Child Protection Policy

Applicable to: KANE's Board, Staff, Volunteers, Interns, External Contractors, Associates, Partners

Kalamata, April 2024

INTRODUCTION

K.A.NE. (Social Youth Development) is fully committed to protecting and safeguarding the **rights of the child**. That means KANE recognizes its responsibility to promote the well-being and development of all children that the organization comes into contact with during the implementation of its programmes, events and activities.

KANE's commitment to Children's Safeguarding Standards

Children are entitled to enjoy the full range of human rights enshrined in a series of international human rights treaties. Indicative are the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR), the European Social Charter, and other international human rights standards, the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

Risks of harm can arise when individuals involved in activities pertaining to children are in direct contact with them and/or are used as intermediates to represent children, work and communicate with them. In order to avert or effectively address such risks, KANE shall abide by, respect and enforce the rights stemming from the international, European and national framework applicable to the protection of children.

Scope of the Child Protection Policy

The present document sets out KANE's Child Protection Policy and Procedures in conjunction with KANE's Statute and statutory purposes. By this policy and the procedures mentioned herein KANE:

- Acknowledges the right of every child in safety
- Ensures that the organization undertakes its responsibilities regarding protection of children and will respond to any concern raised appropriately.
- Dictates the principles and procedures for the support of Board, Staff, Volunteers, Interns, External Contractors, Associates and Partners in their practice. Specifically, the organization shall ensure that the actions of any adult in the context of the work carried out by KANE are transparent and safeguard and promote the welfare, safety and security of all children. Therefore, this policy is structured to ensure that the procedures to protect

children and to report any concerns about their welfare to the appropriate authorities, shall be followed.

Key Principles

KANE's commitment to ensuring the fulfillment of children's rights is structured around the following principles.

1) Equal treatment (Non-Discrimination):

The rights of the child apply to all children without discrimination on any ground. All rights are to be granted without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other status.

2) Best interests of the child:

In all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

3) Right to life, survival and development:

Children have an inherent right to life and to protection from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. Their right to development should be interpreted in its broadest sense, covering but not limited to the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral, psychological, intellectual and social development.

4) The right to be heard:

Children should be involved in decision-making at individual, organisation and policy level. They should be informed of and empowered to understand and enjoy their rights in full. They should be included in every procedure regarding their personal situation and they should be informed of the procedure to be followed where there is a situation concerning them.

5) Do not harm principle:

KANE shall strive against and minimize any harm that may be caused inadvertently to children as a result of its activities in accordance with the International Child Safeguarding Standards[1].

6) Transparency and accountability:

Transparency and accountability are essential to ensure that poor practice is addressed appropriately, potentially abusive behaviour challenged and best practice promoted.

7) Privacy:

All processing of personal data of children, including but not limited to communication and media activities, should be conducted in line with the relevant EU and national legislation in force.

Definitions

- A "child" as defined in Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), is "every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier".
- "Unaccompanied children" (also called "unaccompanied minors") are children who have been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for them.
- "Separated children" are children separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver, but not necessarily from other relatives. These may, therefore, include children accompanied by other adult family members.
- "Orphans" are children both of whose parents are known to be dead. In some countries, however, a child who has lost one parent is also called an orphan.
- Youth are those belonging to the age group 15 to 25 years (in line with main provisions of Greek legislation)

Defining "harm"

- **Physical abuse**: actual or potential physical harm perpetrated by another person, adult or child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.
- **Sexual abuse**: forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities that he or she does not fully understand and has little choice in consenting to. This may include, but is not limited to, rape, oral sex, penetration, or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching. It may also include involving children in looking at, or producing sexual images, watching sexual activities and encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Child sexual exploitation**: a form of sexual abuse that involves children being engaged in any sexual activity in exchange for money, gifts, food, accommodation, affection, status, or anything else that they or their family needs. It usually involves a child being manipulated or coerced. The abusive relationship between victim and perpetrator involves an imbalance of power where the victim's options are limited. It is a form of abuse that can be misunderstood by children and adults as consensual.
- **Emotional abuse**: persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts on a child's emotional development. Emotionally abusive acts include restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, bullying (including cyber bullying), and threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.
- **Commercial exploitation**: exploiting a child in work or other activities for the benefit of others and to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health,

education, moral or social-emotional development. It includes, but is not limited to, child labor.

Child Protection Policy's procedural implementation

KANE's staff must ensure that all individuals involved in activities with children sign a commitment to adhere to the principles and procedures outlined in this policy. In particular, all individuals participating in KANE's projects and activities involving children or minors must consider and consent to the following guidelines for conduct.

1. Code of conduct for individuals involved in KANE's activities

Individuals participating in activities (by any capacity, and by any relation contractual or not e.g. Board, Staff, Volunteers, Interns, External Contractors, Associates and Partners) involving or concerning children must:

- Respect all relevant laws concerning the protection of children in the country where the activity takes place;
- Respect all relevant European and international framework concerning the protection of children;
- Observe the principles outlined in this policy;
- Inform children of their rights in a way fit for their age/cultural background/maturity, including by identifying the person, authority or service where to seek advice/complaint in case of problem;
- Be conscious of perception and appearance in their language, actions and relationships with children; their behavior should demonstrate respect for children and their rights;
- Guarantee that all physical contact with children is appropriate in the relevant cultural contexts;
- Follow the 'two-adult' rule, wherein two or more adults of different sex, where possible and practical, supervise all activities that involve children, and are both visible and present at all times;
- Encourage children to discuss their contact with staff or others and to raise any relevant concerns;
- Take action as required by the present policy when they become aware or suspect that a child has experienced or is experiencing abuse;
- Cooperate with child protection related investigations (internal and external) and take steps to make available any documentation or other information necessary for the completion of the investigation.

It is forbidden that adults participating in activities involving or concerning children:

- Spend time alone with children away from others;
- Take children to their home under any circumstance;
- Engage in any contact between children beneficiaries and KANE Board members, Staff, Associates, Interns, Volunteers, External Contractors, outside the premises of the organization or of events/activities organized by KANE.
- Use any physical form of punishment on a child;
- Discriminate against, show different treatment towards, or favor particular children to the exclusion of others;

- Expose children to hazardous conditions;
- Violate any of the children's rights (e.g. their right to privacy, to information and to participate in decisions concerning them, their right to life and development).

2. Proper use of images of children

When developing and using photos or videos featuring children involved in KANE's activities and projects, the following principles should be respected

- Permission (informed consent) must always be sought from the children themselves before taking images. The organisation must acquire informed consent of the child, the child's guardian, and/or the institution responsible for the child, before using any photo or video for any purpose. The purpose of children's depiction in photos or videos should be made clear to the consent giver.
- Personal and physical information that could be used to identify the location of a child within a country and potentially put them at risk must not be used in any form of communication for general or public purposes.
- Images of children should portray the children in a dignified and respectful manner fit for their age and cultural and religious background.

3. Recruitment

As a condition for working with KANE, Board, Staff, Volunteers, Interns, External Contractors, Associates and Partners and all those acting on behalf of KANE, such as members, consultants or trainers are required to provide the following:

1. All recruitment interviews for staff, volunteers, experts, researchers and consultants should include a discussion on child safeguarding and protection, the candidate's understanding of this and KANE's commitment.
2. Adherence to KANE's Child Protection Policy shall be part of KANE's agreements.

Any Board Member, Staff, Volunteers, Interns, External Contractors, Associates and Partners who has direct contact with children in their work will be fully informed of KANE's Child Protection Policy and the Code of Conduct hereby.

Partnerships with individuals or other institutions (contracting and sub-contracting) shall not be in contrast with the scope and principles of this Policy and there will be a systematic checking towards this.

Contracts and memoranda of agreement for partnership delivery work will include clear minimum requirements, arrangements for safeguarding and non-compliance procedures.

3. Appropriate Training

Within 3 weeks of taking up the position, Staff, Volunteers, Interns, External Contractors, Associates and Partners will receive an introduction to KANE's Child Protection Policy and procedures in accordance with their contract and the General Code of Conduct.

This will include training on behavior guidelines for those in direct contact with children, and guidance on the acceptable and unacceptable sharing of information on children.

Training will also allow staff to be able to identify sources of support for children and their families.

The need for the support of all the staff (permanent, temporary, external partners) and volunteers/interns is based on the recognition of the fact that they may be involved in situations where there is additional stress, risk or actual harm, and hence appropriate training is required so that individuals associated with KANE are armored in the best possible way to protect children's rights.

1. Child Protection Focal person (CPF)

A Child Protection Focal person (CPF) will be appointed within KANE and he/she will be responsible for:

- Promoting awareness and implementation of the Child Protection Policy throughout the organization
- Monitoring implementation of the Policy and reporting on developments at Team meetings and for the Management Board
- The development of child protection training resources
- Maintaining and updating knowledge of best practices and statutory requirements
- Acting as a source of support and information for staff on safeguarding issues
- Acting as the person in charge for handling the reporting procedure.

The name and contact details of the CPF will clearly be displayed in the KANE office and all new staff will be made aware of their role. The disclosure of personal information about children, including legal cases, will be limited to those employees, experts, researchers, volunteers, who need to be aware thereof in order to effectively conclude their assignments/tasks/duties.

<u>Reporting Procedures</u>

All Staff, Volunteers, Interns, External Contractors, Associates and Partners should be alert to signs that may suggest a child is in need of help. Everyone who works with and engages with KANE has a responsibility to ensure that children are protected. The reporting procedure is made widely available to ensure that everyone has sufficient knowledge and understanding of the steps that need to be taken regarding the safety of

children and other witnesses. Further, at meetings and activities where children are directly involved, children will be informed about KANE's safeguarding policy, code of conduct, the existence of the child protection focal person and complaints mechanism in a child-friendly manner.

Once a concern about mistreatment/abuse arises at KANE, the organization establishes a special process regarding the stages of reporting safeguarding issues and concerns. This process refers to the immediate actions that shall be taken in case of safeguarding concerns.

In cases where:

- A child may disclose abuse or give reason to suspect that they or another child are being abused or at risk of significant harm
- A parent or other adult may raise a concern about either their own or another child
- A member of staff or volunteer may be suspected of abusing/exploiting/harming a child
- Anyone acting for or employed by KANE has reason to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm.

Then, the CPF must be informed immediately by the referring person.

Method of Reporting

All witnessed, suspected or alleged violations of KANE's Child Protection Policy will be immediately reported to the CPF in reporting forms which shall include:

- Position of the referring person
- Personal information of the referring person (name, age, gender, address)
- Personal information of the child (name, age, gender, address)
- Date, time & location of the alleged incident
- Short description of the alleged incident
- Time when the alleged incident came to his/her knowledge
- What is his/her relationship to the child
- Personal observations
- Any other relevant information

These records will be stored in a secure place with access limited only to the CPF and under the strictest confidentiality. The CPF must then refer the form to the Board while proceeding in the following action.

Immediate attention and support:

If needed, medical and psychosocial support shall be immediately provided to the child concerned.

Contact with concerned persons:

If the concern refers to a child or vulnerable young adult, the family/parents/guardian of the child shall be contacted on the matter provided that they exist.

Assessment and decision making:

The principal contact – referral person shall try to figure out what has happened and establish the facts in the most objective and immediate manner possible. After assessing the reported concern, he/she submits his/her conclusions and suggestions to KANE board.

The latter in cooperation with the referral person shall make a decision on an action plan which may include but is not limited to, depending on the case, further protection actions, reference to the competent authorities, complaint resolution process, disciplinary process, etc. The "best interests of the child" must be considered throughout the process. An assessment of the specific kind of support and assistance that is needed by the children affected by the incident will be offered.

Disclosure of Abuse by a Child

If a child shares information with a KANE staff member or volunteer about being abused, mistreated or in danger, but requests that such information is not passed on to others, the following steps should be followed:

- The child should be informed that it may not be possible to protect his/her confidentiality and that the matter might be discussed internally at KANE
- The staff member or volunteer, or Child Protection Focal Point should make all efforts to help the child understand the need for seeking appropriate help
- If it is felt that the child is at risk of significant harm, it will be necessary to refer the matter to the Public Prosecutor for Minors and the competent Social Services, thereby breaching the child's confidentiality. However, the child should be informed as fully as possible of what action has been taken and why.

If a child discloses significant harm, the staff member or volunteer should listen carefully, giving the child time and attention and providing interpretation when there is such a need. The child is never to blame in situations of abuse and should be reassured that they have done nothing wrong, either in relation to the abuse or in reporting it. The aim is to facilitate the disclosure (but not to cross-examine) in order to determine whether there is real cause for concern. The responsibility for undertaking any investigation lies with the competent authorities (Public Prosecutor for Minors, competent Police Departments, and Social Services). The child must be informed, as soon as possible, about any action being taken on their behalf and what is likely to happen. If there is no immediate danger, it is advisable to give the child time to fully understand what action is being pursued and the reasons for it before proceeding.

Reference to competent authorities:

In case of maltreatment/harm/abuse concerns or allegations, KANE Board shall report it to the competent local authority and ask for advice. The advice given shall be followed. Depending on the case, it may initiate judicial proceedings and/or other disciplinary process.

Disciplinary process:

Where concerns exist about the conduct of KANE Staff, Volunteers, Interns, External Contractors, Associates and Partners in relation to Child protection and/or where there has been a breach of the Child Protection Policy, this will be investigated under this policy by consideration of referral to statutory authorities for criminal investigation under the law of the country in which they work; and/or by KANE in accordance with disciplinary procedures.

Breaches of this policy and failure to comply with the responsibilities mentioned herein may incur the following sanctions:

- For KANE Staff – disciplinary action leading to possible dismissal depending on the severity of the incident
- For KANE's Associates, Volunteers, Interns, External Contractors, Partners – up to and including termination of all relations including contractual and partnership agreements with KANE.

In case a legitimate concern about suspected child abuse is raised but proves to be unfounded on investigation, no action will be taken against the reporter. However, appropriate sanctions will be applied in cases of false and malicious accusations of child abuse.

Observing the right to information

KANE shall reserve the right to inform other institutions which may contact the organization for professional references of the termination of contract for serious violation of the principles of the present protection policy, always within the legislative framework applicable to personal data protection. Specifically, if such a case occurs during the implementation of an action/project/program/operation **a)** either in the context of a partnership between KANE and other partner(s) and/or either **b)** under the funds assigned by KANE partner(s), by other public or private funding authority/organization/donor, then the administrative board of KANE shall promptly and duly inform and share an information-investigation report with its aforementioned partners and funders – in line with the respect of personal data protection and confidentiality principles.

Ensuring beneficiaries' awareness

KANE will inform beneficiaries of the present Policy, using appropriate means that are in line with the age, maturity, national, cultural and religious background specific of each beneficiary, so as to ensure that the principles and procedures laid down in this policy are adequately understood. Indicatively, the following means may be used:

- Easily accessible and comprehensive information packages on safeguarding arrangements distributed through leaflets, posts on social media, website updates
- Discussion with and personalized information provided to each beneficiary about child protection policy arrangements and the complaint mechanisms in place.

Implementation, monitoring and review

The Board of KANE is ultimately accountable for this policy and responsible for its implementation. Monitoring of abidance by and respect for this policy is made through the mandatory tracking of Child Protection Policy Implementation Standards and KANE's Code of Conduct. Monitoring shall be cooperatively ensured by all members of KANE, with particular focus on the CPF. This policy will be reviewed by KANE Board in cooperation with the CPF. The need for reviewing will be regularly examined every two years and/or when there are changes in the relevant legislation and/or as a result of any other significant change in the field of child protection.

The content of this policy document has taken into account, was inspired of and has include principles concerning children rights and protection thereof as inspired by the relevant international framework, guidelines, policy principles and provisions that are proposed and/or adopted by other institutions engaged in child and youth protection.

For further information on the policy, please contact via email: info@ngokane.org

[1] Child Safeguarding Standards and how to implement them, Keeping Children Safe (2014). Available at www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk

Asimina Galanopoulou, Legal Representative

