

Eine Welt Netz NRW Child Protection Policy¹

Introduction

Objectives and scope of the Child Protection Policy

The Eine Welt Netz NRW Child Protection Policy aims to protect children against abuse and maltreatment in projects carried out by the organisation. For the purpose of the policy, we refer to a child as every human being below the age of eighteen years, as cited in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In order to minimise the risk of abuse and maltreatment, Eine Welt Netz NRW hopes to raise awareness of this topic among all employees. The Child Protection Policy applies to all full-time and voluntary employees, freelance multipliers, trainers that work on our projects, in addition to volunteers and board members at Eine Welt Netz NRW in Germany and abroad.

This Child Protection Policy concerns the conduct of the above individuals and the structures at Eine Welt Netz NRW. It also aims to raise awareness among Eine Welt Netz NRW members, member organisations and partner organisations, along with cooperation partners for projects such as schools or youth centres. It appeals to all of the above individuals/bodies to report violations of child protection to the appropriate authorities.

All employees are handed instructions on how to avoid abuse and maltreatment, how concerns and suspected cases need to be transparently reported within the organisation, and how to handle cases of abuse, maltreatment and the perpetrators taking into consideration the protection of the child. The clear definitions and responsibilities defined in this policy aim to foster an open environment at the organisation with a transparent and effective approach to this topic in the interests of the child.

¹ By resolution of the executive board on 21st May 2019

Declaration of commitment²

Eine Welt Netz NRW wants to establish the protection of children and the

following standards as quality characteristics in its work. Eine Welt Netz NRW and its employees commit:

- to strengthen the rights of children with or without disabilities, and to protect them against sexual, emotional or physical abuse, exploitation and neglect;
- to create a safe environment for children and persons at risk that guarantees compliance with children's and human rights;
- to take interests of the children into account during the planning and implementation of activities that affect them;
- to create awareness of this issue at Eine Welt Netz NRW and its member and partner organisations;
- to develop and implement suitable instruments, including clearly defined responsibilities and procedures in terms of prevention, crisis management and monitoring, and to monitor implementation thereof;
- to ensure, as part of our media, educational and public relations work, that the dignity of the child is protected at all times;

² In accordance with the VENRO Code of Conduct for Children's Rights: Protecting children against abuse and exploitation in development co-operation and humanitarian aid. Bonn 2009

Definition and types of abuse

“Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.”³

The following five main categories of child abuse are derived from the above definition.

Physical abuse – Physical abuse of a child is that which results in actual or potential physical harm.

Sexual abuse – Sexual abuse refers to touching or threatening to touch a child with sexual intentions, i.e. all forms of sexual activity such as inappropriate touching, sexual intercourse, etc. and activities or physical contact such as showing a child pornographic material, performing sexual acts in front of a child or coercing a child to engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour.

Emotional abuse – Emotional abuse includes the failure to provide a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment, that may cause harm to the child’s socio-emotional development and persistent or serious verbal abuse, belittling, bullying, denigrating or rejection that may negatively impact the mental behavioural development of a child.

Exploitation – Commercial or other exploitation of a child refers to use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour and child prostitution. These activities are to the detriment of the child’s physical or mental health, education, or spiritual, moral or social-emotional development.

Neglect – Neglect is the failure to provide for the social-emotional development of the child in all spheres: health, nutrition, clothing, shelter, education, etc.

³ World Health Organization, Report of the Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention, Geneva 1999

Legal framework

The overarching reference framework for this Child Protection Policy is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols⁴, which jointly form the most comprehensive internationally applicable system of proclaimed children's rights in existence. The convention defines a child as “every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”. With the Optional Protocols, the convention provides nation states with the legal framework to use as a basis for subsequent child protection legislation on a national level. Following the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, nation states are required to recognise and implement the rights standardized therein. The Convention on the Rights of the Child contains several fundamental principles of particular importance in terms of child protection. These include the principles of child welfare and non-discrimination, the right to life and development in addition to protection of children's freedom of opinion. In particular, Article 19 requires that nation states “take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment”.

Accordingly, children are entitled to protection against abuse and maltreatment. Criminal offences are prosecutable under national law in Germany, even when committed abroad. The Convention on the Rights of the Child provides the moral and legal basis for the commitment made by Eine Welt Netz NRW to protect and guarantee the welfare of children in its work and projects. As such, the Convention on the Rights of the Child is taken as the legally binding reference framework for this Child Protection Policy.

⁴ Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and Option Protocol on the submission of individual complaints

Preventative measures

Code of conduct for employees

The code of conduct for interacting with children aims to highlight the shared responsibility we all bear when it comes to the safety of children. In addition, it provides information on how Eine Welt Netz NRW employees and individuals that come into contact with children through Eine Welt Netz NRW can best protect themselves against misplaced suspicion with regard to their conduct towards children.

All full-time and voluntary employees, external staff, freelance multipliers that work on our projects, volunteers and board members at Eine Welt Netz NRW in Germany and abroad are required to sign and comply with this code of conduct. By signing the code of conduct, the signing party agrees to actively participate in creating and maintaining a safe environment for children. Each signing party is responsible for observing, sharing and circulating the rules of conduct.

Each signing party is required to...

- read the Child Protection Policy and adhere to the Eine Welt Netz NRW code of conduct for the protection of children;
- participate in fostering a safe, supportive and encouraging environment for children;
- be responsible for the observation, sharing and circulation of the rules of conduct in the respective work environment, as an employee of Eine Welt Netz NRW;
- take concerns and worries voiced by children seriously;
- be aware of and respect the physical boundaries of children;
- report any concerns, allegations and incidents to the child protection contact person or the project management team;
- respect and protect the dignity and self-determination of children, particularly with regard to photos, videos or reports used for publicity purposes;
- create peaceful educational learning spaces without any belittling treatment.

Each signing party commits to never...

- cause mental or physical harm to a child;
- use physical, mental or sexual violence against a child;
- threaten, intimidate or discriminate against a child;
- engage in sexual acts with or in the presence of children;
- provide children with access to pornographic material;
- act on sexual advances from children;
- kiss or otherwise hug, embrace or touch children in an inappropriate manner while at work;
- use inappropriate, indecent or abusive expressions;
- perform suggestive acts with a child or make references that may be construed as sexual innuendo;
- use his/her position of authority to harm children;
- exploit children for his/her own needs or ask for an act or favour that may be construed as abusive or exploitative;
- spend a disproportionate amount of time with an individual child in a group setting away from the other children;
- tolerate or support abusive behaviour towards children from others;
- remain silent about a suspected case of violations of child protection;
- take and publish photos of children without the consent of the child and their parent or guardian;
- take photos or videos that violate the child's right to physical self-determination.

HR policy

As part of its mission to guarantee a safe environment for children, Eine Welt Netz NRW has introduced a number of preventative measures as part of HR management. Eine Welt Netz NRW is aware that despite a careful recruitment and selection process, there is no complete guarantee that potential perpetrators will not enter the organisation. Nevertheless, this process does help to deter those who seek to gain access to children with bad intentions.

Recruitment and selection of permanent employees

All employees are required to actively contribute to fostering a culture of safety for children, the organisation and themselves. During the recruitment process, a consistent hiring practice ensures that child protection issues remain at the fore.

The recruitment and selection process are designed on the basis of the extent to which the vacant position requires direct or indirect contact with children, and where the corresponding risks for inappropriate conduct may lie.

All vacancies advertised by Eine Welt Netz NRW provide a link to the Child Protection Policy, which can be downloaded online.

The Eine Welt Netz NRW Child Protection Policy is also mentioned at all interviews, and applicants are asked for their stance on the child protection measures in place at the organisation.

All employees that come in regular contact with children within the scope of their work are required to provide an extended certificate of good conduct (erweitertes Führungszeugnis). This certificate needs to be submitted to the management team or a person appointed by management to document that it has been checked.

An updated extended certificate of good conduct needs to be submitted every 3 years. All employees are required to participate in basic training on child protection. In addition, employees that come into contact with children within the scope of their work are also required to complete advanced training.

Volunteers and freelance multipliers that work on our educational projects

The volunteers and freelance multipliers each receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy. They are also required to sign the code of conduct.

In cases where volunteers and freelance multipliers regularly have contact with children for more than 4 days at a time, or at events with overnight stays, or they are commissioned by Eine Welt Netz NRW for this purpose, they will be required to provide an extended certificate of good conduct. This certificate needs to be submitted to the management team or a person appointed by management to document that it has been checked.

Voluntary services abroad

The voluntary services for young people offered by Eine Welt Netz NRW, i.e. as part of the weltwärts initiative, are a unique part of the organisation. They often involve working on location with children and young people. The volunteers are contractually linked to Eine Welt Netz NRW, but are often sent to projects abroad run by local organisations.

Eine Welt Netz NRW provides training and advice for volunteers at seminars on the topic of child protection at their volunteer post, which takes place during and upon completion of the post. Before starting a volunteer post, the volunteers are required to sign the code of conduct and provide an extended certificate of good conduct.

Eine Welt Netz NRW endorses child protection at partner organisations and provides advice for the implementation thereof. In addition, the Eine Welt Netz NRW Child Protection Policy is also available in English, Spanish and French.

Training

The goal of training is to raise awareness on the topic of child protection, introduce the policy and support its implementation. It requires the completion of two modules.

Module 1: Basic principles

Participants: All full-time employees incl. volunteers in Germany

Content: Comprehensive introduction to the Child Protection Policy, raising awareness for risk situations, explaining the case management procedure and sensitive public relations

Duration: 2-4 hours, participation required every 2-3 years. Offered once a year or as required.

Hosted by: Eine Welt Netz NRW child protection contact person with assistance from Kinderschutz AG

Module 2: Advanced training

Participants: All employees that come into contact with children and young people within the scope of their work

Content: Establishing the criteria for a safe environment for children, exploring specific case studies, training on child protection measures, information on reporting procedures and on conduct with external individuals, guidelines for external individuals and communicating with parents

Duration: 1-2 days participation required every 2-3 years. Offered as required.

Hosted by: External child protection expert

Case management

Guideline on how to handle suspected cases

Eine Welt Netz e.V. offers an institutional procedure for handling suspected cases related to child protection. This process aims to ensure that any suspected cases that arise are thoroughly reviewed and clarified swiftly with as much confidentiality for the involved parties as possible. In order to achieve this goal, the involved parties and their responsibilities are clearly named in advance and the procedure takes place in a transparent and easily understandable way.

Procedural standards

During the entire process of dealing with a suspected case, it must be ensured that

- the affected child is protected and receives access to all necessary assistance.
- we inform the custodians of the suspected case and next steps and provide them with access to assistance.
- and that the suspect
 - is stopped from working with children or dismissed if the suspicions of abuse or exploitation are substantiated.
 - is kept adequately informed of the status of proceedings.
 - can address the allegations in front of the child protection team appointed to the case.
- the allegations made by the accuser are treated with confidentiality by all parties involved.
- the case is continuously documented.

Reporting a suspected case

Any incident or situation witnessed by employees themselves or reported by another person can be reported for further review with the following process.

- The child protection contact person can be informed of the incident in writing (by email).
- Similarly, the incident can be verbally reported to the child protection contact person and a report form filled out together.
- A written note can also be left of the child protection contact person's desk.

Reports will always be followed up on. We kindly ask that you avoid submitting anonymous reports.

Please ensure that any information provided only contains your own observations, observations from others and/or objectively verifiable facts. Speculation, allegations and

judgements on the situation should not be included. In the event that certain members of the child protection team may be particularly biased or involved in the matter, please inform us directly. This will be taken into account when the child protection team is formed.

Guideline on how to handle suspected cases

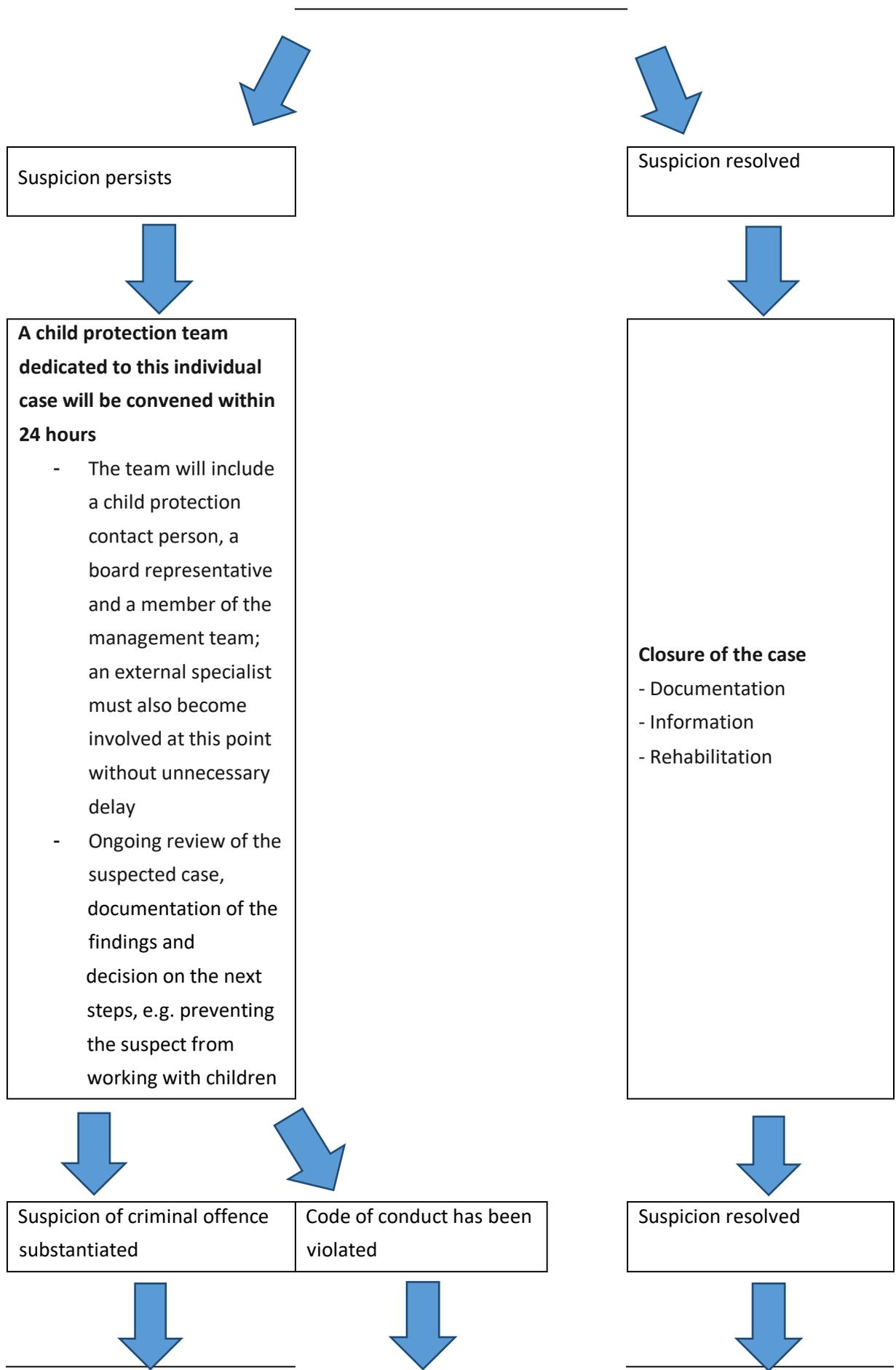
Submission of a report

- The child protection contact person receives a report
- A mutual discussion may take place with the child protection contact person, during which a report form will be filled out.



A child protection team will be convened within 48 hours

- The team will include a child protection contact person, a board representative and a member of the management team
- Internal discussions with a clear statement indicating grounds for suspicion followed by decision on whether a dedicated child protection team needs to be convened



Suspicion persists

Suspicion resolved

A child protection team dedicated to this individual case will be convened within 24 hours

- The team will include a child protection contact person, a board representative and a member of the management team; an external specialist must also become involved at this point without unnecessary delay
- Ongoing review of the suspected case, documentation of the findings and decision on the next steps, e.g. preventing the suspect from working with children

Closure of the case

- Documentation
- Information
- Rehabilitation

Suspicion of criminal offence substantiated

Code of conduct has been violated

Suspicion resolved

Notification of the competent law enforcement authorities (by the management team); Consequences determined by labour law (dismissal)	Disciplinary action (decided by the management team)
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Closure of the case - Documentation - Information	Closure of the case - Documentation - Information
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Closure of the case - Documentation - Information - Rehabilitation

Involved parties and responsibilities

Kinderschutz-AG

Kinderschutz-AG has developed the child protection policy. It provides assistance to the child protection contact person in terms of organising training and continually enhancing the policy.

Child protection contact person

The child protection contact person is responsible for implementing all measures related to the Child Protection Policy. They are also appointed by the management team to encourage employees to get involved. During the above proceedings, the child protection contact person is responsible for the confidential collection, review, forwarding (where necessary), clarification and documentation of all suspected cases for all parties.

The child protection contact persons at Eine Welt Netz NRW are:

Laura Hebling – laura.hebling@eine-welt-netz-nrw.de – 0251-38422203

Nastassja Ott – nastassja.ott@eine-welt-netz-nrw.de – 0251-38422205

Child protection team

The primary task of the child protection team is to clearly identify the evidence behind the suspicion and use this to determine whether a dedicated child protection team needs to be convened for the individual case.

If it emerges during the course of proceedings that an individual has been falsely accused, the child protection team are responsible for ensuring that the individual is completely rehabilitated. This involves ensuring that the individual's reputation is restored and they are capable of returning to work. The rehabilitation process must be carried out with the same prudence applied to investigate the suspected case.

Procedure:

- Ensure the child's well-being
- Collect information:
 - What happened?
 - When did the incident occur?
 - Who is involved?
 - What steps have already been taken?
- ➔ A child protection team dedicated to this individual case may need to be convened.

Dedicated child protection team

This team is responsible for thoroughly investigating the suspected case. Using the findings of the investigation, the team decides whether the suspicion is unfounded, the code of conduct has been violated, or whether the suspicion of a criminal offence has been substantiated. The next steps to be introduced will be determined by the decision made by the team.

Case documentation

1. Reporting a case

a. Email:

- i. forward to child protection contact person
- ii. create file for the case
- iii. save all subsequent emails in the same file

b. Verbally:

- i. document the case in Word (report form)

c. In another written form e.g. letter

- i. scan letter and save in a secure electrical file (restricted access)
- ii. file letter in a paper file (secure location, e.g. locked filing cabinet)
- iii. document the case in Word – use the form where necessary (see point b)

d. Online, e.g. on social media

- i. take screenshots or save in another suitable format
- ii. document the case in Word – use the form where necessary (see point b)

2. Processing a case

2.1 Store all documents in electronic format in the dedicated confidential file to which only members of the child protection team are granted access (e.g. separate hard disk) This includes the following documents:

- Report form
- Minutes from the meeting held by the child protection team to address the case
- Letters, email and all correspondence with those involved in the case
- Photos
- Lawyer correspondence
- Court correspondence
- Press releases (newspapers, TV, radio, etc.)
- Documents from the policy if an offence is reported
- Documentation of discussions held with other external multipliers, e.g. NGOs, social workers, hospitals, counselling services, etc.

- Screenshots for online cases
- etc.

2.2 Hard copies of documents must be stored in a file that can only be accessed by the child protection team (e.g. locked filing cabinet)

3. Conclusion of a case and storage

Once a case has been concluded, the documents must be stored in a secure location within the organisation (e.g. secure hard drive or locked filing cabinet) for a minimum of 10 years.

Ongoing policy enhancement

Kinderschutz-AG meets on an annual basis to discuss the latest developments on the topic of child protection, share information and plan training events for its staff. These meetings aim to ensure ongoing learning within the organisation to continually improve the child protection system.

The Eine Welt Netz NRW Child Protection Policy is updated at least once every three years. Updates account for analysed empirical values from the organisation's own child protection experience and external developments and advancements on the topic of child protection.

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