



# **Hungarian Europe Society – Child Protection Policy**





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## I. OBJECTIVES AND APPLICATION

The purpose of this Child Protection Policy (hereinafter referred to as “**the Policy**” or “**CPP**”) is to set out the principles and values of the Hungarian Europe Society (hereinafter referred to as “**HES**” or “**Organisation**”) in relation to the protection of children and young people and to ensure the protection of children and young people who come into contact with HES.

This Policy applies in all cases in which HES, its members, volunteers, employees, or partners acting on behalf of HES, come into contact with a child or young person in connection with the Hungarian Europe Society’s activities. In all such cases, HES undertakes to act with the utmost care in accordance with the child protection guidelines in preparing and implementing its activities and programmes.

## II. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### Core Values of the Hungarian Europe Society

The core values of the Hungarian Europe Society are fundamental rights, equality, human dignity, progress, social justice and liberal democracy.

### Mission

The Hungarian Europe Society, as a non-partisan and non-governmental organisation, is committed to the ideal of a unified Europe and wishes to promote Hungary’s ever-deeper integration into Europe. HES believes that the founding of the European Union and the subsequent accession of the post-communist countries after the regime change ranks among the most magnificent chapters in Europe’s history. The advantages offered by a common Europe must be fully exploited in the interest of European, among them, Hungarian citizens.

HES is engaged in building ties with other Hungarian and foreign civil groups and think tanks which share its fundamental values. Each year HES organises conferences and public debates dealing with the current state and future of the European Union and liberal democracy. The Hungarian Europe Society consistently monitors the Hungarian government and other Hungarian political actors in the European arena. Representing the cause of a united Europe, it regularly issues declarations. It supports the teaching and research activities of HES members related to European political and economic integration, as well as their media appearances, whilst providing them with a forum for presenting their findings. HES regularly provides information about its activities on its website as well as in the social and mass media, and it always publishes its budget in a transparent manner.



## Policy Statement

Whenever activities of the Hungarian Europe Society are related to children or minors, the objective is to involve them in the process cooperatively and respectfully. These activities aim to help develop civic awareness, to shape the consciousness of socially sensitive, economically aware citizens who are interested in public life, committed to European values and EU integration, and who understand the relevance of transatlantic relations. All this contributes to the development and consolidation of the idea of liberal democracy based on the rule of law, a social market economy and respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms. At the same time, these activities also aim to help young people become conscious, socially committed and active European citizens.

Whenever feasible, the Hungarian Europe Society carries out its activities in cooperation with public and private educational institutions, institutions of higher education, cultural institutions such as museums and exhibition centres, other NGOs and professionals who understand and are familiar with the special educational and learning needs of children and have the best interests of children in mind. HES implements these activities not just in the capital of Hungary but also takes into consideration equal treatment opportunities with its events in the Hungarian countryside as well.

The purpose of this policy is to sensitise members, volunteers and/or colleagues of the Hungarian Europe Society to the importance of child protection activities, to identify activities aimed at keeping children safe and to develop a working culture at HES based on children's rights.



### III. SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This Child Protection Policy applies to:

- HES's members, volunteers and/or colleagues;
- all those acting on behalf of HES such as members, consultants or trainers;
- all those adults accompanying children to events and activities organised by HES;  
*and*
- all those who participate in HES events and meetings involving children, including journalists, sponsors, donors, policymakers, etc.

### IV. BASIC DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Child Protection Policy:

**Child:** according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

**Child abuse:** the World Health Organisation's definition of child abuse and neglect includes physical and/or emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial or other forms of exploitation that result in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in a relationship based on responsibility, trust or power. Harm cannot always be easily categorised as children can be abused in a number of ways, but some broad definitions of abuse can be identified:

- **Bullying:** may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group).
- **Child pornography:** means any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for primarily sexual purposes. This can include photographs, negatives, slides, magazines, books, drawings, movies, videotapes and computer disks or files. There are two categories of pornography: softcore which is not sexually explicit but involves naked and seductive images of children and hardcore which relates to images of children engaged in sexual activity and use of children in the production of pornography is sexual exploitation.
- **Commercial exploitation:** means 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 labour.
- **Commercial sexual exploitation of children:** comprises sexual abuse by the adult and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third person or persons. The child is treated as a sexual object and as a commercial object. The commercial sexual exploitation of



children constitutes a form of coercion and violence against children, and amounts to forced labour and a contemporary form of slavery.

- Emotional abuse: is defined as the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or valued only so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- Neglect: is defined as the persistent failure to meet the child's basic physical and/ or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's physical or cognitive development.
- Physical abuse: may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of or deliberately causes ill health to a child who they are looking after.
- Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g., rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic materials or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways

**Child protection:** the term is used to describe the responsibilities and actions undertaken by the Hungarian Europe Society targeted to preventing and dealing with child abuse and/or neglect, and exposing a minor to danger.

**Endangerment:** a condition resulting from conduct, omission or circumstance - by the child or another person - which hinders or impedes the child's physical, mental, emotional or moral development.

**High-risk programme:** any programme where the child is in the care of HES for more than one day or where there is a high risk that the child may be exposed to danger in connection with HES activities, in particular:

- programmes for the domestic travel and accommodation of minors
- programmes for minors travelling and staying abroad
- participation of a minor in a public event
- underage media coverage

**Minor:** According to the Act V of 2013 on the Civil Code persons who have not yet reached the age of eighteen years shall be deemed minors. Married minors are considered to be of legal age. A minor shall be of limited capacity if he or she has reached the age of fourteen years and is not incompetent. Minors under the age of fourteen years are legally incompetent.



**Partner:** partners of HES with whom HES carries out a joint activity and whose employees or volunteers come into contact with a child or young person in connection with that joint activity.

**Personnel:** members, volunteers and/or colleagues of the Hungarian Europe Society. Employees of the Hungarian Europe Society are those who have an employment contract or a contract of assignment. Volunteers are activists, trainers, members, board members and other people connected with HES and who are working with HES on a voluntary basis, have entered into a contract or otherwise support the activities of HES without remuneration.

**Working with children:** The term refers to a position that includes frequent contact with children, either as part of the person's responsibilities or because of the job description that brings the affected person in frequent contact with children.

## V. LEGAL BASIS AND INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS

Hungarian Europe Society's Child Protection Policy is based on (the)

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ('UNCRC')
- European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence ('Istanbul Convention')
- Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse ('Lanzarote Convention')
- Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union
- Act XXXI of 1997 on the Protection of Children and the Administration of Guardianship
- Act CXXV of 2003 on Equal Treatment and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities

## VI. GENERAL UNDERSTANDING OF INTERNATIONALLY BINDING DOCUMENTS

The UNCRC should be taken holistically, providing a comprehensive framework for the protection, provision and participation of all children. The European Commission is guided by the principles set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by all EU countries. Article 3(3) of the Treaty on the European Union establishes the objective for the EU to promote the protection of the rights of the child. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU guarantees the protection of the rights of the child by the EU institutions and by EU countries when they implement EU law. Article 24 on the rights of the child and Article 31 on the prohibition of child labour specifically cover children's rights.



## VII. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In connection with this Child Protection Policy the basic guiding principles of the Hungarian Europe Society are listed below:

- non-discrimination: all children, regardless of their sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation or gender identity have access to and benefit services provided on an equal basis;
- zero tolerance for child abuse: mandatory reporting of child abuse incidents or suspicions of child abuse;
- every child is recognised, respected and protected by the organisation as a rights holder, with non-negotiable rights to protection;
- every child is treated with dignity and as a unique and valuable human being with an individual personality, distinct needs, interests, and privacy, with due regard to the child's right to participation;
- the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration;
- respect of the child's views: assuring the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child;
- protection of privacy and access to information;
- protecting the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse;
- child-centred approach;
- prevention and early intervention to proactively prevent harm and address concerns promptly;
- promoting an inclusive environment that respects diversity and individual rights;
- collaboration with families, communities, and relevant authorities to protect children.





## VIII. AFFIRMATIVE ACTIONS

- HES respects its members', volunteers' and/or colleagues' privacy, as well as their right to private and family life. HES avoids any unnecessary interference with their free time and leisure activities. HES respects everyone's right to maternity or paternity. HES provides flexibility and support to parent employees and/or volunteers in the performance of their duties in the event of an emergency childcare situation (e.g. granting time off / easing the workload, remote working, flexible working hours, etc.).
- Educational activities of the Hungarian Europe Society providing to children are prepared by professionals, educators and/or psychologists, and are adapted to the children's developmental level.
- The activities of the Hungarian Europe Society in relation to children and minors are always and in all circumstances in the best interests of children, their physical, mental and emotional development and health, consequently all HES activities affecting children and minors have a child-centred nature.
- Members, volunteers and/or colleagues of the Hungarian Europe Society are never left alone with the children – the children are always looked after by at least two responsible adults, when it is possible, with the presence of a parent/guardian and/or another responsible person (e.g. a teacher).
- Audiovisual documentation of the work with children and further use of materials requires the consent of children and their parents/guardians. Materials must not show children in an unfavourable light.
- Processing of children's and/or minor's data requires the consent of children and their parents/guardians and is carried out in accordance with the strictest privacy and data policy regulations, including the Data Protection and Security Policy of the Hungarian Europe Society.
- Situations observed by the Hungarian Europe Society, its members, volunteers and/or colleagues that are harmful to children are reported to the relevant law enforcement agencies with immediate effect.

## IX. CONTACTS

### HES contact

HES has designated a senior member (the person holding the office of Chairman at the time) to take specific responsibility for child protection matters within HES. All cases of alleged or suspected abuse should be immediately reported to Chairman of HES.

### External contact

The appropriate external contacts are the respective Local Police Stations.



## X. RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO ABUSE

### Awareness of abuse

Awareness is the key issue in both the detection and prevention of abuse. A staff member, volunteer, parent or carer may become aware or suspicious of abuse of a child by:

- being told in confidence by the individual child;
- being told by another person as hearsay or as a witness;
- observing symptomatic behaviour;
- observing outward signs of physical abuse/injury.

The abuse may:

- took place a long time ago – even in early childhood and the child may still be suffering the consequences;
- be an ongoing form of abuse which takes place outside HES e.g. typically at home;
- be a current or very recent abuse that has taken place within HES.

### How to recognise signs of abuse

Possible indicators may include:

- Emotional abuse: poor attachment relationship between the child and parent/carer. Parent/carer displaying unresponsive or neglectful behaviour towards the child or making negative comments about the child. The child may be demonstrating emotional indicators such as low self-esteem, unhappiness, fear, distress or anxiety and demonstrating behavioural indicators such as attention seeking, opposing, withdrawing or insecurity.
- Neglect indications: Underweight or obese, unkempt dirty appearance; inadequate/unwashed clothes, hunger, listlessness, indiscriminate friendliness or poor social relationships, poor concentration, low self-esteem.
- Physical abuse: any visible injuries particularly not normal child-like bumps and scrapes. Children who find it painful to walk, sit down, move their jaws or demonstrate other pain. Being furtive or secretive, or displaying uncharacteristic aggression or withdrawn behaviour. Compulsive eating or sudden loss of appetite. Having difficulty in staying awake or suddenly becoming un-coordinated. Giving confused or conflicting explanations of injuries.
- Sexual abuse indications: awkwardness in walking or sitting down, tummy pains, tiredness, extreme variations in behaviour; such as anxiety, aggression or withdrawal, sexually provocative behaviour or knowledge that is incompatible with the child's age and understanding, drawings and/or written work which are sexually explicit, direct disclosure – it is important to recognise that children have neither the experience nor the understanding to be able to make up stories about sexual assault.



### Responding to suspected abuse (procedural steps)

No member of staff, volunteer, parent or carer should investigate reports of physical or sexual abuse him/herself. Alleged victims, perpetrators, those reporting abuse and others involved should not be interviewed beyond the point at which it is clear that there is an allegation. Medical attention should be sought immediately for the child if required.

Any individual to whom an allegation of child abuse is made should then:

Step 1: Limit any questioning to the minimum necessary to seek clarification only, strictly avoiding “leading” the child by making suggestions or asking questions that introduce their own ideas about what may have happened.

Step 2: After the child discloses that something abusive has happened to him/her or someone else, collect only necessary information (Appendix 1) in order to ensure that there is a reasonable doubt and to be able to report to the Chairman of the Hungarian Europe Society. Stop asking any more questions as soon as the child has disclosed that he/she believes that something abusive has happened to him/her or someone else.

Step 3: Tell the child that the Chairman of HES or Authority will now be made aware of the issue.

Step 4: Depending on the age of the child, ask the child what steps he/she would like taken to protect him/her now that an allegation has been made and assure him/her that HES will try to follow those wishes.

Step 5: Report the information immediately to the Chairman of HES. If the volunteer or member of staff would prefer to speak to someone other than the Chairman, he/she should contact Social Services directly.

Step 6: Complete a Record of Concern form and pass this to the Chairman of HES, or relevant Authority if required. Records of Concern must be stored confidentially, in a secure place accessed only by the Chairman of HES.

Step 7: If the report has been made to a staff member or volunteer, inform the child’s parents/carers unless there is a suspicion of their involvement. Additionally, any staff member, volunteer, parent or carer who is told indirectly of any incident or witnesses or suspects any form of child abuse must report the information immediately, as detailed in Step 5.



### Do's and Don'ts

- Treat any allegation seriously.
- Make no promises you can't keep.
- Display belief in what the child is telling you.
- Interrogate the child; ask questions and try to make him/her talk to you- open up to you.
- Tell the child he/she is right to tell you.
- Reassure that he/she is not to blame.
- Be honest about who you have to tell and why.
- Write down everything said and what was done.
- Seek medical attention immediately if necessary.
- Inform parents/carers unless there is suspicion of their involvement
- Don't cast doubt on what the child tells you.
- Don't interrupt or change the subject.
- Don't say anything that makes the child feel responsible for the abuse.

### Confidentiality

Staff members, volunteers, parents or carers should never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to children or other colleagues wishing to tell them something serious. They are obligated to clearly define situations in which they need to breach confidentiality. They should, however, guarantee that they will only pass on information to the minimum number of people who must be told to ensure proper action is taken. They should guarantee that they will not tell anyone who does not have a clear "need to know" and that confidentiality will be respected within the designated team. If any staff member, volunteer, parent or carer has any suspicion, allegation or disclosure that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, then this must always be referred to the Chairman of HES or Social Services.



## XI. CODE OF ETHICS

Code of Ethics that governs the Personnel of the Hungarian Europe Society

- Personnel are obliged to respect the individual personalities of the children that are supported and protected by HES and to ensure their best interest.
- Personnel are obliged not to violate the rights of children under the protection or the supervision of HES.
- Personnel are obliged when practising their professional activities to preserve the children's privacy and matters that concern them.
- Personnel are obliged to deal with children as equals and with respect regardless of their race, skin colour, sex, language, religion, origin, beliefs, legal status of their own or their family members, and respect their national, religious, cultural and social background.
- Personnel are obliged to respect the human dignity of every child, their physical integrity and the right of the child not to be treated in a demeaning manner and not to be violently raised. Any and every kind/form of violence towards the children is strictly prohibited.
- Personnel are obliged to inform immediately the relevant/appropriate people in charge regarding incidents of children being mistreated when it comes to their attention.
- Personnel are obliged to contribute to the proper preparation of children for their role in society as active and responsible adults through games, sports, participation in teams, assignment of responsibilities, etc.
- Personnel are obliged to provide and ensure high quality medical care, equal opportunities, access to all kinds of education and career guidance for the children.
- Personnel are obliged to take into consideration, according to the age and maturity of the children, their right to participate in the decision-making regarding their life and their living conditions.
- Personnel are obliged to respect the children's private life and their freedom of expression, on the condition that the other children's rights are not violated.
- Personnel are obliged to encourage children to speak up for matters that concern them.
- Personnel are obliged to provide, as much as possible, support and positive reinforcement measures in order to strengthen the relations and the functionality between each child and their family.
- The violation of any of the above obligations constitutes a disciplinary offence and is presented to the Board of the Hungarian Europe Society for evaluation, while the Board is empowered to take measures of reprimand (oral or written), call for compliance and/or terminate any contracts without indemnification from the Organisation.



## **XII. RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE**

- When a vacancy is identified, a job description or task/project brief must be drawn up which should identify the skills required for that post. The vacancy should be advertised as widely as possible through the most appropriate means. All volunteers and staff, including temporary or casual workers, must be subject to the HES selection and recruitment procedures as follows:
- All candidates must complete an application form. The Board of HES has to verify the person's identity by his/her formal document, preferably something bearing their photograph.
- The Board of HES has to verify any qualifications stated on the application form.
- All suitable candidates must have an interview or meeting, with at least two Board members of HES.
- Any gaps in employment or inconsistencies in the candidate's history must be identified and reasons given.
- All successful candidates, must be subject to a check according to the Act XLVII of 2009 on the criminal records system, the registration of judgments adopted against Hungarian nationals by courts of the Member States of the European Union and the registration of criminal and law enforcement biometric data.
- No unsupervised access to children is to be allowed until references have been reviewed.
- Advice should be sought prior to recruiting someone with a criminal record or record of other offences.
- New members of personnel must undergo a supervised probationary period including a comprehensive induction which must cover the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- In order to ensure the implementation of Child Protection Policy HES, personnel must be informed about the CPP or other procedures concerning direct work with children.
- Everyone is obligated to cooperate with law enforcement and social welfare institutions in order to ensure the well-being of the child.



### **XIII. TRAINING**

Members, volunteers and trainees working with HES must undergo child protection training. The training session can be online or offline and is supervised by the President of HES.

The training objectives are:

- To improve the understanding of child protection
- To understand and use the terms associated with child abuse
- To increase the capacity to prevent abuse
- To strengthen skills to recognize diverse child protection issues
- To gain skills in upholding child rights
- To increase awareness on how to create a protective environment
- To know rules and procedures for reporting child abuse

Expected Results:

- Be able to define child protection and know the terms associated with it
- Be able to use the child protection policy of HES for assessing issues affecting children and as a tool
- Be equipped with skills to assess the vulnerability of a child
- Have ideas about how to create a protective environment within their communities and activities/projects
- Be able to respond to child protection through responsive action along HES child protection policy

[Training Manual: What is Child Protection? Module 1 | Save the Children's Resource Centre](#)



#### **XIV. PUBLICITY**

This Child Protection Policy is promoted, distributed on the webpage of the Hungarian Europe Society's website and revised if necessary.

#### **XV. REVISION AND BOARD APPROVAL**

In case of doubts about the implementation of this Child Protection Policy members, volunteers and/or colleagues of the Hungarian Europe Society may consult the Board of the Hungarian European Society.

The Board of the Hungarian Europe Society regularly monitors and reviews its safeguarding measures.

The Board of the Hungarian Europe Society regularly oversees the implementation of this policy, evaluates its impact and amends it when necessary.

Accepted by the Board of the Hungarian Europe Society on 20 June 2024.

István Hegedűs  
Chairman of the Hungarian Europe Society





## XVI. APPENDIX 1: RECORD OF CONCERN

### RECORD OF CONCERN

Name of Child:

Age:

Child's Address:

Name of Parent/Carer:

Telephone number:

Is the person making this report expressing his/her own concerns or passing on those of someone else?

What is said to have happened or what was seen? When and where did it occur?

Has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said? Who else, if anyone, was involved and how? What was said by those involved?

Were there any obvious signs, e.g. bruising, bleeding, changed behaviour? Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser?

Have the child's parents been contacted? Who else has been told about it and when?

Signed..... Date.....

NAME.....