

CODE OF CONDUCT AND CHILD PROTECTION PRINCIPLES

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Centre is to promote the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child through the promotion of the rights of the child, public advocacy, research, education and participation of children.

The vision of the Centre is society in which children and youth grow up in a healthy and safe environment with equal opportunities. In order to realise its vision, the Centre continually works on the improvement of quality in all areas of activity. The Centre strives to be recognised by its users, partners and the public as an organisation of value-oriented and competent professionals committed to children's wellbeing. In its everyday work, the Centre aims to set the highest standards of work and results, both for itself and for the social protagonists responsible for the implementation of child rights in Serbia. The Centre therefore continues to see itself in the future as a team oriented towards a continual development and professional growth of its staff and associates.

The Centre is an organisation guided by the values and principles defined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- **Life, survival and development** – every child has an inalienable right to life, and the state has an obligation to ensure their survival and development;
- **Non-discrimination** – all rights apply to all children without discrimination;
- **Participation** – a child has the right to freely express his or her own opinion and the right to have his or her opinion taken into account in all matters and procedures that concern him or her;
- **The best interests of the child** – all actions concerning the child will be undertaken in accordance with their best interests.

All employees of the Child Rights Centre and its associates respect the concept of human rights, particularly the rights of the child, and advocate for their realisation in all situations, actions and decisions they make. They also act in accordance with the values and principles of the Child Rights Centre, thus contributing to the achievement of the organisation's goals.

The reputation of the Child Rights Centre depends greatly on each individual who works for the organisation. To work for the Child Rights Centre means to respect and promote high standards of behaviour and take special responsibility for preserving and respecting human rights in general and the rights of the child in particular.

The Code of Conduct applies to:

1. Director of the Child Rights Centre;
2. Staff of the Child Rights Centre;
3. professional associates and consultants of the Child Rights Centre;
4. Members of the governing structures of the Child Rights Centre (Management Board, Assembly);
5. Persons engaged to provide services on the basis of Temporary Service Contract, Author's Contract or any other type of contract;
6. Volunteers.

The Code of Conduct and Child Protection Principles are an integral part of all contracts concluded by the Center with the aforementioned persons, and an integral part of the membership document.

All members of the governing structure of the Child Rights Centre are required to sign the Code of Conduct.

Any behaviour contrary to the provisions of this Code of Conduct will constitute grounds for exclusion from the governing structure of the Child Rights Centre.

Any behaviour contrary to the provisions of this Code of Conduct will constitute grounds for the unilateral cancellation of the contract by the Child Rights Centre.

The Child Rights Centre can terminate the contract unilaterally before the end of the procedure for determining responsibility before the competent public authorities, if it is deemed that even the suspicion of acting in violation of the Code of Conduct may damage the reputation of the Child Rights Centre.

All behaviours described in the Code of Conduct in relation to children refer to behaviour towards children participating in the Centre's activities, as well as behaviour towards children who are not participants in these activities, which means that the contract can be terminated and the membership cancelled if there is knowledge about the aforementioned behaviours towards any child.

All engaged individuals are required to adhere to this Code of Conduct.

The Director and Programme Managers have a special responsibility and obligation to set a good example and create a work environment that helps employees adhere to these standards and resolve situations in which the Code of Conduct is violated.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

1. Respecting others

Respecting human rights, including the rights of the child, without discrimination. The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of any personal characteristic, such as race, colour, ancestry, citizenship, nationality or ethnic origin, language, religious or political beliefs, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, property status, birth, genetic characteristics, health status, disability, marital and family status, conviction, age, appearance or any other actual or presumed personal trait.

Not participating in any form of discrimination, harassment or abuse (physical, psychological, sexual or verbal), intimidation or exploitation, or in any other way of threatening the rights of others.

2. Active work on child protection

Responsible treatment of children and creation of a safe environment, in order to prevent their physical, sexual, emotional and any other form of abuse or neglect.

Individuals involved in activities on the basis of a contract or membership document may not:

- Act in ways that may lead to the violation of the policies and procedures of the Child Rights Centre or that may place a child at risk;
- Withhold information about any charges or procedures conducted against them, in relation to violence against children, either at the time of joining the Child Rights Centre or during their employment in the Child Rights Centre;
- Withold knowledge and information about the abuse and neglect of children, especially if the abuse/neglect was carried out within the Centre's activities.

3. Maintaining high standards of personal and professional behaviour

Striving to achieve high standards in work, taking responsibility for one's own actions and behaving in a way that does not damage the reputation of the Child Rights Centre.

Individuals involved in activities on the basis of a contract or membership document may not:

- Enter into sexual relationship with an individual younger than 18, abuse or exploit the child in any other way;
- Exchange money, good and services for sexual services;
- Drink alcohol or use any other substances in a way that affect their work ability and/or reputation of the organisation;
- Be in possession of illegal goods or substances;

- Seek or expect any personal payments or services from others, particularly beneficiaries, in exchange for their help, support, goods or services of any kind;
- Accept a bribe or valuable presents (apart from small tokens of gratitude) from the government, beneficiaries, donors, suppliers or anybody else offered as a result of employment in the Centre;
- Enter into any kind of professional relation, on behalf of the Child Rights Centre, with the family, friends or other individuals/legal entities, for supplying goods or services for the Child Rights Centre, without permission;
- Use computers or other equipment of the organisation to watch, download, make or distribute inappropriate materials, such as pornography.

4. Seeking to protect the safety and wellbeing of oneself and others

Individuals involved in activities on the basis of a contract or membership document may not:

Behave in a way that may cause unnecessary risk to themselves or others.

5. Protecting the Child Rights Centre's assets and resources

Individuals involved in activities on the basis of a contract or membership document shall ensure that the Child Rights Centre's resources are not misused and are protected from theft, fraud and other damage. Individuals involved in activities on the basis of a contract or membership document may not disclose to others any private and confidential information related to the Child Rights Centre (or for which the Child Rights Centre is responsible) unless legally required to do so.

CODE OF CONDUCT WITH CHILDREN AND CHILD PROTECTION PRINCIPLES

The Child Rights Centre strongly expresses its commitment to zero tolerance towards any form of behaviour that involves discrimination, violence, abuse or neglect of a child, in accordance with the definitions of these terms contained in the laws and by-laws of the Republic of Serbia, international documents for the protection of child rights and UN definitions.

The Child Rights Centre expresses its zero-tolerance stance on sexual exploitation and abuse by individuals involved in activities on the basis of a contract or membership document.

Sexual exploitation is an actual or attempted abuse of someone's position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, for sexual purposes, or for obtaining financial, social or political benefits by sexually exploiting another person. Sexual abuse is an actual or threatened physical assault of a sexual nature, either by using force or threatening to use it. It includes also contactless and online sexual exploitation and abuse.

Individuals involved in activities on the basis of a contract or membership document may not:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children;
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive;
- Act in ways that may be abusive in any way or may place a child at risk of abuse;
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive or abusive;
- Have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised;
- Do things for children of a personal nature that children can do themselves;
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive;

- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse;
- Discriminate against, treat differently or favour some children over others;
- Engage in sexual relationships with children;
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative;
- Sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working;
- Achieve a financial gain by exploiting any child (sexual exploitation).

This list is not exhaustive or exclusive. The principle is that individuals involved in activities on the basis of a contract or membership document should avoid actions or behaviours that may constitute poor practice or potentially be interpreted as abusive.

It is important for all individuals working with children to:

- Be aware of situations that may pose risks and envisage how to manage them;
- Plan and organise their work and workplace so as to minimise risks;
- Be visible in working with children as much as possible;
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed;
- Ensure that individuals involved in activities on the basis of a contract or membership document have a sense of accountability so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unaddressed;
- Talk to children about their contact with individuals involved in activities on the basis of a contract or membership document or others, and encourage them to raise any concerns;
- Empower children - discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem;
- Avoid spending excessive time with children without the presence of others;

- Avoid taking children to their home, especially not where they would be alone with them.

The procedure for reporting behaviour that is not compliant with the Code of Conduct and assessing the risk to the child's safety is performed in accordance with the document entitled: ***Procedure of Reporting Violence and Risk Assessment in the Child Rights Centre***

Violation of any of the aforementioned behaviours may, depending on the degree of severity, lead to immediate disciplinary action, exclusion from the governing bodies, and termination of contract.