



Child Protection Policy 2022

Purpose

At SUPPORT, we have a zero tolerance approach to child exploitation or abuse. We believe that it is the shared responsibility of all adults, particularly those involved with organizations catering to children, to prevent and mitigate any potential exploitation and abuse. Our Child Protection Policy is a testament to this commitment, embodying the principles and expectations for all our staff and partners. We align our values and initiatives with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which we deeply respect and uphold.

All staff and partners of SUPPOR-Center are required to immediately report any suspected or alleged case of child exploitation, abuse, or policy non-compliance. Reports can be directed to [your designated email], managed by our Conduct and Ethics Unit. All provided information will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and in line with appropriate legal considerations.

Our team, while primarily responsible for our specific programs and activities, should be well-acquainted with this policy. Moreover, every member is bound by our Code of Conduct and other guiding documents.

If there are uncertainties regarding what constitutes child exploitation and abuse or policy non-compliance, please reach out to our Child Protection Compliance Section for confidential advice via our email:

info@support.org.mk – subject: *child protection*



Table of Contents

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY 2022	1
PURPOSE.....	1
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
I. SCOPE OF THIS POLICY	3
II. POLICY PRINCIPLES.....	3
III. RISK-BASED APPROACH.....	3
IV. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE POLICY	4
V. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE POLICY	4
VI. MANAGEMENT OF THE POLICY.....	4
VI. IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT	5
CHILD PROTECTION – PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOURS.....	7



I. SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This policy applies to everyone under the SUPPOR-Center umbrella, including:

- Counselors and therapists
- Consultants and advisors
- Partner organizations and their staff
- Volunteers and affiliated organizations
- All program participants and beneficiaries

II. POLICY PRINCIPLES

Zero Tolerance of Child Exploitation and Abuse: At SUPPOR-Center, any form of child exploitation and abuse will result in strict actions. We prioritize children's safety and ensure our environment is free from risks.

Assess and Manage Child Protection Risk and Impact: We acknowledge that risks can't be fully eradicated. However, with meticulous management and planning, these risks can be identified and minimized.

Sharing Responsibility for Child Protection: Effective child protection demands collaborative efforts. We expect full cooperation and commitment from our partners and collaborators.

Procedural Fairness: Every decision made, especially those impacting individual rights, will be rooted in fairness.

Recognition of the Best Interests of the Child: In all our actions, children's best interests remain paramount.

III. RISK-BASED APPROACH

All SUPPOR-Center programs will integrate a risk assessment strategy focused on child protection. Activities directly involving children will undergo a thorough evaluation for potential risks, and suitable measures will be implemented accordingly.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE POLICY

Staff at SUPPOR-Center must ensure child protection risk is prioritized and handled in line with our risk management practices.

Our Partners and Affiliates are expected to uphold the principles outlined in this policy, engage in risk assessments, provide training in child protection, and report any concerns promptly.

Sub-Contractors and Volunteers are also expected to adhere to our child protection standards and practices.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE POLICY

This policy takes effect from December 2022. Regular reviews will be conducted every three years to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.

VI. MANAGEMENT OF THE POLICY

At SUPPOR-Center, we guarantee:

- Thorough implementation and regular reviews of the policy.
- Prompt response to all reports of child exploitation, abuse, and non-compliance.
- Monitoring of partner investigations and outcomes.
- Frequent training sessions and capacity building for child protection.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT

To facilitate the effective implementation of this policy, SUPPOR-Center will provide various guidance documents, training materials, and tools. For more information or assistance, you can contact us via: Email: info@support.org.mk

Telephone: +38971330727

Web: www.support.org.mk

Requirement	Minimum Standard	Minimum Standard – Evidence	Why is this required?	What is the risk without it?
<p>Having a Child Protection Policy and reporting procedure in place</p>	<p>Partners: SUPPOR-Center has a child protection policy in place that applies to all personnel, including partners, their respective downstream personnel, and subcontractors involved in any SUPPOR-Center activity. The partner in charge must ensure compliance of all downstream entities and individuals with the policy's minimum child protection standards.</p> <p>Individuals: Individual contractors, while not mandated to have a personal child protection policy, are required to sign a code of conduct, in compliance with local/governmental child protection policy/law.</p>	<p>Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presence of child protection policy - Personnel awareness of the policy, possibly via internal communication and training - Documented strategy for ensuring all associated with SUPPOR-Center meet minimum standards - Preliminary risk assessment of the organization and related activities for policy formulation <p>Individuals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in child protection training Signed code of conduct - Demonstrated commitment to child protection - Current Criminal Record Chec 	<p>A comprehensive child protection policy offers clear guidance, establishing how SUPPOR-Center, across its various operations, will protect children from potential harm during the execution of its programs</p>	<p>An organization might remain ignorant of potential risks to children within their domain, or of the activities they oversee.</p>

Child Protection – Professional Behaviours

Organizations and partners working with or operated with SUPPORT-Center, that interact with or work alongside children during their duties on behalf of SUPPORT, are mandated to strictly adhere to the following professional behaviors:

1. **Respect and Dignity:** Always treat all children with utmost respect.
2. **Communication and Behavior:** Refrain from using language or displaying behavior towards children that is:
 - Inappropriate
 - Harassing
 - Abusive
 - Sexually provocative
 - Demeaning
 - Culturally inappropriate
3. **Sexual Activity:** It is strictly forbidden to:
 - Engage in any form of sexual activity or intercourse with children under 18, including paying for sexual services.
4. **Working Environment:** Whenever feasible, ensure the presence of another adult when working near or with children.
5. **Home and Residential Boundaries:**
 - Do not invite unaccompanied children into private residences unless they are at immediate risk or in physical danger.
 - Avoid sleeping close to unsupervised children, unless unavoidable. In such cases, obtain permission from a supervisor and try to ensure the presence of another adult. (Note: This does not apply to interactions with one's own children.)
6. **Digital and Media Boundaries:**
 - Never exploit or harass children using computers, mobile phones, cameras, video cameras, or through social media platforms.
 - Do not access or distribute child exploitation materials via any means.

7. **Physical Treatment:** Using physical punishment on children is strictly prohibited.

8. **Child Labor:**

- Do not employ children for labor that:
 - Is inappropriate for their age or developmental stage.
 - Hinders their education or recreational activities.
 - Poses significant injury risks.
- Adhere to all relevant Australian and local laws, including those pertaining to child labor.

9. **Reporting:**

- Promptly report any suspicions or allegations of child exploitation, abuse, or policy non-compliance using the designated procedures.
- Disclose all charges, convictions, or outcomes related to child exploitation and abuse, even those under traditional law, that arise before or during the association with DFAT.

10. **Behavioral Awareness:**

- Stay aware of one's behavior and avoid actions that could be perceived by others as child exploitation or abuse. These guidelines are designed to guide professional interactions and are not meant to interfere with normal family relations.

11. **Media and Image Usage:**

- While photographing or filming children or using their images for work purposes:
 - Respect local traditions and restrictions concerning personal images.
 - Obtain informed consent from the child and their parent/guardian. Explain the purpose and use of the photograph or film.
 - Ensure the depiction of children is dignified, respectful, and not vulnerable, submissive, or sexually suggestive.
 - Images should be genuine representations of context.
 - Do not disclose identifying information about a child when transmitting images electronically or publishing them.

SUPPORT-Center partners are urged to adopt the "Child Protection – Professional Behaviours" as their Child Protection Code of Conduct. Alternatively, they can integrate these behaviors into their existing policies and procedures.