, and anyone associated with our organization on how to recognize, report, and respond to concerns of child abuse or neglect.

1. Policy Statement:

At Esplai Social, we are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all children who come into contact with our organization. Esplai Social supports the rights of children and is committed to their safety and well-being. We are committed to implementing effective child safeguarding measures in all areas of our work to ensure that children are protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, and harm.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all part-time, full-time, and casual Esplai Social employees, freelance and other experts, interns and volunteers (hereinafter: Esplai Social staff or staff) as well as associate firms and sub-contractors (hereinafter: partners) working with Esplai Social on the implementation of development assistance projects.

3. Definitions:

Child: A child is defined as any person under the age of 18 years.

Child Abuse: Child abuse is defined as any act of commission or omission that results in harm or potential harm to a child's health, survival, development, or dignity.

Neglect: Neglect is defined as a failure to provide for a child's basic needs, including but not limited to, food, shelter, medical care, and education.

Physical Abuse: Physical abuse is defined as any non-accidental physical injury caused to a child by another person.

Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse is defined as any act of commission or omission that results in a child's emotional or psychological harm.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse is defined as any sexual activity or behavior involving a child that is exploitative, abusive, or involves coercion.

4. Principles and values

The following principles and values reflect Esplai Social stance on child protection:

- Zero tolerance of child abuse: Esplai Social does not tolerate any form of child abuse, nor does it tolerate possession or access to any material that is abusive towards children. Esplai Social will not knowingly engage anyone who poses a direct risk to children.
- Recognition of children's interests: Esplai Social recognises that some children are at greater risk of abuse. Of particular vulnerability are children with disabilities, children in conflict situations as well as migrant children or children without parents.
- Sharing responsibility of child protection: When bidding for projects in association with firms that do not have a child protection policy, Esplai Social will

ensure that associate firms agree to adopt Esplai Social' Child Protection Policy and the Child Safeguarding Standards as set out by the Council of Europe.

5. Esplai Social' commitment

Esplai Social' commitment to child protection will be guided by the following:

- Awareness: we will ensure that all Esplai Social staff and partners as well as stakeholders involved in projects are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children.
- Prevention: we will ensure, through awareness and good practice, that Esplai Social staff and partners minimise the risks to children.
- Reporting: we will ensure that Esplai Social staff and partners are clear on what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children.
- Responding: we will ensure that action is taken to support and protect children where concerns of abuse arise.

6. Roles and Responsibilities:

6.1 Board of Trustees:

The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that Esplai Social has effective child safeguarding policies and procedures in place, and that these are regularly reviewed and updated.

6.2 Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO):

The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) is responsible for overseeing and coordinating all child safeguarding matters within Esplai Social. The DSO is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all staff, volunteers, and contractors receive regular child safeguarding training and are aware of the organization's child protection policies and procedures.
- Ensuring that all concerns or allegations of child abuse or neglect are reported to the relevant authorities and that appropriate action is taken.
- Ensuring that all child safeguarding policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that they are effective and in line with current best practices.

6.3 Managers and Supervisors:

All managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that child safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented within their areas of responsibility. They are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all staff, volunteers, and contractors under their supervision receive regular child safeguarding training.
- Ensuring that all concerns or allegations of child abuse or neglect are reported to the DSO and that appropriate action is taken.
- Ensuring that all child safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented effectively within their areas of responsibility.

6.4 Staff and Volunteers:

All staff and volunteers are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of the organization's child safeguarding policies and procedures and that they implement them effectively in their work with children. They are responsible for:

- Reporting any concerns or allegations of child abuse or neglect to their manager, supervisor, or the DSO.

- Attending regular child safeguarding training to ensure that they are aware of the signs and indicators of child abuse and neglect, and know how to respond appropriately.

7. Procedures:

Procedures are the practical steps that need to be taken in order to implement a child protection policy effectively. These procedures should be detailed, comprehensive, and easy to follow. In this section, we will outline the procedures that should be in place to support the implementation of a child protection policy.

1. Identification and Response to Child Protection Concerns:

- 1.1. All staff, volunteers, and contractors should receive child safeguarding training and should be able to recognize signs and symptoms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- 1.2. If a child protection concern is identified, the staff member should immediately report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).
- 1.3. The DSO should investigate the concern and decide whether it meets the criteria for child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. If so, the DSO should report the concern to the appropriate authorities, following local child protection procedures.
- 1.4. If the concern is not deemed to meet the criteria for child abuse, neglect, or exploitation, the DSO should take appropriate action to support the child and their family.

2. Recruitment and Selection:

- 2.1. All staff, volunteers, and contractors who will be working with children should undergo a thorough screening process before being appointed.
- 2.2. The screening process should include a criminal record check, reference checks, and an assessment of the individual's suitability to work with children.
- 2.3. All staff, volunteers, and contractors should be required to sign a code of conduct that outlines expected behaviors when working with children.

3. Training and Development:

- 3.1. All staff, volunteers, and contractors should receive regular child safeguarding training.
- 3.2. The training should cover topics such as recognizing signs of abuse, reporting child protection concerns, and responding to disclosures.
- 3.3. The training should be tailored to the specific roles and responsibilities of the individual and should be regularly updated to reflect current best practices.

4. Code of Conduct:

- 4.1. A code of conduct should be developed for all staff, volunteers, and contractors who work with children.
- 4.2. The code of conduct should outline expected behaviors, including appropriate boundaries, appropriate language, and guidelines for physical contact.
- 4.3. The code of conduct should be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that it reflects current best practices and local child protection procedures.

5. Supervision and Support:

- 5.1. All staff, volunteers, and contractors who work with children should receive appropriate supervision and support.
- 5.2. Supervisors should provide regular feedback on performance and offer guidance and support to ensure that staff are following child protection policies and procedures.
- 5.3. Supervisors should be trained to recognize signs of burnout or stress in staff and should provide appropriate support.

6. Record Keeping:

6.1. All child protection concerns, reports, and investigations should be recorded and kept confidentially.

6.2. Records should be stored securely and only accessed by authorized staff.

6.3. Records should be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that they reflect current best practices and local child protection procedures.

7. Communication and Awareness:

7.1. The child protection policy and procedures should be communicated to all staff, volunteers, and contractors.

7.2. The policy and procedures should be reviewed regularly to ensure that they reflect current best practices and local child protection procedures.

7.3. All children who come into contact with the organization should be made aware of the child protection policy and procedures.

8. Legislation

8.1 When handling child abuse complaints, Esplai Social will take into account the relevant legislation in both Spain and the country in which the alleged incident took place.

Conclusion:

Effective procedures are critical to the successful implementation of a child protection policy. By implementing the procedures outlined above, Esplai Social can ensure that all children who meet our organization are protected from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Annex 1 – Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct for Esplai Social

Introduction

Esplai Social is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all children who come into contact with our organization. This code of conduct outlines the expected behaviors for all staff, volunteers, and contractors who work with children in order to ensure their safety, dignity, and wellbeing.

Expected Behaviors

1. Professionalism

All staff, volunteers, and contractors who work with children must always maintain a professional and ethical approach. This includes:

1.1. Respecting the rights, dignity, and privacy of children.

1.2. Maintaining appropriate boundaries with children and refraining from behavior that could be perceived as inappropriate or exploitative.

1.3. Ensuring that all interactions with children are appropriate to their age, maturity, and cultural background.

1.4. Avoiding any behavior or language that could be considered discriminatory or offensive.

2. Safety

The safety of children is our top priority. All staff, volunteers, and contractors who work with children must take appropriate steps to ensure their safety, including:

2.1. Ensuring that all activities and environments are safe and appropriate for children.

2.2. Taking appropriate steps to prevent and respond to accidents and emergencies.

2.3. Taking appropriate steps to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

2.4. Reporting any concerns about child safety to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) immediately.

3. Respect

All children have the right to be treated with respect and dignity. All staff, volunteers, and contractors who work with children must treat them with respect and dignity, including:

- 3.1. Listening to and valuing their opinions and ideas.
- 3.2. Avoiding any behavior that could be perceived as intimidating or humiliating.
- 3.3. Refraining from physical punishment or verbal abuse.
- 3.4. Respecting their cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds.

4. Communication

Effective communication is essential for building positive relationships with children. All staff, volunteers, and contractors who work with children must communicate effectively and appropriately, including:

- 4.1. Using language that is appropriate to their age and maturity.
- 4.2. Listening actively and responding sensitively to their needs and concerns.
- 4.3. Ensuring that all communication is respectful and non-judgmental.
- 4.4. Avoiding any communication that could be perceived as inappropriate or harmful.

5. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is essential for protecting the privacy and dignity of children. All staff, volunteers, and contractors who work with children must respect their confidentiality, including:

- 5.1. Only sharing information about children on a need-to-know basis.
- 5.2. Keeping all records and information about children confidential and secure.
- 5.3. Seeking appropriate consent before sharing any information with third parties.
- 5.4. Reporting any concerns about child protection to the DSO, following local child protection procedures.

Conclusion

By following this code of conduct, Esplai Social can ensure that all children who come into contact with our organization are treated with respect, dignity, and care. It is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers, and contractors who work with children to uphold these expected behaviors and to report any concerns about child safety or welfare to the DSO immediately.