



## **Child Safeguarding Policy**

### **1. VISION, CORE VALUES AND MISSION OF THE ASSOCIATION 21 LUGLIO**

Associazione 21 luglio is a non-profit organisation that supports groups and individuals facing extreme segregation and discrimination by protecting their rights and promoting the well-being of girls and boys.

The Association is a non-profit organisation. It intends to pursue activities of general interest with the sole purpose of social, human, civil and cultural solidarity, in accordance with the principles of the New York International Convention on the Rights of the Child, approved by the United Nations General Assembly on 20.11.1989, and to combat all forms of discrimination (racial, religious, political or gender-based) and all forms of intolerance against diversity, with particular attention to children disadvantaged for economic, social or family reasons.

In particular, the following activities fall under Statutory Activities:

- The protection and promotion of human, civil, social and political rights, first and foremost of those children present in deprived contexts, with the aim of raising a critical awareness of the rights of these children and eliminating inequalities and discrimination against them;
- The fight against social, economic, educational poverty, aimed at removing obstacles that prevent or reduce the quality of a dignified life, equal opportunities, non-discrimination.

### **2. OUR ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN, TEENAGERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Association 21 luglio implements projects to support children and families using the method of 'citizenship pedagogy'. Children living in marginality are the clearest demonstration of the social inequality and deprivation of the right to full and effective citizenship to which a certain section of the population is subjected. It is precisely with regard to them that the 21 luglio Association makes its privileged choice by promoting an intervention in 'concentric circles', which starts with the girls and children and then extends to their families and the entire educating community.

The action of Associazione 21 luglio does not nurture a univocal process that sees the child or the community of reference as an 'empty vessel to be filled', but instead aims to develop and bring out the knowledge and potential that each person possesses in order to develop awareness of their rights and duties, with full freedom of self-determination.

The empowerment actions carried out by Associazione 21 luglio always follow a human rights approach and promote actions 'in context', actively involving community members living in segregated and socially marginalised contexts.



The 21 luglio Association manages the former Fienile Complex in Tor Bella Monaca, where it carries out educational and support activities for children, young people and parents. The activities at the centre focus on social inclusion for children, young people and adults by means of social, educational, creative and cultural services. With regard to early childhood, formal and non-formal education activities are carried out in the former Fienile Complex, aimed at accompanying children and their parents to educational institutions.

Access tends to give priority to minors in serious conditions of fragility (economic situation of the household, risk of educational poverty, even if not followed by social services). The operators use tools to investigate the emotional condition of the children to support them in times of change, bringing out problems, conflicts and possible proposals in order to make the children protagonists of a learning process and not just mere users of services. The activities are held in appropriately equipped spaces, involving the beneficiaries in groups formed by age and experimenting with innovative methodologies, such as socio-affective pedagogy and outdoor education.

Methodologies are tried out that engage and engage families with children, especially the most vulnerable ones, implementing and developing new offers to make them protagonists of the educating community. Attention is paid to the prevention of distress for children and parents. Participation in processes counteracts isolation and decreases poverty by nurturing opportunities for reciprocity, exchange and culture from below, fostering intertwined community practices.

### **3. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

The purpose of the Policy is to prevent any condition that may lead to the commission of criminal acts against the child or to prejudice to the child.

The 21 luglio Association is aware that it is impossible to eliminate the risks entirely, but believes that it is nevertheless advisable to do everything possible to minimise them through prevention, reporting, and responding to such problems in order to encourage, raise awareness of, and inform all those who work with the Association in any capacity.

In doing so, the Policy of the 21 luglio Association conforms to the principles and values underlying the main international treaties concerning the rights of children and adolescents (1948 - Universal Declaration of Human Rights; 1989 - UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; 1996 - European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights; 2000 - Convention on the Fundamental Rights of the European Union) and the Constitutional Charter of the Italian Republic (in particular Art. 3).

The Policy also takes into account the duties set out in the European Good Practices for the treatment of minors, and adopts the principle of full recognition of the subjectivity of the child as a subject of rights, which is the basis of the national legislation in force.

The 21 luglio Association believes that every child, boy and girl has the right to the best possible emotional, intellectual and physical development and that all boys and girls have the right to be protected and safeguarded from any form of violence, abuse or neglect.

This protection must take place regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic background or religious faith. The 21 luglio Association is convinced that the protection of minors is also favoured

by constant work on enhancing individual peculiarities, active listening and promoting the child's ideas and opinions.

#### 4. COMMITMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION CRITERIA

The 21 luglio Association is committed to promoting the protection and wellbeing of the children, girls, boys and girls with whom it works and partners come into contact during the provision of educational and training activities and social welfare services for them. It undertakes to ensure their protection from any form of maltreatment, neglect, exploitation, discrimination and violence and to recognise their needs arising from special conditions of fragility. It also undertakes to promote the expression of children's needs and wishes.

The 21 luglio Association aims to ensure the safety of children, boys and girls during all phases of its work:

- Needs analysis;
- Design;
- Delivery and implementation of programmes, projects and individual activities;
- Communication and awareness-raising activities;
- Monitoring and evaluation activities.

It undertakes to train and inform all those who work with the Association on the existence of risks of abuse and exploitation of girls, boys and girls; on how to prevent them; on how to behave and on the boundaries to be kept within when working with minors.

21 luglio Association staff members, its representatives, volunteers and partners must always demonstrate the highest standards of behaviour towards children, boys and girls. These standards must be considered to apply to the private and professional lives of staff and anyone else working in the Association.

Anyone working with the Association has a responsibility to report suspicions or evidence of risk of child abuse to the project leaders, coordinators and the President, taking into account the procedures for protection set out in this document.

The 21 luglio Association is committed to ensuring effective and timely intervention in response to every report of abuse by supporting, protecting and safeguarding the child involved.

Recruitment and selection of staff, other collaborators or volunteers must reflect the Association's commitment to the protection of minors, providing for the exclusion of anyone considered unsuitable to work with minors.

Successful applicants are warned of the binding nature of this Policy and its application in their private and professional lives.

In the recruitment phase, the 21 luglio Association evaluates:

- References;
- The motivation to work with children;

- A predisposition to the duty to respect children's rights;
- The ability to understand material and emotional needs;
- Knowledge of international debates on sensitive issues;
- Adherence to the values of the Association.

## 5. TO WHOM THE POLICY IS ADDRESSED

- To the members of the Executive Board and the Members' Assembly;
- To the hired staff;
- To volunteers, interns and trainees;
- To all those who come into direct contact with the projects and services of the 21 luglio Association;
- To staff and representatives of Partners and any other individual, group or organisation cooperating with Association 21 luglio and having direct contact with minors.

## 6. DEFINITIONS

For the main definitions, the 21 luglio Association refers to the terminology used by most International Agencies, the United Nations and other organisations dealing with the protection of children and adolescents.

Child abuse and maltreatment should be understood as "all forms of physical and/or emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect or negligence or commercial or other exploitation that result in actual or potential harm to a child's health, survival, development or dignity within a relationship characterised by responsibility, trust or power" (WHO, 2002).

**Abuse** is therefore everything that prevents the harmonious growth of children and adolescents, by not respecting their needs and not protecting them physically and psychologically. It therefore includes not only commission-based behaviour, which includes physical, sexual or psychological abuse, but also omission-based behaviour, i.e. the more or less acute inability of parents to provide adequate material and emotional care for their child.

## 7. PROCEDURES

To guarantee children's right to protection and guardianship, the 21 luglio Association adopts a simple and clear procedure for reporting suspicions of abuse.

To this end, the Association appoints an internal Child Protection Group (CPG) consisting of the project leaders and the President, which is responsible for handling any reports of child abuse. The CPG has the duty to report suspected abuse to the competent authorities, local services and specialised resources locally available for the protection of girls, boys, girls and boys.

The referral procedure ensures respect for the best interests of the child and is based on two fundamental values:

- **Confidentiality:** the names of the persons who made the report, the subject of the report and the identity of the accused person will not be made public, unless the case comes before the judge and witnesses are required to be heard.

- Loyalty: the accused person who is a member of the staff, volunteers and board members of the 21 luglio Association will be supported by the Association to the best of his or her abilities and possibilities and, by virtue of the legal principle of presumption of innocence, will be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

**WHO CAN REPORT:** a minor, a parent, a family member, a staff member, a volunteer, a trainee or intern, a member of the Board of Directors, partners and all those who collaborate or come into contact with the 21 luglio Association in any way.

Anyone working within the association or collaborating with the association is obliged to report suspicions of abuse or exploitation of minors, whoever the author and whatever the nature of the report (official reports, testimonies, suspicions).

The priority of any staff member to whom abuse is reported is always and in all cases the protection of the child. All reports must be prompt and must be made within 24 hours, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

**WHAT TO REPORT:** any suspicion of conduct detrimental to the child's right to protection, any concern about the child's safety or physical and psychological integrity can be reported.

**HOW TO REPORT:** a report can be made through a written report or document, a telephone call, an e-mail, a letter and any other valid means. The choice of any valid means is essential to ensure that even minors are able to make a report.

**TO WHOM TO REPORT:** Reports should be made directly or indirectly to one of the members of the Child Protection Group (CPG), who will promptly convene the other members of the CPG in order to inform them of the report received.

## **8. CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **WHAT NOT TO DO**

The Association's staff, volunteers, the staff of partner organisations and their representatives, and all those who, for whatever reason, cooperate or come into contact with the Association must not:

- 1) Striking or assaulting - physically or verbally - a minor;
- 2) Physically or psychologically abusing a minor;
- 3) Having attitudes towards minors that may negatively affect their relational and socio-emotional development;
- 4) Acting with behaviour that sets a negative example for minors;
- 5) Engaging in sexual activities with individuals under the age of 18, regardless of the definition of majority or the legally recognised methods of consent in different countries.  
A mistaken belief about the age of a child is not an acceptable defence;

- 6) Acting in ways that may place children at risk of exploitation, maltreatment or abuse;
- 7) Using language not appropriate to the age of the child;
- 8) Giving inappropriate, offensive or abusive suggestions or advice;
- 9) Behaving inappropriately;
- 10) Establishing or maintaining inappropriate contact with child beneficiaries;
- 11) Allow one or more minors with whom you work to sleep in your home, except in exceptional circumstances and with the authorisation of the direct supervisor;
- 12) Sleeping in the same room or in the same bed with a child you work with;
- 13) Replacing the child in activities that he/she can perform independently;
- 14) Giving money or goods or other benefits to a child outside the parameters and purposes set by the project activities or without the knowledge of the person responsible;
- 15) Tolerating or encouraging illegal or abusive behaviour of minors that poses a risk to their safety;
- 16) Humiliating, belittling or despising a child, or perpetrating any other form of emotional abuse;
- 17) Discriminating, treating differently or favouring some children to the exclusion of others.

This list is not exhaustive or exclusive. The basic principle is that actions or behaviour that may be inappropriate or potentially abusive towards children should be avoided.

## **WHAT TO DO**

It is important that the staff of the 21 luglio Association, volunteers, trainees and interns, the staff of partner organisations and their representatives, and all those who work with the association in any capacity:

- 1) Be vigilant in identifying situations that may pose risks to children and know how to handle them;
- 2) Report any concern, suspicion or certainty about possible abuse or maltreatment of a child as set out in this policy;
- 3) Organise work and the workplace in such a way as to minimise risks;
- 4) Always be visible to other adults, as far as possible, while working with children;
- 5) They ensure the dissemination and maintenance of a culture of openness that allows staff, volunteers, children and carers to easily raise and discuss all kinds of issues and concerns;
- 6) Ensure that staff members develop a sense of responsibility for their actions so that inappropriate actions and behaviour or behaviour that may lead to child abuse do not go unnoticed or are not tolerated;
- 7) Tell children what kind of relationship they should expect to have with staff or representatives and encourage them to report any concerns or doubts;
- 8) They value the children's skills and competences and discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and what is not, what they can do if any problem arises;
- 9) They maintain a high personal and professional profile;
- 10) They respect the rights of children and treat them fairly, honestly and with dignity and



respect;

- 11) Encourage the participation of children so as to also develop their capacity for self-protection.