



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Document prepared by: Employees of DKolektiv – organisation for social development

Document approved by: Executive Board of DKolektiv – organisation for social development

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INTRODUCTION

DKolektiv – a non-profit organisation established in 2005, operates as a regional resource center in Slavonia and Baranja, primarily focusing on issues related to the development of volunteering and civil society as crucial elements in community and democracy development. As an organisation involved in activities with children and those influencing them, DKolektiv takes its responsibility seriously in promoting the safety and protection of children from abuse and exploitation in any form.

The Child Safeguarding Policy outlines DKolektiv's commitment to ensuring the realization of children's rights and their right to protection, along with procedures to safeguard children involved in the organisation's activities. DKolektiv takes necessary measures to act in the best interest of the child.

All employees, external collaborators, and volunteers of DKolektiv are obligated to implement the Child Safeguarding Policy.

The Child Safeguarding Policy covers four areas:

1. Organisational Policy – outlining the organisation's commitment to preventing, protecting, and responding to harm inflicted on children.
2. Staff Responsibility and Expectations – defining clear responsibilities and expectations for employees, external collaborators, and volunteers of DKolektiv when working with children.
3. Conduct Standards – describing procedures to ensure the safety of the child.
4. Monitoring and Implementation Responsibility – detailing the method for monitoring and revising the policy.

For the purposes of this policy, a child is defined as any person under the age of 18.

All masculine terms with gender significance used in this document are employed neutrally and apply equally to both female and male individuals.

DKOLEKTIV PRINCIPLES IN WORKING WITH CHILDREN

- All activities are conducted to ensure the safety, health, and well-being of the child.
- Each child is treated with respect and dignity.
- Work with children is carried out in a manner consistent with their developmental capabilities, while simultaneously enhancing their skills and potentials.
- Children's rights as stipulated in the UN Convention on the rights of the child must be respected, and efforts should be made to promote, protect, and enhance these rights.
- Discrimination, exclusion, or marginalization among children is strictly prohibited.
- Privacy and the child's identity are respected, and consent from the legal guardian is ensured for the child's participation in organisation activities, the use of the child's data, photography, and the publication of photographs.
- All individuals directly involved in working with children (employees, external collaborators, volunteers) are familiarized with this policy and accept its terms.

ORGANISATION POLICY

In working with children, DKolektiv relies on the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child.

As an organisation, we believe that no child should be subjected to abuse or exploitation. Therefore, in our work with children, we aim to create an environment where children feel safe, respected, protected, and empowered.

All programs related to children or involving children must be designed and implemented in a way that maximally safeguards the interests and well-being of the child, protecting them from any form of abuse and exploitation. Employees, external collaborators, and volunteers of DKolektiv have an obligation and responsibility in their work with children to protect and promote the welfare of children and to provide a space for collaboration and consideration of the needs of the children.

The Child Safeguarding Policy is publicly accessible and is published on the organisation's website with the intention of informing all individuals who wish to learn about the organisation's principles in working with children and the procedures for protecting children involved in the organisation's activities.

RESPONSABILITATES AND EXPECTATIONS OF STAFF

All individuals involved in direct work with children or activities that impact them are responsible for the protection of children and are obligated to apply the standards outlined below in their work.

Employees, external collaborators, and volunteers of DKolektiv who have direct or indirect contact with children should:

- Treat all children equally regardless of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity, religious affiliation, social status, physical or mental disabilities.
- Be aware of situations that may pose risks to children and know how to appropriately handle such situations.
- Plan and organize work and workspaces in a way that minimizes potential risks.
- Enable children to openly express their problems and concerns in their environment and discuss them.
- Engage in conversations with children about their relationships with staff, volunteers, and external collaborators, encouraging them to openly express any concerns.
- Familiarize children with their rights and the procedures to follow in case of a violation of these rights.
- Respectfully consider the opinions of the child in matters affecting them.
- Allow children to participate in decision-making processes that concern them.
- Report to relevant authorities any actions that may endanger the health and integrity of the child.

Employees, external collaborators, and volunteers of DKolektiv working with children must never:

- Physically harm a child in any way.
- Develop physical and/or sexual relationships with a child.
- Develop relationships with children that could be considered offensive or exploitative in any way.
- Behave in a manner that is indecent or sexually provocative.
- Act in a way that may put the child at risk of abuse.
- Use inappropriate language, provide suggestions, or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive, or humiliating.
- Behave in a way that shames, humiliates, degrades, or otherwise applies any form of emotional abuse to children.
- Discriminate against or favor specific children.
- Fail to appropriately respond to observed dangerous or bullying behavior towards children.
- Expose children to inappropriate content such as violence or pornography.
- Publish photos or videos of children for promotional purposes without written consent from the legal guardian.

BEHAVIOR STANDARDS

Before organizing any activity involving or impacting children, DKolektiv will conduct a risk analysis to determine if the activity presents situations that may expose children to abuse, exploitation, and/or neglect. The analysis includes assessing potential risks, determining measures to reduce risks, and verifying the implementation of appropriate measures that can minimize or eliminate risks. Individuals directly involved in each activity with children will be informed of all identified measures.

When involving its employees, collaborators, and volunteers in direct or indirect contact with children, DKolektiv will ensure that all required checks are in compliance with applicable regulations, including obtaining a certificate of no criminal record and/or pending criminal proceedings. Additionally, every new employee, collaborator, or volunteer will be familiarized with this policy before engaging in activities with children.

Before participating in activities with children, each employee, collaborator, and volunteer will receive instructions and information on how and where to report any observed child abuse and/or exploitation.

For volunteers involved in direct work with children, DKolektiv will provide necessary education and continuous support. Before engaging volunteers in activities that bring them into direct contact with children, each volunteer is required to undergo training organized by DKolektiv to prepare them for quality work with children. Part of the training includes acquainting volunteers with this policy, responsibilities, and expectations, both of the volunteers themselves and DKolektiv as the organizer of volunteering.

Before involving a child in organisational activities, DKolektiv will seek written consent from the legal guardian, including a detailed description of the activities in which the child will participate.

Before recording audio, photographic, or video materials, DKolektiv will obtain written consent from the legal guardian, as well as permission to use the recorded materials for promotional, educational, and other purposes.

In case of suspicion of a violation of a child's rights, abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation, DKolektiv employees are obligated to initiate proceedings to protect the child's rights. Any suspicion of a violation of a child's rights should be reported to program managers and the executive director, who will take legally required actions and report the case to the relevant authorities.

In case of suspicion of child abuse and/or exploitation by an employee, external collaborator, or volunteer, the person under suspicion will not be allowed to work with children until the investigation is completed. If the investigation confirms the allegations, the person accused will face disciplinary measures, ranging from a permanent ban on working with children in the organisation to termination of the contract, depending on the severity of the offense.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION

DKolektiv regularly monitors the implementation of child protection policies and procedures.


Program managers, in communication with their colleagues, external collaborators, and volunteers, ensure the application of standards outlined in this Policy and report to the executive director. During DKolektiv staff meetings held at least twice a year, internal evaluations are conducted, which include reviewing the application of standards outlined in this Policy, assessing their effectiveness, and identifying areas for improvement. Additionally, the meeting assesses whether, and to what extent, all specified measures have been taken to protect each child, according to the risk analysis conducted for each activity.

The Policy is adjusted as needed based on the evaluation findings and revised. The revised Policy is approved by the DKolektiv Executive Board.

The approved revised Policy is published on the organisation's website, and all employees, external collaborators, and volunteers involved in working with children are familiarized with it.

This Policy was approved by the Executive Board of DKolektiv in March 2020.

Osijek, 19.3.2024.

 Izvršna direktorica
Lejla Šehić Relić
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