

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY



KARPAŤSKÁ
NADÁCIA

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1 VISION

Our vision includes eastern Slovakia as a place where people¹ and organizations have accepted responsibility for their actions and their region, where they work to improve their lives and the world around them, where they respect each other, work together, help each other, and form their future jointly. Children and vulnerable groups are very important to the Carpathian Foundation. The Carpathian Foundation undertakes to protect children from any actions that could have detrimental effects on them or violate their rights.

The Carpathian Foundation applies a zero-tolerance policy towards violations of the Child Safeguarding Policy and always acts promptly to ensure that investigations of potential violations are conducted in accordance with procedural requirements while safeguarding the safety and rights of all persons involved. The Carpathian Foundation obliges its staff to report violations of the Child Safeguarding Policy and, at the same time, guarantees the protection of the reporting person (whistleblower) and the victim. The possibility of reporting superiors is guaranteed, including "bypassing" these persons in the investigation process.

The Child Safeguarding Policy includes clear procedures that staff, organizations, and individuals working with the Carpathian Foundation must follow during joint activities, projects, and programs. These processes and checklists form part of this Child Safeguarding Policy, as do the reporting procedures and follow-up steps to be taken in the event of a violation of child safeguarding standards. The standards and procedures set out hereinafter are underpinned by the principles mentioned below.

2 PRINCIPLES, DEFINITIONS, AND POLICY SCOPE

The Child Safeguarding Policy (hereinafter, the 'Policy') of the Carpathian Foundation is based on the Child Safeguarding Policy designed by Eurochild. We also drew inspiration from the Child Safeguarding Policy of the Keeping Children Safe Coalition and consulted with child safeguarding experts from the Children of Slovakia Foundation. The Child Safeguarding Policy is underpinned by the UN [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (hereinafter, the 'Convention'). The Carpathian Foundation respects the Convention as a holistic document that provides a comprehensive framework for safeguarding, provision, and participation of all children. We believe that child safeguarding, access to information, and the space to express their views in communication with other children and adults are crucial to ensuring children's rights. The Policy takes into account the procedures and principles recommended by UN agencies for safeguarding the rights of vulnerable persons.

¹ *Note on gender inclusivity:* Where generic nouns or pronouns are used in this text, the authors intend them to inclusively refer to all individuals—women, men, and non-binary persons—in all instances.

2.1 Principles

All children and young people involved in the activities organized or supported by the Carpathian Foundation have the right:

- to have their health, safety, well-being, and best interests considered as top priority;
- to have their development promoted and safeguarded, thereby enabling their development and the fulfillment of their potential;
- to be valued, respected, and understood within the context of their own cultural, national, and religious background;
- to be listened to and to have their views given careful consideration;
- to become active participants in decisions that directly affect them (including child rights protection).

The Carpathian Foundation (hereinafter referred to as 'CF') strives for the highest standard of professional conduct and practice. The aim is to prevent any form of abuse of children and young people during their involvement in CF activities – including those that the CF supports financially or otherwise, therefore it:

- creates a safe environment where children, young people, and adults discuss issues of safety and safeguarding openly;
- practices transparent communication both internally and externally (with partners and anyone who comes into contact with the Carpathian Foundation) to promote awareness and the implementation of the principles of child safeguarding;
- creates clear processes to handle any allegations openly, reliably, and fairly;
- creates measures in the recruitment of new staff to ensure the safeguarding of children and youth;
- creates management structures for the effective implementation and observance of this Policy;
- provides training for CF staff, partners, and all entities with which it cooperates in any way.

The Carpathian Foundation obliges all its staff, contractors, partner organizations, and organizations receiving financial support from the CF or acting on its behalf to abide by these principles.

2.2 Definitions

Child

Pursuant to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is defined as any human being under the age of 18, unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Child Safeguarding

Child safeguarding is a broad term that includes principles, standards, guidelines, and procedures designed to protect children from intentional or unintentional abuse. In this context, we understand child safeguarding as CF's duty to ensure that its staff, activities, or programs do not cause harm to children, meaning they do not expose children to the risks of potential abuse

or harm. In the event of a suspected Policy violation, CF undertakes to thoroughly investigate any such suspicion and draw consequences against the perpetrator if the suspicion is confirmed by an investigation conducted by CF or CF's responsible partner organization. Where necessary, CF also involves competent authorities and local bodies, including the police, in the investigation process.

Staff

Any person performing paid or unpaid work for CF on the basis of an employment or similar contract, commercial or volunteer contract, internship agreement, or any other relevant type of contract.

Direct Contact with Children

By this term, we understand a situation in which a person is physically present with a child during any activity organized by CF, whether it involves regular, short-term, or long-term meetings. This includes formal and non-formal education, leisure-time activities, and various conferences and meetings attended by children, as well as working with volunteers and staff who work with children and young people.

Indirect Contact with Children - By this term, we understand:

- access to information about children involved in CF activities, such as names, addresses, photographs, and case studies;
- providing funding for organizations that work directly with children. Although we define this contact between CF and children as indirect, it is the responsibility of CF as a donor to advocate for the rights and safety of children and young people even in such cases.

Responsible Organization

An organization with which CF has a contractual relationship, and in which a violation of children's rights occurred, or which employs the alleged perpetrator (or has a contractual relationship with them), and is thus responsible for investigating the allegation and taking all appropriate follow-up steps.

2.3 Child Abuse

The WHO (World Health Organization) defines child abuse or maltreatment as the use of all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial, sexual, or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development, or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power.

In our understanding, child abuse can manifest itself (inter alia) as:

- **Physical abuse**, which takes various forms and manifestations, such as: beating, shaking, throwing, burning, intentional scalding, suffocating, strangling, and drowning a child, etc. Physical abuse also occurs when a parent or other responsible person neglects the symptoms of an illness or intentionally causes an illness in a child. Sometimes a specific form of abuse occurs – the so-called **Munchausen's syndrome by proxy**, where a parent fabricates and intentionally stages medical problems of a

child, due to which the child is repeatedly subjected to relatively demanding and painful examinations and treatment.

- **Emotional abuse**, which includes behavior of persons that adversely affects the psychological state, emotional development, and behavior of a child. It can take various forms and manifestations, such as repeatedly telling children that they are not loved, have no value, are not good enough, or that their value is inadequate to meet the expectations of the person caring for them. It may also include age- or development-inappropriate expectations of the child, as well as exposing the child to danger or inducing fear in them. To some extent, emotional abuse is a component of all forms of child abuse, but it can also appear independently.
- **Neglect**, which we define as an acute and serious threat to a child resulting from insufficient care and stimuli important for their healthy physical and psychological development.
- **Bullying**, which we define as intentional harm, often repeated over a certain period, where the victim finds it very difficult to defend themselves. It manifests itself in various forms, but the most common manifestations are: physical bullying (beating, kicking, stealing the victim's belongings), verbal bullying (inappropriate racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name-calling), and psychological bullying (isolation of the victim, non-acceptance into a peer group).
- **Discrimination** is, within the meaning of Act No. 365/2004 Coll. on Equal Treatment and on Protection against Discrimination and on Amendments and Supplements to Certain Acts (the Anti-Discrimination Act), a violation of the principle of equal treatment on the grounds of sex, religion or belief, race, affiliation to a nationality or ethnic group, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status and family status, skin color, language, political or other thinking, national or social origin, property, lineage, or other status, or due to the reporting of crime or other anti-social activity. Discrimination also includes harassment, sexual harassment, unlawful sanction, as well as an instruction to discriminate and incitement to discrimination.
- **Direct discrimination** is an action or omission where a person is treated less favorably than another person is, has been, or would be treated in a comparable situation.
- **Indirect discrimination** is an externally neutral regulation, decision, instruction, or practice that disadvantages or could disadvantage a person compared to another person; indirect discrimination does not occur if such a regulation, decision, instruction, or practice is objectively justified by the pursuit of a legitimate interest and is appropriate and necessary to achieve such an interest.
- **Child abuse for the purpose of trafficking (Commercial exploitation)**, which we define as the exploitation of children for work or other activity with the aim of obtaining benefits for the person responsible for the child, while having a damaging effect on the child's physical and mental health, education, or moral-emotional development. This form of abuse manifests itself, inter alia, through forced child labor.

A child who is abused in some way is often a victim of multiple forms of violence and may face other forms of violation of their rights (see the Convention).

- **Sexual abuse**, which we define as contact between a child and an older or more developed person (for example, a juvenile or an adult, who may be a stranger, a sibling, or a responsible person – a parent or legal guardian), where the child is used as an object of sexual gratification for the adult or older person. Often, this behavior is coerced through force, extortion, bribes, threats, or other forms of pressure. Sexual abuse also includes any exposure of a child to sexual activities, sexual contact, sexual behavior, and activities, regardless of whether the child is aware of it or not.

Child sexual abuse can manifest itself:

- physically, where sexual manifestations may involve physical contact (where penetration may occur, such as in rape) or physical contact without penetration;
- without physical contact, for example, through forced viewing or production of pornographic video recordings, or viewing sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in an inappropriate sexual manner;
- psychologically;
- verbally.

Commercial sexual exploitation is considered to be any use of a child for sexual purposes for financial or other remuneration. In this case, the child is considered an object of trade and sexual exploitation. This phenomenon is often linked to trafficking and organized crime, or forced labor and modern slavery.

Child pornography is defined as the depiction of real or simulated sexual intercourse, another type of sexual contact, or another similar sexual act involving a child or a person looking like a child, or the depiction of naked body parts of a child or a person looking like a child, aimed at inducing sexual gratification in another person. This content may be displayed in the form of photographs, negatives, slides, magazines, books, drawings, films, video recordings, and computer graphics. There is a general division into two categories: *soft-core* (does not contain explicit sexual scenes, but depicts naked children or children behaving seductively) and *hard-core*, which depicts children actively participating in sexual activities.

2.4 Scope of Policy

The Child Safeguarding Policy aims to ensure in particular:

- **Protection of children:**
Some children are particularly vulnerable to the risk of abuse, exploitation, and neglect by those who care for them or have access to private information. Many children living in adverse conditions have already experienced a violation of this right to protection and have suffered a disrupted relationship, breach of trust, or have even been abused by an adult.
- **Protection of personnel:**
According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, all children have the right to be protected from any form of violence, abuse, and exploitation. Therefore, CF has

a responsibility to ensure that all its activities, projects, and programs are safe for children. This means that CF personnel do not pose a risk to children, and programs and projects are designed to protect and promote the safety of children.

- **Protection of the organization's reputation:**

Organizations that work with children, either directly or indirectly, face the risk that violations of children's rights may occur within their activities. It is important that they have established principles of conduct to prevent violations of children's rights, as well as transparent processes for reporting and investigating allegations of such violations and for holding perpetrators accountable. Creating their own policy that captures these principles and procedures strengthens the organization's reputation, enables it to protect itself against false accusations, and enhances the protection of the children it works with.

The Child Safeguarding Policy applies to:

- all personnel (employees and workers who work for CF other than in permanent employment), members of the Board of Directors and the Supervisory Board and other advisory bodies, interns, and volunteers;
- everyone who cooperates with CF or acts on its behalf based on a contract (e.g., trainers, consultants, photographers, etc.);
- partner organizations and organizations that receive financial or any other support from CF, as well as persons who work for them or act on their behalf.

For the effective implementation of the Policy, it is essential that all personnel, volunteers, consultants, trainers, etc., are familiar with the content of the Policy, understand it, and comply with all steps ensuring that no harm comes to any child they might come into contact with during or outside of work. It is also essential that all these persons know the procedure for reporting a violation of the Policy to the Carpathian Foundation.

The Policy applies to all organizations and external partners who cooperate on CF activities involving children. If these organizations do not yet have their own child safeguarding policy, they are obliged to adhere to the principles and steps defined in the CF Policy. At the same time, they should demonstrate a willingness to develop their own Policy that reflects the local context and legislation.

A copy of the Policy will be sent to every person and organization cooperating with CF. Cooperating organizations are obliged to inform their personnel and clients/participants of activities with children about the content of the Policy, and to appropriately inform children of their rights to protection and the processes for reporting violations of their rights should they occur.

In the event of a breach of the rules and principles of this Policy, or a violation of a child's safety, CF reserves the right to terminate cooperation with the organization, institution, or individual concerned. CF will assess each violation individually.

The Child Safeguarding Policy Manager is responsible for updating the Child Safeguarding Policy, and is also responsible for:

- informing CF personnel about the Child Safeguarding Policy and its implementation within the organization;
- monitoring the implementation of the Policy and regularly informing members of the Board of Directors (once a year) and the foundation team about the progress achieved;
- internal evaluation and updating of the Policy once every three years, with its compliance and results to be approved by the Board of Directors;
- preparing materials for training sessions on the Child Safeguarding Policy;
- gathering and managing information on legal requirements, best practices, etc.;
- providing support and assistance to other team members regarding child safeguarding topics;
- receiving reports of Policy violations.

The name and contact details of the Child Safeguarding Policy Manager (hereinafter referred to as the "Policy Manager") will be published on the CF website and visibly displayed at the CF headquarters.

Only designated persons directly concerned will be allowed to obtain information about children, including legal cases. General responsibility for the implementation of the child safeguarding policy within CF is borne by the CF Board of Directors.

3 PREVENTION, REPORTING AND PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF A POLICY VIOLATION

This Policy has been established to ensure the highest possible level of professional conduct when working with children, so that they are not put at risk during their participation in activities organized and supported by CF. Every personnel member, collaborator, and organization working with children must ensure that children and their caregivers are made aware of their rights and the methods for reporting violations of the Policy, including anonymous channels and the commitment to providing whistleblower protection.

3.1 Prevention of Policy Violations

Every CF personnel member and collaborator must:

- become familiar with the Child Safeguarding Policy, including the procedure for reporting Policy violations and the consequences of such violations;
- confirm in writing that they agree with the principles and conditions of the Policy and that they undertake to comply with them, namely by
 - a statutory declaration prior to commencing cooperation with CF (for example, during the selection process);

- signing an employment, mandate, or similar contract with CF, which includes a declaration of consent to comply with the principles and conditions of the Policy;
- if implied by the contractual terms, undergo CF training on the Child Safeguarding Policy no later than 1 month from the commencement of cooperation with CF, and subsequently at least once a year throughout the entire duration of the cooperation.

Every organization funded by CF or in a partner relationship with CF must:

- become familiar with the Child Safeguarding Policy, including its obligations, the procedure for reporting Policy violations, and the consequences of such violations;
- confirm in writing that it agrees with the principles and conditions of the Policy and that it undertakes to comply with them, namely by:
 - signing a cooperation agreement or a similar contract with CF, which includes a declaration of consent to comply with the principles and conditions of the Policy;
 - where relevant, the signing of a statutory declaration of consent to comply with the principles and conditions of the Policy may be a condition for entering into a contractual relationship with CF;
- if justified, undergo CF training on the Child Safeguarding Policy.

In the event that CF implements activities within a consortium with other organizations and the conditions of cooperation do not allow for the full application of this Policy, CF shall enforce compliance with the principles of prevention, reporting, and the protection of children's rights to an appropriate extent and in accordance with the contractual terms and policies of the respective consortium. Even in such cases, the protection of children's rights remains an unalterable priority for CF. The limited application of formal mechanisms and procedures under this Policy as a result of a partnership arrangement shall in no way diminish CF's commitment to creating and strengthening a safe environment for all children.

3.1.1 Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct contains guidelines on the standards of ethical and appropriate behavior of adults towards children, as well as among children themselves. The priority of the Code is always the best interests of a child and transparency in actions. CF's goal is for adults and children to behave towards each other in a manner that ensures everyone is protected and safe during joint activities.

Everyone involved should:

- know the responsible persons and the processes for reporting suspected violations of children's rights as defined in the Policy;
- respect the fundamental rights of children and act fairly, truthfully, thoughtfully, and treat children and other adults with esteem and respect;
- know what child abuse is (as elaborated in this Child Safeguarding Policy) and be aware of the associated statutory provisions;
- know the signs of abuse and promptly report any suspicion (including anonymously) to the Child Safeguarding Policy Manager through the specified reporting channels;

- treat all children equally and involve them in activities without distinction and discrimination;
- protect the health, safety, and well-being of children and other people in all cases;
- note the risk of unsupervised, age-mixed groups of children, where younger children may be put at risk by older ones;
- note potential bullying among children themselves;
- note how children perceive their words, behavior, and relationships;
- ensure a method of supervising children so that younger or vulnerable children are protected from abuse by older children or adults;
- ensure an environment in which children can develop personally, physically, psychologically, socially, morally, and intellectually;
- encourage children and young people not to be afraid to express their opinions, and respect their opinions;
- restrict and/or prevent children's access to inappropriate electronic content;
- respect the right to private information under all circumstances;
- ensure the written consent of the child or their parent/legal guardian in the case of photographing, filming, or processing private data within the activity.

No one involved should:

- engage in any form of sexual activity with children;
- behave provocatively;
- allow an adult to sleep in the same room or bed alone with a child (unless a parent/legal guardian has given written permission for this);
- dress, bathe, or otherwise take care of children's personal hygiene if they are already capable of doing so independently;
- discriminate against, disparage, shame, humiliate children, or cause any form of emotional abuse to children (e.g., speak in a way that insults and hurts children, or show images or tell stories that can emotionally or mentally harm children);
- strike a child or physically harm them in any other way;
- behave in a manner that may directly harm a child or expose them to the risk of abuse;
- encourage or defend the behavior of other adults (personnel, volunteers, trainers, and others) who would violate the principles of this Code of Conduct;
- remain alone with a child;
- allow children to engage in games with sexual undertones;
- show attention to children in a manner that is culturally inappropriate or otherwise insensitive to children (kisses, hugs, caresses, rubbing, touching, etc.);
- seek physical contact with a child (such as holding hands) if the initiative does not come from the child or if the child has not expressed consent;
- propose an inappropriate relationship and encourage sympathy and expressions of interest in a relationship from the child;
- photograph, film, or request private information except for that which is agreed upon and necessary for CF activities;
- inappropriately use private information about children (for example, on social media) outside of agreed and permitted CF activities.

In the event that any suspicion of a violation of the Child Safeguarding Policy arises, it is necessary to immediately inform the Child Safeguarding Policy Manager at CF.

3.2 Reporting Violations of the Child Safeguarding Policy

Every individual or organization that becomes familiar with this Policy should be able to:

- recognize signs and manifestations in a child indicating that they need help (Annex No. 4);
- respond to violations of safeguarding principles using the ACT methodology (*Act / Child-Centered / Time Counts*) described below;
- report relevant violations of this Policy (regardless of whether it is a suspicion of a violation, an alleged violation, or a violation with witness testimony) to the Child Safeguarding Policy Manager at CF. **In the event that such a suspicion arises against the Policy Manager, it must be reported to the management of the Carpathian Foundation. If the violation of the Policy involves a personnel member of a CF partner organization, the Policy Manager shall forward the report to the respective organization, which then becomes the responsible organization liable for investigating the reported matter, holding the perpetrator accountable, and informing CF about the course of the investigation and its conclusions.**

All records and reports must be stored in a secure place. Access to them is restricted to the CF Child Safeguarding Policy Manager and the CF management.

Deciding whether it is necessary to report a Policy violation can be challenging; therefore, we recommend using the ACT methodology:

How should I act in a given situation?



The Carpathian Foundation undertakes to do everything in its power to prevent further harm to the child/children during or after the incident to which the report relates. At the same time, after considering the impact of the incident on the child, CF will assist in seeking professional help, including, if necessary, a medical assessment of their health status. Important contact numbers for the police, emergency medical services, social guardianship, social workers, helplines, and other organizations or individuals that can provide assistance will be published and made available.

The Carpathian Foundation also undertakes to immediately contact family members or legal guardians and inform them about the incident and the assistance provided. Subsequently, a Child Safeguarding Policy Violation Report (Annex No. 2) will be prepared. Throughout the entire process, CF undertakes to prioritize the best interests of a child and guarantees the protection of both the whistleblower and the victim.

How to Report a Suspected Violation of Children's Rights

Suspicious or violations of the Policy can be reported through the following channels:

- personal reporting;
- reporting by phone, SMS, or email (including anonymously);
- written report by a letter marked with the text "related to CSP – confidential", which offers the option to report anonymously as well – the letter can be sent by mail to the Carpathian Foundation's address or dropped directly into the CF mailbox at the organization's headquarters.

A suspicion of a violation or a violation of the Policy can be reported to the Child Safeguarding Policy Manager directly, or through any CF personnel member or personnel member of a partner organization, who will promptly contact the Policy Manager.

3.3 Procedures for Violations of the Child Safeguarding Policy

The Carpathian Foundation obligates its personnel to report violations of the Child Safeguarding Policy.

If anyone has a suspicion of a Policy violation by a CF personnel member, an individual, or an organization that is supported by or in any contractual relationship with CF, or who acts on behalf of CF, it is necessary **to promptly report this suspicion to the Policy Manager**, who:

- notifies local or national authorities, including the police, if necessary, if there is a suspicion that a criminal offense has been committed;
- ensures the safety and necessary support for the child concerned by the report through available means (contacting crisis helplines, involving state authorities, preventing further contact with the suspect, etc.);
- prepares a Child Safeguarding Policy Violation Report (Annex No. 2) together with the person reporting the suspicion;
- notifies the foundation's management (the Director or the Governing Board) of the report, which will open an investigation and, upon its conclusion, enforce consequences for the Policy violation;

- in the event that the report concerns a CF personnel member or collaborator, CF conducts the investigation and enforces consequences, including the termination of cooperation;
- in the event that the report concerns a personnel member of another organization, CF forwards the report to the responsible organization, which conducts the investigation and enforces consequences. At the same time, the responsible organization is obligated to inform CF about the progress and results of the investigation. If the responsible organization does not follow this process and/or fails to enforce consequences for a confirmed Policy violation, CF reserves the right to terminate cooperation with the organization.

CF reserves the right to take any disciplinary actions in connection with a Policy violation, even at the stage of suspicion, and to act in accordance with such actions, including filing a report with the police.

In the event that a member of the CF management (the Executive or Program Director) is suspected or accused of a Policy violation, the foundation's Governing Board will decide on further procedures and disciplinary actions. In the event that a member of the Governing or Supervisory Board of the Carpathian Foundation is suspected or accused, they will be excluded from investigation and decision-making activities throughout the entire course of the investigation. The possibility of reporting superior persons is guaranteed, including "bypassing" these persons in the investigation process.

The investigation is to be concluded by the CF management, which will also decide on enforcing consequences and inform the Governing Board. The decision on any investigation conclusions will be delivered to the accused person in writing.

4 GUIDELINES ON COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA COMMUNICATION

This section of the Child Safeguarding Policy contains guidelines for CF personnel when communicating with the public or the media about the work of CF or the work of CF partners. It includes fundamental principles for safeguarding children's safety in every situation, as well as other specific guidelines that must be observed by CF employees, as well as photographers, filmmakers, etc., who participate in events organized by CF. The guidelines included in this Policy are applicable and relevant to all forms of communication, including social media.

For the safety of children, it is essential under all circumstances to obtain an Informed Consent signed by a parent or legal guardian, in which they agree to the use of photographs, audio-visual outputs, and statements of children in the media or publications.

4.1 Principles

CF undertakes that, regardless of the form of communication, it will respect the rights and dignity of every child under all circumstances, taking into account their best interests. **CF will not use degrading or discriminatory depictions and statements.**

This section contains guidelines regarding the use of photographs, videos, films, or stories of children for the purpose of communication with the public and the media, the reason for these guidelines being to protect children and their private information.

CF undertakes to adhere to the following principles in communication:

- **Principle of Dignity** – the dignity of the child must be preserved under all circumstances. Statements must not degrade, discriminate against, or disparage the child. Children must be appropriately dressed during photography/filming and must not appear in photographs/videos in poses that could be perceived as sexually provocative.
- **Principle of Correctness** – information about children must not be manipulated or distorted, for example, for the sake of sensationalism. Stories and photographs should speak in a balanced way about the lives of children and the circumstances or negatives they face, as well as about the changes and progress of the children. Generalizations that do not reflect the given situation should be avoided in communication. Photographs/audio-visual works that do not directly depict the given story or event and are taken out of context should not be used.
- **Principle of Privacy Preservation** – CF undertakes not to use any information about children, the disclosure of which could put the children at risk or lead to the exposure of their privacy and identity.

CF also undertakes that it:

- will always use only the child's first name and ensure that the child's address, the name and address of the school the child attends, or other information regarding their residence is not disclosed, unless agreed otherwise with the legal guardian and the child. In the event that it is necessary to protect the child's safety, a changed name will be used.
- will securely store all obtained information about the child and images of children (including those stored on a computer). Access to the information will be granted only to those persons who are directly involved in the given program, project, or activity.
- will, depending on relevance, represent a wide spectrum of children in its communication outputs: boys, girls, children of various age ranges, children of various nationalities, ethnic groups, and abilities. CF will ensure that children from different groups and countries appear in communication outputs, depending on where CF conducts its activities.

4.2 Informed Consent

It is essential to request a signed informed consent before photographing children or recording videos about their lives that we plan to use in publications or other promotional materials. This means that the children and their legal guardians are informed about how and where the photographs, videos, or information will be processed and published. They are also informed that they do not have to agree to this, and that information about their residence or other private data will be changed or withheld. Consent from the child or their legal guardian is also required to publish the child's first name.

This consent is valid only with a signed and completed Informed Consent form signed by a parent/legal guardian. In the event that this is not possible, the consent shall be signed by a representative of the organization representing the child. It is preferable if the consent is requested by the organization that works directly with the children, as in that case, the child or parent/legal guardian feels freer to refuse.

The Informed Consent and other forms will be archived by CF in a secure place. Despite obtaining written consent, it is necessary to re-verify the children's consent to participate in photography/filming, etc., directly during the activity.

Sample guidelines regarding informed consent/permission:

Age group	Child	Guardian	Absence of guardian / guardian is not in the best interests of the child	Method
0 – 5	-	informed consent	informed consent of another trusted adult or social worker	written consent
6 – 11	informed permission	informed consent	informed consent of another trusted adult or social worker	oral permission, written consent
12 – 14	informed permission	informed consent	informed permission of another trusted adult or child	written permission, written consent
15 – 18	informed consent	obtains informed consent with the child's permission	the child's informed consent and their sufficient maturity are given due weight	written consent

4.3 Conducting an Interview with a Child

Conducting interviews with children requires mastering certain skills and adhering to basic principles to ensure that children's rights are respected and their dignity is preserved during the interview.

- **Informed Consent** – in addition to basic information and consent, it should also include an overview of the topics that will be discussed with the child and an assurance that the child can decide to refuse to continue the interview at any time. The person conducting the interview should make sure at the very beginning of the interview whether the child understands the conditions of the interview and their rights.
- **Ensuring Support** – a person whom the child knows well should be present during the interview. If possible, the child should identify the person who will participate in the interview themselves.

- **Respecting the Right to Say NO** – it is necessary to reassure the child that they do not have to answer questions if they feel uncomfortable and that they can withdraw their consent at any time.
- **Gender** – it is important to realize that girls and boys have different needs and to consider whether the interview will be conducted by a man or a woman. At the same time, it is important to consider the topics of the interview from a gender perspective.
- **Respecting the Right to Information** – if it is necessary to take notes or record the interview, the child must be informed in advance and asked for their consent.

4.4 Visits by Photographers, Film Crews, and Other Persons

When photographers, film crews, or other persons visit during CF programs, projects, and activities, the following must be taken into account:

- Photographers, film crews, etc., must be familiarized with the CF Child Safeguarding Policy before they meet with the children they will be photographing, recording, or interviewing. At the same time, they shall sign a Declaration of Commitment to adhere to the terms and principles established in this Policy.
- It is necessary to ensure that children are not left alone with journalists, photographers, etc., without supervision. The responsible CF personnel member must be present at all times.
- Children, parents/legal guardians will be informed about the method of publishing the photographs, film, or statements of the child, and CF will obtain their consent to use the acquired material.
- It is important that copies of photographs, films, or statements are sent to the organizations with which CF cooperates, and subsequently forwarded to the children and their legal guardians.
- For the purpose of safeguarding the child's safety, the journalist, photographer, etc., must inform CF how the acquired material will be used. CF reserves the right to deny permission for the publication of materials if it constitutes a violation of any principles and terms of the Child Safeguarding Policy.
- If the materials are also to be used by other organizations, the following must be stated under the photograph: Carpathian Foundation/name of the photographer and the caption of the photograph.

Annex 1: Child Safeguarding Policy Violation Report Form

Child Safeguarding Policy Violation Report Form	
Date of report:	Reporting channel used:
Information about the reporter	
Name and surname of the reporter:	
Age of the reporter:	Gender of the reporter:
Nationality of the reporter:	Preferred language for submitting the reporting:
Address and contact details of the reporter:	
Any immediate needs or safety concerns regarding the reporter:	
Other information/comments:	
Information about the victim	
Name of the victim:	
Address and contact details of the victim:	
Nationality of the victim:	Preferred language of the victim:
Gender of the victim:	Age of the victim:
If the victim is under 18 years of age and does not have a parent/designated guardian: separated <input type="checkbox"/> unaccompanied <input type="checkbox"/> accompanied <input type="checkbox"/>	If the victim is under 18 years of age, the name and address of the parent/guardian:
Did the victim or legal representative consent to completing this form and making the referral? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Any immediate needs or safety concerns regarding the victim:	
Other information/comments:	
Information about the incident(s)	
Date and time of the incident(s):	Place of the incident(s):
Name of the alleged perpetrator:	
Name of the organization the perpetrator works with/cooperates with:	
Description of the incident(s) in the words of the victim/complainant:	
Steps taken so far:	
Please describe any steps taken to meet immediate needs or address concerns regarding the safety of the complainant/victim:	
If the victim has been referred to an organization for support, please describe:	
Information about the receiving entity	
Date of reporting:	
Name of the person who completed the report:	
Signature:	

<i>Information about the investigation and next steps taken by the Carpathian Foundation</i>
<i>Name of the director who received the report:</i>
<i>Date the report was received by the director:</i>
<i>Director's signature:</i>
<i>Names of designated investigators and the justification for their selection:</i>
<i>Investigation start date:</i>
<i>Date of submission of the investigation report:</i>
<i>Details of the investigation (please provide information regarding the steps taken during the investigation process, including justification, dates, locations, names of persons involved and their account of events):</i>
<i>Investigation findings:</i>
<i>Is it recommended to refer the case to the Slovak authorities? If yes, please provide details:</i>
<i>Signatures of the investigators:</i>
<i>Follow-up steps taken based on investigation results, including justification:</i>
<i>Name of the person responsible for the follow-up steps, signature and date:</i>

Annex 2: Binding declaration of consent to the child safeguarding policy of the carpathian foundation-personnel

I, the undersigned, hereby bindingly declare that I have read and fully understood the standards and guidelines set forth in the Child Safeguarding Policy of the Carpathian Foundation. I agree with all the stated principles and recognize the importance of implementing and enforcing the Child Safeguarding Policy, its standards, processes, and procedures, and I commit to adhering to them throughout the entire duration of my cooperation with the Carpathian Foundation.

At the same time, I acknowledge that by providing my consent, I grant the Carpathian Foundation the right to:

- verify criminal record history directly related to working with children
- request a signed Statutory Declaration regarding any criminal conviction or rehabilitated sentence
- request a declaration regarding any potential investigation or charges against me in relation to child safety
- request two personal references.

Personal references

Please provide the name, address, and contact details of two persons who have known you for more than two years and are not family members, to provide a personal reference for you.

Name:

Address:

Mobile:

E-mail:

Name:

Address:

Mobile:

E-mail:

Statutory Declaration of Integrity

- Have you ever been legally convicted of an intentional criminal offense? YES/NO
- Have you ever been charged with sexually inappropriate behavior in any form? YES/NO

If you answered yes to any of the questions above, please provide details and circumstances related to any charges and convictions, including spent convictions.

The Carpathian Foundation is committed to protecting the confidential information you provide. It will be securely kept by the Program Director / HR Manager, who will also consider the extent to which it poses a threat to the principles of the Carpathian Foundation's Child Safeguarding Policy.

- I have been informed that in the event of submitting a false statutory declaration, I may be prosecuted for a misdemeanor pursuant to § 39 par. 3 of Act No. 71/1967 Coll. on Administrative Proceedings.

.....
(name)

.....
(position)

.....
(signature)

.....
(date and place)

Annex 3: Recognizing Signs of Abuse

Recognizing signs of abuse committed against children is a highly complex matter, and there is no simple guide for quick and easy detection. There are certain indicators that may arouse suspicion; however, they must be evaluated with great caution. One must not automatically assume that abuse is occurring in such cases. It is equally important to realize that if any signs are observed, they must be reported to the Child Safeguarding Policy Manager as soon as possible, so that measures can be taken in accordance with the child safeguarding policy in the event of proven abuse.

Possible signs and consequences of physical abuse:

- bruises, burns, dislocations, bites, cuts,
- improbable explanations of injuries,
- refusal to talk about injuries,
- flinching or withdrawing from physical contact,
- refusal to uncover arms and legs in hot weather,
- refusal to participate in activities (such as sports) that require removing outer clothing,
- fear of returning home or of contact with parents,
- signs of mistrust and wariness toward adults,
- self-harming behavior,
- aggressiveness toward others,
- passivity and frequent complaining,
- repeated running away.

Possible signs of psychological abuse:

- adverse or delayed psychological, cognitive, and emotional development,
- fearfulness,
- delayed speech development or sudden change or disorder in speech,
- fear of new situations,
- low self-esteem,
- inappropriate emotional expressions/reactions to situations,
- extreme passivity and/or aggressiveness,
- drug and alcohol abuse,
- repeated running away,
- pathological stealing.

Possible signs of neglect:

- frequent hunger,
- scavenging food from trash bins, stealing, and hiding food,
- poor personal hygiene,
- frequent fatigue,

- inappropriate clothing (e.g., summer clothes in winter),
- frequent lateness to school, activities, or absenteeism,
- unaddressed health problems,
- low self-esteem,
- poor social skills,
- pathological stealing,
- drug and alcohol abuse.

Possible signs of sexual abuse:

- age-inappropriate sexual behavior or language,
- bedwetting and soiling (enuresis and encopresis),
- pain in the anal or genital area,
- insomnia/sleep problems,
- fear of being left alone with an adult,
- sexual promiscuity,
- extreme risk-taking in adolescents.

Possible behavioral concerns regarding adults:

- a person in whose presence the child's behavior visibly changes – they become withdrawn, fearful, stressed, or irritable,
- a person who asks a child to lie or keep a secret,
- a person who violates any of the principles of the Child Safeguarding Policy or the Code of Conduct,
- a person who proposes private communication with a child via email, telephone, or in person.

Annex 4: Important Contact Information



Carpathian Foundation
Letná 27, 040 01 Košice
Mobile: 0948 488 615
Email: info@karpatskanadacia.sk
www.karpatskanadacia.sk

Contacts at Carpathian Foundation

- **Child Safeguarding Policy Manager**
Mgr. Nora Čéplöová, nora.ceploova@karpatskanadacia.sk
- **Manager for Protection From Sexual Exploitation And Abuse Policy**
Zuzana Némethová, zuzana.nemethova@karpatskanadacia.sk
- **Foundation Administrator:**
Laura Dittel, laura.dittel@karpatskanadacia.sk
- **Nominated Board Member:**
PhDr. Jana Knežová, PhD.

Contacts for Providing Support and Counseling to Victims:

- **National Helpline for Children in Distress (Linka detskej istoty):**
Tel.: 116 111 (Free, anonymous, 24/7 across Slovakia)
- **Internet Online Counseling Center IPčko:**
www.ipecko.sk (Free, anonymous, 24/7 across Slovakia)
- **National Coordination Centre for Solving the Issues of Violence against Children: Childhood Without Violence –** www.detstvobeznasilia.gov.sk

Emergency Services:

- **Emergency Services, Police, Fire Brigade: 112**
- **Emergency Medical Service: 155, 112**
- **Police Force: 158, 112**
- **Fire and Rescue Service: 150, 112**
- **Mountain Rescue Service: 18 300**