

Child Protection Policy

Centropa - CEC- Zentrum zur Erforschung und Dokumentation jüdischen Lebens in Mittel- und Osteuropa
ZVR: 702944918
Vorsitzender: Edward Serotta

Date: April 25, 2020

Centropa is committed to providing and maintaining a caring learning environment which promotes its core values, and prevents and addresses child abuse and exploitation.

We strongly condemn all forms of child abuse and exploitation and always respond to any case of proven, alleged or attempted abuse within our field of function and influence according to its nature.

Efforts ensure that mechanisms are in place to raise awareness, aid prevention, encourage reporting and ease response. They range from human resource development actions such as training and counselling to legal actions where needed.

Centropa's Child Protection Policy is based on

- a. our vision, mission and values
- b. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- c. Experience and input of stakeholders from various partnerships as great value is placed upon their views
- d. The standards on child protection as defined by the Keeping Children Safe Coalition

Centropa works in accordance with the UNCRC: The best interest of the child is our primary consideration. Every child has the right to develop to his or her full potential, to quality education, participation and non-discrimination. Everybody has the responsibility to protect children from all forms of abuse, abandonment, exploitation, violence and discrimination.

In this policy, specific attention is focused on specific mechanisms to prevent and respond to child abuse.

Introduction

This policy document is binding for all co-workers and partner associations of Centropa. Based on this policy paper, each co-worker and partner shall define clear reporting and responding structures, as well as consistent crisis management plans to bring child protection to life in its field and region.

Every child is potentially at risk of abuse and exploitation. Some girls or boys may be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, due to various forms of discrimination and marginalization relating to their socio-economic status, gender, disability, ethnicity, caste, or living situation.

Therefore it is crucial that every person connected with Centropa understands child abuse, as well as his or her own role and responsibilities in protecting children.

Any definition of child abuse first requires a definition of the child. According to the UNCRC a child is “every human being below the age of 18 years unless national law recognizes the age of majority earlier”.

We recognize that child abuse and exploitation takes place in all countries and societies around the world. Trying to define it as a world phenomenon is still difficult because of the vast cultural, religious, social, political, legal and economic differences that children experience.

Centropa respects all cultures and religions; within a broad intercultural and interdisciplinary approach we have attempt to create a unified frame. In order to prevent and respond to child abuse, it is crucial that we as an organization reach a common understanding as to what child abuse is and in which circumstances our policies and procedures apply.

Furthermore, Centropa is committed to broader awareness-raising, prevention and advocacy work within families, schools, communities and national authorities to promote the protection of children’s rights.

The UNCRC provides an international framework outlining children’s rights to protection from abuse and neglect (article 19), discrimination (article 2) and different forms of exploitation (articles 32-36); special consideration is given to children deprived of parental care (article 20), refugee children (article 22), children at risk of developing a drug habit (article 33), children who are deprived of their liberty (article 37, 40), children in situations of armed conflict (article 38, 40).

Centropa further recognizes the importance of children’s participation, empowering girls and boys to speak up against all forms of abuse, acting as agents of self-protection and the protection of their peers.

AUSTRIA
Centropa
Selzergasse 10 Top 5–8
1150 Vienna
+43 1 409 0971
office@centropa.org

HUNGARY
Centropa
Ferenciek tere 7–8
1053 Budapest
+36 209 738 338
budapest@centropa.org

USA
Centropa
1141 Loxford Terrace
Silver Spring, MD 20901
+1 301 787 0052
usoffice@centropa.org

GERMANY
Centropa c/o wework
Axel Springer Platz 3
20355 Hamburg
+49 176 457 51975
germanyoffice@centropa.org

Goals of the Child Protection Policy

This policy aims at:

preventing cases of child abuse and reducing the number of incidents (child-to-child, adult-to-child) in families & schools of Centropa's influence,

- making children aware of their rights and their active role in child protection,
- informing children, co-workers, board members, family, school and community members, volunteers and partners (sponsors, donors, journalists, governmental authorities, etc.) about the child protection policy and related procedures (awareness, prevention, reporting, responding),
- encouraging co-workers directly involved with children to apply the skills needed to contribute to each child's development and protection,
- ensuring that all co-workers have the working conditions needed to contribute to each child's development and protection,
- fostering open and honest discussions on child abuse in national meetings and workshops in all programmes and facilities amongst all stakeholders (children, young adults and their families, child and youth care co-workers, management staff, board members, PR and fundraising staff, teachers, maintenance and security staff, etc.)
- putting in place fair, secure and transparent reporting channels in all types of programmes that guarantee the right of stakeholders (children, parents, staff) to be heard,
- forming an active network of protection so that all children and adults in our sphere of influence are safe and protected. Within and across all co-workers and partners, we strive together for the protection of children.

What is Child Abuse? – Definitions and terminology

Definitions of the four main categories of abuse:

Physical Abuse is the actual or potential physical harm caused by an action or lack of action, which is reasonably within the control of the parent or person in a position of responsibility, power, or trust. Physical abuse may involve hitting, spanking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning and suffocating. It can also mean causing physical harm to a child by fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health to a child. The incidents may be single or repeated.

Sexual Abuse is evidenced by an activity between a child and an adult or another child who, by age or development, is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power; the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. Child sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact and penetrative or non-penetrative acts. This may also include

involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect and Negligent Treatment is the inattention or omission on the part of the caregiver to provide for the development of the child in: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers and which causes, or has a high probability of causing, harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as is feasible.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child that adversely affects his or her self-perception and development. It may involve conveying to the child that he or she is worthless, unloved, and inadequate, or there only to meet the needs of another person; or imposing inappropriate expectations upon him/her. Acts include restricting movement, threatening, scaring, discriminating, scapegoating, corrupting, ridiculing, degrading, bullying, humiliating (e.g. asking potentially embarrassing questions, demanding potentially embarrassing action) or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

Specific Considerations:

Child-to-Child Abuse

Allegations or concerns regarding the abuse of a child by another child need to be responded to with particular sensitivity; nevertheless, they have to be dealt with through the child protection procedures. All work with young people who have committed abuse requires an effective approach which ensures the protection of people affected, while at the same time supporting the young person in challenging and changing his/her behaviour. Any such approach requires:

- the recognition that a child who has abused another child differs significantly from adults who have committed similar offences, as the child is not fully aware of why he or she has committed abuse and what the consequences are
- keeping in mind that the best interest of the child is the primary consideration in all decisions made - for both the victim and the abuser.

Violation of Children's Privacy

The protection of a child's privacy refers to private data of the child as well as pictures, texts, films etc. about children which are produced for publicity purposes:

Any information about a child's history, medical condition and family background has to be stored carefully and to be handled confidentially and with discretion.

Children and even their parents or caregivers might not always be aware of a specific form of emotional abuse which might occur in fundraising, public relations or communication. A child's privacy is, for instance, violated by the production of

unauthorised publicity material (pictures, films, texts, etc.) featuring the boy or girl; or by presenting sensitive information within a context that reveals the child's identity.

All co-workers and external partners involved in spreading information on children and in creating and distributing publicity material act according to the following guidelines:

- When producing publicity material featuring a child, we need to ask both the child and his or her legal guardian (or at least an adult caregiver of the child) for permission to do so.
- We do not actively ask children to do or say anything that might make them feel displayed as 'objects of pity' (e.g. to speak about their past or ask for donations).
- We handle children's names carefully, especially in connection with sensitive information about the same children (e.g. the family background, their medical condition, disability or negative behaviour).
- We act with caution when it comes to combining textual and visual information whenever a text includes sensitive information about a child and whenever a photo or video track shows sensitive aspects of a child's life and reveals his or her identity.

Following these guidelines ensures the respect of the children's privacy while at the same time preventing, and raising awareness for, violations of that privacy. Based on these guidelines, coworkers who are directly involved with children have the right and obligation to protect the children from any attempted violations of their privacy – be they intentional or not.

Stakeholders

Child protection is everyone's business. It is an integrated part of our work and affects everyone at Centropa and anyone who comes into contact with our organization. The specific approach is defined by each member association based on the Child Protection Policy on hand.

Stakeholders

& KEY MESSAGES FOR THESE STAKEHOLDERS

- Children (below 18 years of age)
- Young adults (18 years of age or older attending Centropa's programmes and interventions)

- *You have rights – and this includes the right to say 'No'.*
- *Violence is not allowed.*
- *We listen to you and take you seriously.*

- Child development co-workers: Educators, social workers, psychologists, community-based carers, volunteers

*- You are role models and are listened to.
- You have support in developing positive and participatory discipline processes.
- Listen to children: pay attention to possible signs of abuse; take your responsibility and be there for them when they need your support!*

- Leaders of various facilities and programmes
- Board members
- Sponsors, donors, journalists and visitors
- Partners of other organisations who work and interact with Centropa.
- External contractors and consultants who provide services

- Protection is everybody's business; you are part of the team.

Key Parts of Child Protection Policy

- a. **Awareness:** Raise awareness of child abuse and its risks
- b. **Prevention:** Provide guidance on how to safeguard children from abuse
- c. **Reporting:** Set up and adhere to a clear and simple reporting procedure
- d. **Responding:** Ensure clear action is taken when child abuse is suspected or reported

Notes:

- Definitions in this paper are based on the definitions used by EveryChild as well as on the definitions elaborated by the WHO, 1990.
- Training for Child Protection, Trainer's notes, p. 123 following. This toolkit was produced by the Keeping Children Safe Coalition, UK in 2006:
<http://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk/>
- Any concerns or allegations raised, results of investigations, and interviews etc. are documented and stored safely. It is recommended to record and analyze child protection issues that occurred within the communities as well in order to adjust the actions and services provided by Centropa accordingly.



Edward Serotta