

## **U.DI.CON. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

U.Di.Con. – Unione per la Difesa dei Consumatori – was founded with the main purpose of protecting consumers and users of both private and public services. We believe that every citizen, regardless of their economic or social status, has the right to be given support and fair access to disputes for household, financial, e-commerce, tourism, food quality and environmental issues.

U.Di.Con. dedicates its activities to all the consumers of the population and, therefore, also to minors. For this reason, U.Di.Con. believes essential to have a child protection policy in order to protect and promote all of their rights at local, national and international level.

Our Association does not accept any kind of abuse or exploitation of minors. The Policy is respected in all our activities and projects and it has to be considered mandatory for all the people involved in activities, projects, and in particular for:

- Members of the Board of Directors, working staff and the volunteers;
- Journalists, testimonials, professionals or any other person who comes in direct contact with our projects;
- Schools, local authorities or groups that work with the organization in activities or projects that involve direct contact with children and adolescents.

The Policy's compliance is an integral part of U.Di.Con. work ethics. It must be guaranteed in professional and in private life.

All our partners must provide their own child protection policy – not a cumulative one, but one per association – that safeguards all children, irrespective of ability, ethnicity, faith, gender, sexuality and culture.

U.Di.Con. has structured its policy in three main parts, with the aim to make it clear and effective. Section A states explicitly our values, that form the basis of our work with children. Section B states our commitments, and it is strictly tied to section C, our procedures, that represent the practical way we realise our commitments.

### **A) OUR VALUES**

All our projects involving children comply with the following values, mirroring those of our association:

1. We safeguard and represent children rights.
2. We protect children from all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation.
3. We protect all children regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, age, religion, political opinion, gender, sexual orientation, economic or social status, education or any other personal characteristic.
4. We inform and make children aware of their rights.
5. We include children in the decision making and we listen to their needs.
6. We acknowledge in every child the right to civic, supportive and socially useful education.
7. We base our projects on the formation of the children according to the principles related to democracy, ethics and social solidarity.

## **B) OUR COMMITMENTS**

In compliance with the values set above, we set out the following commitments:

- UNACCEPTED BEHAVIOURS – All our staff and other working members/volunteers must not expose children to any risk or uncomfortable situation.
- BAN ON EXPLOITATION – Our association bans every kind of direct and indirect exploitation. All our working members must ensure that no child becomes a victim of any exploitation according to the principles explicated above.
- CODE OF CONDUCT – All our staff and other working members/volunteers must sign and abide by our Code of Conduct (Appendix 1)
- DATA PROTECTION - Children’s data must be processed in strict compliance with the GDPR (EU Regulation 2016/679) and the applicable legislation, and also in an ethically appropriate manner. Because of that reason, the processing and the storage of data are reduced to a minimum and their publication is prohibited unless there is a proven need that results congruent with the interest of the minor and with their parents or legal guardians’ consent.
- SECURITY NETWORK FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN – The association must appoint for all the activities a CPPO (Child Protection Policy Officer) in charge of the protection operations as well as other agents, for instance a CPU (Child Protection Unit), who assist the CPPO and all the worker members. All of them are assigned - at different levels - to monitor and to ensure the compliance of the policy in all phases of carrying out the activities.
- SAFE RECRUITMENT – All selected partners and educators must be qualified and fully trained to interface in the best way with children (see section C below). In addition, all our staff who works with children must sign the certificate of pending charges.
- ESTABLISHMENT OF A REPORTING SYSTEM - The association must adopt a reporting system that is also directly accessible by the children and which allows to identify the potential emerging risks from the situation in which children are involved.
- REPORTINGS PRIORITY – Our association must evaluate each report with the utmost attention and scrupulousness and it must take all the necessary measures, involving the competent subjects at national level.
- REGULAR REVIEW OF THE CPP – A review of this CPP will be done every two years. We will involve children in this activity, by considering firstly their suggestions to create a safe environment.
- PUBLIC ACCESS OF THE CPP – The CPP is public and is published on the website of the organization who participate in activities involving children.
- VERSION OF A CPP ACCESSIBLE FOR CHILDREN – The association has released a child-friendly version of this policy that is public as the standard CPP.

## **C) OUR PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

- PUBLICITY AND MANDATORY CODE OF CONDUCT - All U.Di.Con. the personnel figures and other working members/volunteers must expressly know, share and adhere to the Code of Conduct (Appendix 1), which is to be considered an integral part of this policy and it is, therefore, made public in the same manner as the CPP. The Code of Conduct is periodically reviewed with the CPP.

- CHILDREN'S PRIVACY PROTECTION – Children's data are protected at any stage of the project and after it is concluded. The data protection law, as established in the General Data Protection Regulation ([EU Regulation 2016/679](#)), is respected. All data are collected with the sole purpose of the project realization and are not made public without prior written consent of the children's legal tutors. Children's privacy is always respected and any private information, such as full names and addresses, is not published. Pictures or videos are taken for strictly professional use and are made public only after written consent of the children's legal tutors. Pictures and videos must always respect children's safety, dignity and privacy. Any data processing, in any case, is carried out only where it is consistent with the interest of the minor.
- SECURITY NETWORK – The association appoints a CPPO (Child Protection Policy Officer) to ensure the safeguarding of children's rights in all the activities in which children are involved in.

The main duties of the CPPO are to ensure the implementation of the policy; CPPO keeps monitoring and controlling every potential need and problem of minors in children primary interest and the CPPO ensures that there is no risk for them.

The CPPO doesn't work independently but is supported by other people (unit) - CPPU - Child Protection Policy Unit - where necessary by the individual activity, which supports CPPO in ensuring the application of the policy.

The CPPU's duties, indeed, are ensuring the application of this policy and the absence of risks for children in the local contexts. Furthermore, CPPU has to report to the CPPO any critical issues that must be tackled.

For every activity (workshop) that is carried out with children, the CPPO (or the CPPU) is always present, specifically for activities such as: theatre performances, plays, conferences or similar.-

CPPO is elected by the association control organism through the majority vote. CPPO contact details are public and shared on the CPP section of the official Association website.

The CPPUs are chosen by the Association for the activities that do not require partnerships and/or international activities.

In case of international activities, at least one CPPU is appointed for every country in which the activities take place, in agreements with the local partners.

CPPU contact details are public and shared on the CPP section of the official Association website

- SAFE RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES - The activities must be in a school or other safe places, where the child is already placed in a protected environment and supported by qualified educators.

All our staff and other working members/volunteers must sign and abide by our Code of Conduct (Appendix 1).

In addition, all the collaborators who interact or implement activities with children must be selected by CPO.

All the collaborators who come in contact with children must show that they have a specific suitable qualification, recognized by national authority, according to their roles in the activities.

- SELF-CERTIFICATION OF PENDING CHARGES PROCEDURES- All our working members/volunteers who come in contact with children must sign a declaration certifying that they have no pending charges.
- REPORTING SYSTEM PROCEDURES – U.Di.Con. eases the potential emerging of problems related to children and the current policy by the following measures:
- CPPO and CPPU personal contact details are public and posted on the on the CPP section of the official Association website. Everyone can contact them in any time and case freely.
- in the CPP section of official Association website there is a contact form to send an inquiry available also by mobile in order to facilitate the problems relevant for this policy. The warning messages will be addressed to CPPO, who will evaluate them and adopt the measures that he/she deems appropriate according to the children primary interest, complying with children privacy and informing parents or relevant authorities.

The warning messages will be evaluated even if are anonymous and, in this case, a deep adjustments investigation has been planned.

- in order to ease the emerging of potential warnings by who won't use the online channels during the activities' implementation, an external post box is foreseen placed out of projects' venue. This collection will be set up in order to gather the messages respecting the privacy, also those ones that are relating to the correct application of this policy.
- CPP'S REVIEW PROCESS – The CPP is reviewed every 2 years.

In the review process, supervised by the CPPO, the needs of minors that are collected through the reporting system have priority. Children needs are the focus of the revision process, which must necessarily take them into account.

Exploitation and availability of CPP and its related information are posted on the official association website in a user-friendly way by one-click access in order to be available also by mobile.

A child- friendly version is also available on the website.

The official documents are also released during the activities with children.

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1 – CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Code of Conduct is to be considered integral part of the Child Protection Policy. It must be known and signed by all members of the working staff and volunteers.

#### **I will always:**

- Respect child rights and interface with children in appropriate manner, always putting the children needs in first place and making children comfortable during all the activities
- Operate fairly and impartially, adopting the same treatment towards all children regardless of age, nationality, religion, gender, social status or any other personal characteristics
- Use non-violent and positive behavior when interfacing with children
- Encourage them to disclose abusive or problematic situations
- Signal potentially abusive situations to the competent authority
- Inform children about all the activities that are about to be undertaken
- Guarantee to every child the same possibility to take part in the activities, regardless of physical and/or mental disabilities or language barriers
- Include the children in the decision-making process according to their age and needs
- Ensure that information concerning children remain confidential and be sure to have children's legal tutor written consent before taking pictures and/or videos
- Encourage children to speak openly and friendly with each other or with adults
- Make sure that children carry out all the activities in appropriate and safe places
- Demonstrate openness in decision-making processes and provide everyone with the same opportunities without any prejudice or special treatment
- Interface properly with the co-workers and organize the work place in such a way so as to minimize risks
- Respect the children's principles regarding ethics and social solidarity

#### **I will never:**

- Interface with children in any inappropriate manner
- Exploit children in any way, for example for labor or money
- Avoid any kind of physical contact with children or any inappropriate or disrespectful behavior, or any situation that makes children uncomfortable
- Use violent behavior or violent language
- Have direct or indirect relations with children or with children's families in private (for instance messages, private gatherings...)

- Use and/or public children's data with no written consent by their legal tutors
- Take pictures and/or video with no written consent by their legal tutors
- Interface with children under the effects of drugs or alcohol or any state that could compromise lucidity and judgment skills

## APPENDIX 2 – DEFINITIONS

**CHILD:** a child is any human under the age of 18, as stipulated by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

**CHILDREN RIGHTS:** the rights of children to live free from hunger, abuse, neglect, and other inhumane or degrading or uncomfortable conditions. According to the United Nations Conventions, the rights of the children are part of the human rights that must be respected, protected and fulfilled. The children must have a special online protection and a health system.

**SAFE ENVIRONMENT:** a safe environment is such if it makes the person living there feel free of danger due to the presence of any dangers or feelings of discomfort.

**RISK:** a situation of exposure to **sexual violence, physical abuse, bullying or exploitation**

- **Sexual violence:** coercion or force to take part in sexual acts of any kind
- **Physical abuse:** any physical contact that results in discomfort, pain or injury by acting badly or neglectfully
- **Bullying:** is the use of force, coercion, hurtful teasing or threat, to abuse, aggressively dominate or intimidate.
- **Exploitation:** misuse of power or control over another person for financial, social, sexual or other benefit

**SAFEGUARD:** anyone or anything that ensures the safety or integrity and that fights against loss or injury

**BULLYING:** is the use of force, coercion, hurtful teasing or threat, to abuse, aggressively dominate or intimidate. There are four types of bullying:

- **Physical** bullying is any bullying that hurts someone's body or damages their possessions.
- **Verbal** bullying is one of the most common types of bullying. This is any bullying that is conducted by speaking or other use of the voice and does not involve any physical contact.
- **Relational** bullying (sometimes referred to as social aggression) is the type of bullying that uses relationships to hurt others.
- **Cyberbullying** is the use of technology to harass, threaten, embarrass, or target another person. When an adult is involved, it may meet the definition of cyber-harassment or cyberstalking