



Child Protection Policy

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I. INTRODUCERE	2
A. Purpose, applicability and key terms	2
Definition of key terms:	2
B. The context in which this policy applies	3
C. Principles underlying this policy	3
D. Types of activities carried out by NHF:	4
II. ACTION DIRECTIONS OF THE NOI ORIZONTURI FOUNDATION WITH RESPECT TO CHILD PROTECTION	5
A. Prevention of violence and abuse against children	5
Actions related to the contents of the educational programs carried out	5
Actions related to ensuring the framework for running programs (space, team, etc.)	5
B. Protection of the child's image and identity	6
C. Protecting the physical and mental integrity of the child	7
D. Reporting violence or suspected violence against the child	7
III. REVIEWING AND UPDATING THE POLICY	9
ANNEX A: Code of conduct	
ANNEX B: Commitment declaration	
ANNEX C: Policy "Safety management in outdoor activities"	
ANNEX D: Policy "Safety Management in VIAȚA Camp"	
ANNEX E: Emergency procedure VIAȚA Program	



I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose, applicability and key terms

The main purpose of this policy is to ensure the protection and safety of children within the programs run by New Horizons Foundation (NHF) and to prevent any form of abuse, neglect or exploitation of them.

This policy applies to the following categories of people:

- NHF Board of Directors
- NHF employees, full or part time
- Collaborators, service providers, NHF consultants from all implemented programs, including volunteers
- NHF partners: partner institutions and organizations, involved in the partnership projects carried out together with the New Horizons Foundation. If the activities carried out under the auspices of the FNO are carried out by partners, and they have their own child protection policy, the partners' policy will apply.

Communication of the policy to relevant persons:

All persons who work with children - employees, service providers, volunteers - within the organization will take note of this child protection policy. They will also benefit from information on recognizing the signs of abuse and neglect, as well as ways to report and intervene.

Definition of key terms:

1. **"Child"** means any person who is under the age of 18 and does not have full legal capacity.
2. **"Violence against children"**: all forms of physical or mental violence, face-to-face or online, harm and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. It also includes situations where the act of violence was committed by another child.
3. **"Abuse"** includes, but is not limited to, physical, emotional, sexual, or verbal abuse, face-to-face or online.
4. **"Exploitation"** refers to any form of child exploitation, including sexual or commercial exploitation, labor exploitation, face-to-face or online.



5. **"Neglect and negligent behavior"** refers to the deprivation or omission on the part of caregivers to support children's development in terms of: educational, emotional, physical development, access to food, shelter, medical care and decent living conditions. It also refers to the failure to properly supervise and protect children from these behaviors.

B. The context in which this policy applies

NHF is an organization that innovates and supports experiential education models that empower children and young people to develop themselves, their community and the world in which they live.

Our vision is a society where children and young people grow in fertile soil, fulfill their potential and use it for the development of the community and the world in which they live. We believe in the transformative power of experiential education and the ability of educators and leaders in organizations and communities to support children and youth to become better, stronger, wiser.

In order to fulfill its vision, NHF implements programs in which it collaborates with teachers and other people in the field of education, leaders of clubs for children and youth, socio-educational animators, leaders of organizations and communities, trainers, librarians, volunteers, students and young people, parents, as well as with public and private institutions and non-governmental organizations that support or contribute to the good implementation of its programs.

NHF takes all necessary measures to ensure that the organization, its programs, employees, collaborators and volunteers always have the best interests of the child in mind and act to prevent their harm, respectively treat with the utmost seriousness cases where there are suspicions of neglect, abuse, violence or other forms of violation of the child's rights.

This policy is built based on NHF Values.

C. Principles underlying this policy

Respect for the rights of the child:

NHF respects and protects the rights of the child as defined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Non-discrimination:

Every child has the right to protection regardless of his or her origin, race, religion, gender, disability, material situation, state of health, or any other characteristic.

Children's participation:

NHF encourages the active involvement of children in the decision-making processes that affect them and constantly strives to provide them with opportunities to express their opinions. By



participation we mean the nine principles stated in the international document THE NINE BASIC REQUIREMENTS For Meaningful and Ethical Children's Participation, developed by Save the Children.

The right to decide the level of involvement:

In all NHF programs, children have the opportunity to withdraw or refuse participation without any repercussions, and they are informed of this possibility. In the LIFE camp this principle is called challenge by choice.

Alignment with international standards:

NHF prioritizes alignment with agreed standards at national and international level regarding children's rights, in general, and child protection, in particular:

- Alignment with Law no. 272/2004 republished, on the protection and promotion of children's rights.¹

Data collection and use:

NHF collects data for the sole purpose of research and program monitoring. This is done in compliance with national and international data collection guidelines from minors²³, taking care to respect the dignity of the child and the anonymity of the subjects.

D. Types of activities carried out by NHF:

Depending on the type of interaction with children, FNO activities are divided into:

- A. direct interaction of NHF employees/collaborators with children: e.g. summer schools, LIFE camp, volunteer activities (children aged 16 to 18)
- B. interaction mediated by partners (third parties) with children: e.g. classroom lessons, IMPACT clubs, etc

The description of the actions below will state which type of interaction applies.

Depending on the venue, FNO activities are divided into:

¹ <https://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/Legislatie/L272-2004-R.pdf>

² **Legea nr. 129/2018 privind prelucrarea datelor cu caracter personal**

³ **Legea nr. 190/2018 privind măsurile de implementare a Regulamentului General privind Protecția Datelor**

Location	Applicable policies and procedures
1. Indoor	Safety rules specific to the activities carried out
2. Outdoor	"Safety management in outdoor activities" policy (Appendix C)
3. Outdoor - adventure education activities (VIAȚA Camp and related activities)	"Safety management in Camp VIAȚA" policy (Appendix D) Emergency procedure LIFE Program (Appendix E)
4. Online	N/A

II. ACTION DIRECTIONS OF THE NOI ORIZONTURI FOUNDATION WITH RESPECT TO CHILD PROTECTION

NB: The list below of the NHF's directions for child protection is not exhaustive or exclusive. It is the principle that all employees, volunteers, members and collaborators of NHF will not engage in inappropriate behavior and will not take harmful or potentially abusive actions towards minors.

A. Prevention of violence and abuse against children

The following are the main actions to prevent violence against children that we implement on a permanent basis:

Actions related to the contents of the educational programs carried out:

- *Education and awareness:* Supporting, developing and implementing educational programs in schools and communities to raise awareness of children's rights. The programs to increase the level of literacy, implicitly the basic skills without which the child/future adult cannot fully exercise their rights, and the service-learning programs implicitly aim at increasing the chances of children to know and acquire the rights, to acquire a voice and to be autonomous.



- *Creating recreational programs and activities for children* that provide opportunities for healthy development and positive interactions with adults and peers. In many cases, these programs are run in partnerships with educational institutions (for example: IMPACT Clubs).
- *Parenting Programs*: Providing learning resources and parenting programs for parents and guardians that focus on non-violent methods of discipline and effective communication with children (eg Family Club, Champions of Inclusion, Learning for All).
- *Promoting a safe environment for children* through careful monitoring and supervision of their activities, especially in programs run by NHF directly with child beneficiaries (eg: LIFE Camp, summer schools).
- *Promoting children's rights*: Supporting and promoting children's rights, including the right to quality education for the most vulnerable children, the right to health, participation and protection from any type of violence (eg Inclusion Champions, Community Schools, EduLab).

Actions related to ensuring the framework for running programs (space, team, etc.)

- Informing the team and collaborators about this Policy and training them in applying the principles and actions detailed in it.
- Arrangement of the work space with the aim of ensuring safety, according to PSI rules. In the case of adventure education activities organized in the open air, safety is a priority and is ensured by the measures detailed in the Policy "Safety Management in VIAȚA Camp" (Annex D).
- Setting up the work space with the aim of respecting the child's dignity and ensuring the quality of the educational act. In the case of partner-mediated interactions, the responsibility for the appropriate arrangement of the space rests with the partners.
- Application of safeguards in personnel selection and recruitment. Candidates for any position (either employees or volunteers with a voluntary contract) and any type of norm (full-time, part-time, seasonal, etc.) will present their identity documents as well as a valid record. NHF reserves the right to verify the information, as well as to consult the National Registry of persons who have committed sexual crimes (more information here). This policy as well as the code of conduct are mentioned in the job description of the employees and volunteers of the NHF, with the obligations and responsibilities arising from them.

B. Protection of the child's image and identity

NHF carries out the communication in a safe way, according to the EU GDPR regulation, for the children who benefit from the services offered. In all communication activities of the organization, we protect the image, privacy and dignity of the child. For each child beneficiary of an NHF program,



the program manager obtains written permission from the parents/legal representatives to take photographs or videos in which the child's image appears, informing them in advance of the subject and purpose of the recording. Images of children will present them in decent postures that respect their dignity.

Children's stories used for reporting, communication or fundraising materials will reflect not only the difficulties they face, but also the progress made to overcome these difficulties.

In the studies it carries out and in which the subjects are children, NHF will ensure the confidentiality of the information collected and the anonymity of the children.

Ensuring good practices in the use of online or offline communication:

NHF makes sure to reduce as much as possible the risk that materials referring to minors (articles, stories, videos, photos, social media posts, etc.) will be used in an inappropriate way. The measures that the NHF takes in this regard include:

- in all photo-video materials representing minors, care will be taken that they do not appear in compromising positions (e.g. undressed, indecent positions or gestures, etc.)
- in all written materials (articles, reports, stories, etc.) or photo - video, care will be taken that the details presented do not allow the "tracking" of the minor, i.e. he cannot be associated with a specific place / community. Details of street names or specific buildings should not be included if they identify where the minor lives or studies.
- if minors are photographed with a mobile phone, location (GPS) must be disabled.
- if the NHF hires a person for documentation (journalist / photographer, etc.) they will be checked (background) and references will be requested.
- before publishing any information or image about/with a minor, NHF will ensure that it has the express consent of both the minor and the parent/legal representative for publication.

C. Protecting the physical and mental integrity of the child

All NHF programs promote a culture of open communication between staff and children so that they can report any inappropriate behavior or situation without fear of repercussions.

Actions related to ensuring the physical and mental integrity of the child

- Children will be supervised at all times during activities within the organization to prevent any risk situation.



- Any type of activity that could endanger the physical integrity of children will be avoided, without prior training of the children and the adults involved and ensuring all the conditions related to the safe conduct of the activities.
- Any type of activity that could endanger the mental and emotional integrity of children will be avoided.
- No child participating in NHF programs will be forced to participate in a particular activity against their will.

D. Reporting violence or suspected violence against a child

Any NHF staff member who suspects or is aware of a case of violence, abuse or neglect of a child with whom they work directly is required to immediately report the situation to the program/project manager. In case of an emergency or if there is imminent danger for the child, the emergency number 112 will be called to request the intervention of the Police and/or the Ambulance.

After consultation with the executive director and the representative of the partner organization/institution, if necessary, the program/project manager will initiate the reporting procedure to the General Directorate for Social Assistance and Child Protection (DGASPC) in the child's county of residence, respectively to the Embassy or The consulate of the country of origin, if the children are from outside Romania.

Reports of abuse or neglect will be treated confidentially and information will be disclosed only to authorized persons.

In relation to acts of abuse or violence against a child committed by another child, they will be dealt with taking into account that:

-a child who has abused another child differs from the adult who commits such a crime because the child is not fully aware of the abuse committed and the consequences of his actions.

-in all the decisions taken, the best interest of the child takes precedence, both in relation to the victim and the minor who commits the abuse.

III. REVIEWING AND UPDATING THE POLICY

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it is up-to-date in accordance with applicable law and effectively implemented.



Any changes to the policy will be communicated clearly and transparently to all staff and stakeholders, who will sign the Commitment Declaration from Annex B



ANNEXES

ANNEX A: Code of conduct

- This Code of Conduct presents the ethical principles that the staff of the Noi Orizonturi Foundation undertake to respect in the performance of the tasks and responsibilities resulting from the job description, as well as in the direct interaction with the children and young people in the organization's programs or in the interaction with the people who work directly with children and young people (teachers, volunteers, etc.).

In relation to minors (children and young people) participating in the organization's programs, NHF staff:

- treat each child with respect and act without discrimination (based on race, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, disability, material situation, state of health, etc.)
- respect and promote the right of every child to have his own views, to make his own choice and to make his own decisions concerning him, unless his welfare, health or legitimate interests or those of others are threatened.
- promote and ensure the welfare and safety of children with whom they interact directly, face-to-face or online
- assess risks and manage the safety of activities involving the direct participation of children
- very clearly demarcates professional activity from private life
- takes care that the actions and behavior shown outside the work program are not in contradiction with the values of the organization
- does not accept gifts or favors from children or other persons, which may compromise professional integrity
- do not develop close personal relationships with the children who are part of the organization's programs
- does not engage in any form of sexual or explicitly sexual activities with minors who are part of the organization's programs. Any act of this kind will attract legal liability according to the provisions in force
- reports worrying situations (with potential risk for children) to the competent authorities who can take measures for the protection of the child

Situations where acts of violence are committed by other children:

Responsible adults intervene to stop the act of violence, respecting the dignity of both the abuser and the abused. Depending on the seriousness of the situation and the degree of urgency, he will request qualified support, report the incident to the competent entities, notify the legal guardian.

ANNEX B: Commitment declaration



I, the undersigned, _____, have read and understood the principles and lines of action set out in the Child Protection Policy.

I agree with the principles set out in this document and accept the importance of implementing the actions for child protection included in this document in my capacity as an employee / volunteer / collaborator / member of the board of directors / partner / service provider during the time I collaborate at the New Horizons Foundation or I am associated with the New Horizons Foundation.

_____ (Name) _____
(Position) _____ (Signature)
_____ (Date)

ANNEX C: Policy "Safety management in outdoor activities"

*separate document



ANNEX D: Policy "Safety Management in Camp VIAȚA"

*separate document

ANNEX E: Emergency procedure VIAȚA Program

*separate document