



# Child Protection Policy

## 1. Introduction

The European university college Association (EucA) is a non-profit organisation based in Brussels, representing University Colleges and networks of Colleges in Europe. EucA aims to enrich students' academic and professional development through non-formal and informal activities in employability, soft skills, international mobility and responsible citizenship. EucA also offers services to Colleges' Directors and Student Affairs Professionals, supporting them in internationalisation, best practices sharing and professional development.

EucA's activities entail direct contact with member organisations, university students, and European or international institutions. While the organisation's target group is young people over 18 years old, we occasionally come in contact with minors, mainly when we cooperate with partner organisations.

Risks associated with child protection may therefore exist. Children could attend events that EucA organises, or they may interact with us via social media. In such cases, it is the responsibility of EucA to prevent child abuse and implement safeguarding measures.

## 2. Aims and Objectives

This Child Protection Policy guides EucA's staff in the organisation and implementation of any activity involving children and includes principles to be applied. Since the European university college Association's work is international, EucA further commits to always refer to national legislation and apply any relevant requirements.

The aim of this policy is to:



- Include safeguards when implementing activities for or involving children to promote full respect of their rights and pursuit of their best interest;
- Prevent and minimise the risk of harm that may be caused to children as a result of actions or neglect;
- Ensure good practice when using the media, including social media;
- Clarify procedures for handling incidents in case they occur.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Protect children who attend EucA's activities from harm;
- Provide staff, volunteers and children with the overarching principles that offer guidance during events in where children participate.

### 3. Definitions

**Child:** A child means any person below the age of eighteen years.

**Child Safeguarding:** Child safeguarding means taking appropriate measures to ensure that staff, experts, contracted third parties, operations, projects and programmes do no harm to children and promote their best interests. This means that children are not exposed to the risk of harm and abuse and that any concerns about children's safety are reported to the appropriate authorities. Child safeguarding includes preventive actions to minimise the risks of harm occurring and responsive actions to ensure that incidents are appropriately handled.

**Child Abuse:** For this policy, child abuse consists of anything which individuals, organisations, or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospects of safe and healthy development. Child abuse can be physical, sexual and/or emotional in nature.



**Safeguarding Concerns:** For the purpose of this policy, these are feelings or worries that a person may be at risk of harm or have been harmed. They may refer to a singular act of harm and abuse or multiple instances. A person may report such safeguarding concerns because s/he experienced or feared being harmed, or as a bystander who became aware of others being at risk of, or experiencing harm.

## 4. Principles

This policy is to be upheld and guided by the following principles:

**Protection:** All children and young people are entitled to protection from any form of harm and abuse.

**Responsibility:** Safeguarding is an organisational and individual responsibility. Euca and Euca's staff are responsible for creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive culture and will proactively listen to learn from and act on any safeguarding concerns raised.

**Youth-centred and youth-led:** Euca strives for all decisions and actions related to this policy to be led by the voices and interests of young people, respecting their ownership over their opinions and bodies as well as the processes designed to protect them.

**Not harm:** Euca commits to carefully consider, minimise and manage any risks to prevent any negative impact caused by its work.

**Duty of care:** Euca commits to always acting with care and kindness, ensuring it can safely carry out its work and never do anything or neglect to do something that may harm others.

**Non-discrimination:** The rights of the child apply to all children without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or their parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex,



language, religion, opinion, nationality, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, or other status.

**Best interests of the child:** In all actions concerning children, the child's best interests shall be a primary consideration.

## 5. Guidelines for Conduct

The organisers of activities involving or concerning children must always have full regard for the principles outlined in this policy and commit to embodying them in all aspects of their behaviour, informing other participants of these guidelines and ensuring they follow them to the best of their ability.

EuCA must:

- Comply with all relevant laws concerning the protection of children in the country where the activity takes place;
- Inform children of their rights in a way they can understand, including by identifying the person, authority or service where to seek advice/complain in case of a problem;
- Maintain the 'two-adult' rule: never work alone with a child. This includes online interactions;
- Refrain from contacting participants on social media. When communication is essential for the delivery of the activity, group settings are to be preferred; never one-on-one communication with children;
- Only use organisational email (xxx@euca.eu) to communicate with children; never personal emails;
- Maintain content and tone of conversations that are age-appropriate and strictly related to EuCA's activities and, therefore, must not contain any references to personal information;
- Maintain and respect appropriate boundaries in all forms of communication.



## 6. Participation of Children in Events

When inviting children to participate in an event, they must be provided with complete, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about their right to express their views freely and to have them given due weight. They must be informed on how this participation will occur, its scope, purpose and potential impact. Children must never be coerced into expressing views against their wishes and must be informed that they can cease involvement at any stage.

In particular:

- Event organisers must seek parental consent in writing when a child is to attend Euca's activities.
- Children must not be accommodated alone in a room of adults. They should share the room with other children, with their accompanying parent/guardian or be accommodated in a private room;
- All participants must have access to information relating to safeguarding. Children, in particular, will have accessible versions, with particular attention to the format and language used and removing unnecessary jargon;
- When the time and format allow, proactively build opportunities to listen to children's ideas for identifying risks and improving participation while noting the different needs of individuals or groups with specific needs, characteristics or backgrounds. We take into consideration that children may experience the same environment in different ways.

Euca has to ensure that service and/or third-party contracts for events in which children participate must include terms of reference that clearly define the obligations of the contractor concerning safeguarding children in the performance of the contract.

## 7. Media and Social Media



When developing and using photos or videos featuring children involved in activities, the following principles must be respected:

- **Informed consent:** Permission must always be sought from the children and their guardian before taking images. To the greatest extent possible, the organisation must acquire informed consent of the child and the child's guardian, before using any photo or video for publicity, fundraising, awareness raising, or any other purpose. The purpose must be made clear to the consent giver.
- **Privacy:** Personal and physical information that could be used to identify the location of a child within a country and cause them to be put at risk must not be used in any form of communication for general or public purposes.
- **Security and data protection:** Information about children's lives and images of children (including information stored on a computer) must be kept in secure files. Access to these must be limited to those who need to use them during the course of their work.
- **Portrayal:** Images of children must portray the children only in a dignified and respectful way. The image may not shame or embarrass a child and should be presented in context.

Different countries may have specific laws or cultural norms, which must be understood and adhered to appropriately.

When seeking the consent of a child for a photograph or a recording, Euca must ensure children understand the following:

- How their images, audio recordings or video content will be used;
- The platforms they may be displayed on;
- How long their images, audio recordings or video content will be stored;
- Their consent can be withdrawn at any time, and Euca will delete all content from our systems and comms channels and not use it again;



EucA must never interview or photograph a child individually without the parent/guardian giving explicit consent.

## 8. Reporting and Procedures

In events organised by EucA, the organisation must put in place a confidential reporting mechanism for safeguarding concerns, as follow:

- In every project or event, EucA will appoint a Child Protection Officer (CPO) responsible for providing general information about the policy, implementing and supervising its procedures. If a CPO is not appointed, the project manager will act as CPO.
- Any complaint or safeguarding concern can be addressed to the CPO.
- The first response to all complaints must occur as soon as possible and by 24 hours after they were brought to the attention of the CPO.
- The CPO and any other person involved in organising the event that children attend are obliged to report any concerns to EucA's Secretary General (unless a complaint was submitted against her, in which case the President of EucA shall be informed).
- The Secretary-General, trained to address safeguarding concerns, shall investigate the complaint while adopting a survivor-centred approach and upholding the principles laid down in this policy. Any serious allegations must be reported to the competent authorities if the Secretary-General deems it safe and in the child's best interest, when it is requested by the child concerned or the guardian/parent, or when it is required by law.
- The CPO may decide to remove from the event any person against whom an allegation has been made. If the complaint is submitted against a staff member or a volunteer of the European university college Association, the Secretary-General and the President of the EucA will decide whether to suspend



the alleged perpetrator during the investigation period. They will take any necessary measures upon the investigation's final conclusion, including termination.

- Overall, staff and the CPO must always include the children in conversation and should try to seek consent before having the parents/guardians in any conversation on safeguarding concerns. Should this not be the case, staff or the CPO should inform the child before sharing information with their legal guardians/parents.
- The child and/or their parents/guardians must be informed of any decision the European university college Association takes, including the possibility of appealing against such a decision.
- All complaints, including subsequent procedures and outcomes, must be securely stored on a safeguarding register.

## 9. Staff Recruitment and Training

Staff recruitment processes minimise the risk of engaging anyone unsuitable to work with children. For EuCA staff working exclusively with children, these include previous employer references from all workplaces in the two years before the recruitment of, confirming the suitability for the new hire to work for a youth-focused organisation and detailing whether or not there have been any safeguarding complaints made against the new hire.

All contracts for staff, approved trainers and experts must include a requirement to comply with EuCA's Child Protection Policy. Child protection awareness training will be provided to Staff attending events where children are involved.





Euca's child protection Policy is reviewed every 5 years, when guidance changes or following an incident.

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A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Gian Luca Giovannucci".

Gian Luca Giovannucci  
President of Euca