



IPčko
občianske združenie

IPčko

Child Protection Policy

1. Introduction and objective

In accordance with its statutes, code of conduct and ethical codex, IPčko is dedicated to ensuring the highest level of protection for all children with whom we come into contact, whether directly or indirectly. Our aim is to establish clear standards and procedures to safeguard them from any risk and all forms of abuse, violence, and harassment.

IPčko maintains a zero-tolerance policy towards incidents of violence or abuse against children, whether perpetrated by employees or individuals affiliated with our organization. All staff members and affiliated persons are explicitly prohibited from engaging in any activity that may result in any form of child abuse. It is expected that all IPčko staff and affiliated individuals conduct themselves in a manner consistent with this commitment and obligation. Any violations of this policy will be treated as serious infractions and will result in disciplinary action, including termination and any other legal remedies available.

This policy holds significance across various aspects of our operations, ensuring that our standards of conduct and safeguarding measures are consistently applied regardless of the mode of service delivery. Whether engaging with clients virtually through online platforms or in-person within physical settings, our commitment to upholding the principles outlined in this policy remains unwavering. By extending its applicability to both online and offline realms, we demonstrate our dedication to maintaining a cohesive approach to child protection and welfare across all contexts of our work.

2. Key definitions

Child or Children: Anyone under 18 years of age.

Child Abuse: Anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood. The main categories of Child Abuse are Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Neglect/Negligent Treatment, Sexual Exploitation & Abuse and Exploitation.

Physical Abuse: Non-accidental use of physical force that inadvertently or deliberately causes a risk of or actual injury or suffering to a child.

Emotional Abuse: Harm to a child's emotional, intellectual, mental or psychological development. Emotional abuse includes but is not limited to any humiliating or degrading treatment, failure to meet a child's emotional needs, and rejecting, ignoring, terrorizing, isolating or confining a child.

Neglect/Negligent Treatment: The failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs either deliberately or through negligence.

Sexual Exploitation & Abuse (SEA): All forms of sexual violence and coercion, sexual solicitation, manipulation or trickery including incest, early and forced marriage, rape, involvement in or exposure to indecent images/video (aka pornography), sexual slavery/trafficking, and statutory rape. Sexual abuse may include but is not limited to indecent touching or exposure, explicit sexual language towards or about a child and grooming. Sexual abuse does not always involve touching. Sexual Exploitation is any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes including but not limited to profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. Be aware that technology is a tool sometimes used to sexually exploit a child.

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Child Protection: Child protection is making the world safe for children. It is IPčko's mission and key area of work to protect children from all forms of abuse and exploitation in all regions of the world.

3. Scope of the policy

In addition to being fully qualified psychologists and social workers, IPčko ensures that all staff members adhere to ethical principles of psychological work. This commitment begins during the onboarding process, where employees are informed about the existence and importance of our child protection policies. This education is provided to individuals at all levels of the organization and affiliates who may interact with children or handle their data as part of their job responsibilities. Through comprehensive training and education, we emphasize the critical role that each staff member plays in safeguarding the well-being and rights of children. This commitment extends beyond direct interaction with children to encompass any tasks or responsibilities involving the handling of sensitive information or potential interactions with minors. By fostering a culture of awareness and accountability, we strive to create a safe and supportive environment for all children and ensure compliance with our child protection standards.

Moreover, children's protection remains a key focus during ongoing training sessions covering various topics such as crisis intervention, online crisis intervention, and outreach intervention. These training sessions are mandatory for all employees in direct contact with clients. Given that our primary focus is suicide prevention, we prioritize maintaining a highly professional approach to prevent any insensitivity toward beneficiaries. This emphasis on professionalism is closely tied to the incorporation of our child protection policy, ensuring that the welfare of children remains paramount in all aspects of our work.

4. Behavior protocol

IPčko staff or affiliated individuals must never:

- Engage in actions that could be considered abusive or put children at risk of abuse.
- Physically assault, hit, or abuse children, or make threats of such actions.
- Display physically inappropriate or sexually provocative behaviors. This includes touching, holding, kissing, hugging, or otherwise interacting with children or adult beneficiaries in a culturally insensitive or inappropriate manner.
- Engage in any form of sexual activity or have a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18, regardless of the age of consent or local customs.
- Exchange money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favors, degrading behavior, or exploiting beneficiaries. This prohibition extends to exchanging assistance that is rightfully due to beneficiaries.
- Stay alone overnight with one or more children participating in IPčko activities who are not part of their family. This includes refraining from having non-relative child beneficiaries stay overnight at their home, sharing a bed or room with them, or inviting them to stay overnight in any accommodation with IPčko staff or affiliated individuals.



- Employ children in any form of child labor, including as domestic workers ("house help"), unless it is deemed to be in the best interest of the child and complies with local laws and international standards. ("Child labor" refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially, or morally dangerous and harmful to children, or that interferes with their education. Conversely, "child work" may be beneficial if permitted by International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions and prioritizes the child's interests over any benefits gained by adults.)
- Transport a child alone in a vehicle for IPčko work, unless absolutely necessary and with the consent of the child's parent/guardian and management.
- Exchange personal contact information with children or request children's personal information, or misuse or be careless with personal data about individual children.
- Expose child beneficiaries to inappropriate images, films, music, or websites, including mature content, indecent images (pornography), and violence.
- Develop relationships with children that could be considered exploitative or abusive.
- Use language, make suggestions, or offer advice to children that is inappropriate, offensive, or abusive.
- Perform tasks of a personal nature for child beneficiaries that they are capable of doing themselves (e.g., toileting, dressing, feeding, washing, etc.).
- Engage in actions that shame, humiliate, belittle, or degrade children, or perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- Discriminate against, show unfair preferential treatment towards, or differentially treat particular child beneficiaries to the exclusion of others.
- Arrange to meet children away from other adults or spend excessive time alone with child beneficiaries away from others in a manner that could be interpreted as inappropriate.
- Condone or participate in behavior by children that is unsafe or illegal.
- Remain silent, cover up, or enable any known or suspected safeguarding incident or breach of this Policy by an IPčko staff member or affiliate.

This list is not exhaustive or exclusive. IPčko staff and other affiliates must, at all times, avoid actions that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive behavior.

IPčko staff and other affiliates must never put themselves in a position where they may be vulnerable to allegations of misconduct. Failure to adhere to the Behavior Protocol, any other aspect of the Child Protection Policy, or engaging in inappropriate behavior towards children, as well as failing to report any known or suspected safeguarding incidents involving an IPčko staff member or affiliate, will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or affiliation with IPčko.



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5. Accountability

IPčko ensures accountability throughout its organizational structure by implementing various methods to crosscheck the services provided. Each team is assigned to a specific location and region, overseen by a designated team leader. The size of the team may vary based on regional needs and available funding, but each member is individually responsible for their activities. All personnel within the psychological teams, including psychologists, social workers, and interpreters, participate in regular interventions and both in-house and outsourced supervisions to ensure quality and adherence to established protocols.

Furthermore, all team leaders are accountable to the director of IPčko. Any breach of IPčko policies by team members will result in disciplinary action, which may include termination and other legal remedies as deemed necessary. This accountability framework not only ensures the integrity and effectiveness of IPčko's services but also underscores the organization's commitment to upholding the highest standards of child protection and welfare. Through regular monitoring, supervision, and enforcement measures, IPčko strives to maintain transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct across all levels of its operations.

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