



Child Protection Policy 2022

Policy Guidelines, Principles and Procedures on Child Protection

Introduction

Holocaust Education Trust Ireland ('HETI') affirms its belief in the rights of all children, including the right to be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence, and to develop to their full potential, be healthy and happy, as set out in the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and in the Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention, 2007). For the purposes of the present policy, a child is any person under the age of eighteen years.

Children with whom HETI staff and volunteers will be assured the rights expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Through its work, HETI aligns with the "EU Strategy for the Rights of the Child" and is committed to making decisions and taking actions that are guided by the principle of the "best interest of the child". The Organisation takes the prevention of child abuse very seriously and understands that child abuse and inappropriate contact of children is a pervasive problem throughout the world that must be managed in proactive manner.

The writing of this manual and guidelines shows the commitment to taking proactive steps to protect children in HETI programs and facilities.

Child Protection Policy

This document outlines policies regulating the behaviour and approaches of all employees and volunteers of HETI who have contact with children and young people on school premises or through their work on behalf of the Organisation. It specifically addresses the following aspects of the professional life of all employed by HETI: screening and hiring; conduct when working in contact with children; training, and working with other Partners. It is of high importance to ensure all employees/volunteers have an ability to recognise abuse as it can be defined in many ways. Please see the appendices for the Definitions of Abuse.

Child Protection Training

All staff members will complete the TUSLA Introduction to Children First training.

External collaborators and associates who may come in contact with children and young people must also complete this training and provide HETI with a copy of the certificate upon completion.

HETI has put in place a standard reporting procedure for dealing with disclosures, concerns or allegations of child abuse. The Organisation has appointed a Designated Liaison Person who will be Dr Thomas O'Dowd.

Principles

HETI is committed to the following values and principles, which should be respected and promoted by all its staff, volunteers and Board Members:

1. HETI values and treats every person without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the age, race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, language, gender identity or sexual orientation, property, disability, birth or other status.
2. HETI recognises the right of every child to be protected from harm and abuse. The Organisation takes all necessary action to prevent any harm from being done against children, and to report abuse against children.
3. The best interest of the child always comes first in the undertaking of HETI's activities.
4. HETI promotes the right of children to be heard and share their views, and supports this approach in its activities.
5. HETI wishes to provide all necessary guidance to its employees, volunteers and collaborators who work in close contact with children.

Guidelines for Management of Staff

In accordance with HETI's staff handbook all staff undergoes an induction process including the Child Protection Policy and will confirm in writing that the induction process has taken place.

HETI's Child Protection Policy will be rolled out to existing staff through an in-house training programme. Ongoing training will be provided following annual review or statutory/ guideline changes.

Recruitment

All advertisements, screening and recruitment for vacant posts within the Organisation will reflect the Organisation's commitment to equality. We will ensure that interviewers conduct interviews in a non-discriminatory way. Interviews will be undertaken by a minimum of two representatives of the Organisation using an agreed set of questions. A minimum of two references (one from the most recent employer) will be taken up followed by a telephone reference. References should be in writing and no references from family or relatives will be accepted. Successful candidates will be offered a Contract of Employment in accordance with Employment legislation requirements and each contract will include a probationary period. All employees' contracts will include signing up to HETI's Child Protection Policy.

HETI will not employ, contract or involve as a volunteer any person to work with children or young adults who has a criminal conviction for violent crime, sexual crime, drugs related offences, or any other offences deemed inappropriate in relation to work with children.

All workers employed, contracted to work, or volunteering to work with children through HETI will be required

to sign a declaration form outlining any previous criminal convictions and granting permission for vetting from An Garda Síochána to be sought.

Employee conduct when coming into contact with children

1. Prior to performing any work duties, staff members/volunteers will sign and date a copy of the Code of Conduct of the Organisation, to which the Child Protection Policy is annexed. They will receive the updated copy of the Code of Conduct and of the Child Protection Policy annually.
2. The Code of Conduct will be updated and kept in a file in Clifton House.
3. HETI will review the Child Protection Policy annually. It will be shared with the Board of Directors and all new staff/interns and volunteers.
4. HETI does not share the personal data provided with any other entity. Data privacy and protection issues shall comply with relevant EU rules (especially the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679).
5. If personal data about children and young people needs to be collected, written informed consent will be sought from their parents/legal guardians.
6. All publications must comply with the Child Protection Policy, before being publicised or shared.
7. Disclosure of information that identifies children who come in contact with our staff, volunteers, associates, and anyone having a role within HETI, is restricted by the terms of international, European and Irish regulations and legislation. Written informed consent of the parents/legal guardians shall be sought. In accordance with article 3 of the UNCRC, the best interests of the child will be the fundamental principle applied in all cases.
8. Data, including images, of children and young people are only collected if strictly necessary and foreseen as specific activity of the Organisation or of a project that the HETI implements. Specific permission of the child's legal guardians as well as the approval of the child will be sought by the staff of the Organisation or school implementing the activity, according to law requirements.
9. The rules and expectations will be shared with each new employee/volunteer and intern and will be regularly reinforced with existing staff and volunteers.
10. All members of staff and volunteers have the obligation to report any child abuse concerns they may have or suspect. Staff/volunteers will be instructed to report anything they notice regarding a gap between protocols and practices. Staff and volunteers working with or coming in contact with children will be also instructed, through training, on the procedures to apply in case they suspect or have knowledge of a situation of child abuse.
11. Reporting of suspected breach of the above, and specifically of the Child Protection Policy, follows a standard procedure, which includes a reporting form. Reports will be treated by the Designated Liaison Person at HETI Dr Thomas O'Dowd.
12. Any member of staff/volunteer found in breach of the Code of Conduct, or of the Child Protection Policy on which the code draws, will be immediately suspended from their position, pending investigation, internal or by statutory authorities depending on the specific case. Disciplinary action will be undertaken, including and up to termination of employment/cessation of the professional engagement with HETI. In case of an alleged or certain crime, the staff will be immediately removed from their position and their contract terminated.

Cooperation with other Organisations and agencies

1. The selection of partners should take into account the child protection history of the Partner Organisation.
2. HETI reserves the right to conduct a reference check on the Partner's previous history related to child protection and its policies towards children.

3. HETI will not tolerate any inappropriate communication towards children.
4. HETI must take a serious action towards any partner convicted for child abuse during the implementation of its projects/programmes.