

## **Hellenic Association of Positive Psychology, Athens, Greece**

### **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURES**

This policy outlines how the Hellenic Association of Positive Psychology will protect the rights and safety of the children and young people with whom we come in contact during the course of our work.

The Hellenic Association of Positive Psychology will also take all possible steps to ensure that programs undertaken with associates are safe and suitable for children.

#### **Terms and Definitions**

**Child**: The United Nation's Convention on the rights of the Child defines a child as every human being below the age of eighteen years.

**Child protection**: the responsibilities and actions of the Institute with the aim of prevention and combating child abuse.

**Child abuse**: Child maltreatment, sometimes referred to as child abuse and neglect, includes all forms of physical and emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, development or dignity. Within this broad definition, five subtypes can be distinguished – physical abuse; sexual abuse; neglect and negligent treatment; emotional abuse; and exploitation" (World Health Organisation)

**Direct contact with children / Work with children**: Is any physical presence of adults with children in the context of the Institute's work. The duration (shortterm or long-term) is not relevant.

**Indirect contact with children**: having access to information about children such as names, addresses, photographs and case studies.

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**Staff** (including volunteers): All the people employed by the Hellenic Association of Positive Psychology, associates and possible volunteers.

1. The Hellenic Association of Positive Psychology follows the standards outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child [CRC] (1989), the Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention, 2007), the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the Council of Europe Convention on Human Rights and all relevant international, regional and domestic instruments on human rights and the rights of the child. It is the duty of adults to understand and adhere by these to protect children from all forms of abuse.
  2. Every child and young person that is involved /participates in the activities should be able to do so in a positive and safe environment. This means to be protected from harm or any damage or impairment. Every adult involved bares this responsibility, as it is their duty.
  3. The best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration in all actions concerning a child.
- The Hellenic Association of Positive Psychology is committed to safeguard all children, without distinction of any kind, whatever their age, ability, language, ethnicity, faith, gender, sexuality and culture, political or other opinion, birth or other status.
  - All adults involved should respect, protect and promote the rights of children at all times.
  - All suspicions or allegations or concerns that have to do with abusing children will be taken seriously. These need to be reported to the appropriate person (health care professional) as soon as possible. The Hellenic association of Positive Psychology will respond to these in an

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appropriate manner, that is according to the relevant laws and the United Nation's Convention on the rights of the Child, and will inform relevant services, such as the Social Welfare Services and/or the police.

- The Hellenic Association of Positive Psychology carries the duty of care and provides children an environment with safe training opportunities, with respect to human rights and nondiscrimination.
- The Hellenic Association of Positive Psychology wishes to reduce any harm to which a child might be subjected to.

### **Research & Training**

Any research undertaken by the Hellenic Association of Positive Psychology is approved by the **Greek Ministry of Education**, prior to the research.

When working with anyone under the age of 18 years, all adults involved should act in accordance to the Hellenic Association of Positive Psychology rules.

Specifically, adults need to have in mind:

- Request informed written consent from parents/guardians if the children are under the age of 18, and where appropriate (capable of providing informed consent), from the children themselves. For the procedure of assessing if the child can provide consent, their age, literacy, cultural background and any learning difficulties or disabilities should be taken into account.
- Any children participating in research should be informed about the nature of the research, in child friendly language, where they understand the research proposed.
- Any children participating should feel comfortable at all times to continue the research. This should be monitored by the researcher.
- If any of the children participating would like to discontinue, this right should be respected at all times.

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- It is possible that a one-on-one meeting might be needed or a confidential interview. In these cases, it is advised to perform the interview in a room with an open door or visual access.
- Children should not be promised of complete confidentiality.
- The Hellenic's Association of Positive Psychology staff come into direct and indirect contact with children. This can include research, training and career counselling. Thus, recruitment of employees will need to entail that these people are suitable to work with children.
- Before engaging in any work that relates to children, staff should provide the Hellenic Association of Positive Psychology a certificate of clean criminal record and a certificate of clean criminal record in relation to crimes against children.
- For the construction of any child related material, the Hellenic Association of Positive Psychology takes into consideration all the above.

### **Practical Guidelines**

- Adopt the safest possible practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children.
- When physical contact is made with children this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Adults should be cautious of physical contact, unless it is initiated by the child, or under other occasions e.g. to give first aid or help. Thus, all staff should use their professional judgement at all times whether physical contact is appropriate, or seek consultation with a colleague.