CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
2018

PRINCIPLES, PROCEDURES AND POLICY GUIDELINES
ON CHILD PROTECTION AT CSC
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Introduction.

Following in the footsteps of its founder and inspirator of its work Danilo Dolci, Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo Danilo Dolci strongly believes in the need to affirm the rights of all children, including the right to be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence, as set out in the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and in the Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention, 2007).

Within the present policy, any person under eighteen years of age is considered to be a child.

Given the nature of its work, often in collaboration with schools and educational institutes, CSC’s staff members (including volunteers, interns, external and internal collaborators) often come in contact with children and children-related material (photos, statements, questionnaires, etc.). Therefore the need for this manual and guidelines in order to show the commitment to taking proactive steps in protecting children in CSC’s programs and facilities and ensure that they are assured the rights expressed in the UNCRC.

In fact, CSC takes the prevention of child abuse very seriously and it understands that the latter and any inappropriate contact with children is a pervasive problem everywhere, and one that must be addressed in a proactive manner.

CSC is committed and ready to take decisions and undergo actions that are guided by the principle of “the best interest of the child”.

The Child Protection Policy.

The purpose of the present Child Protection Policy document is to outline the internal policies regulating the behavior and approach adopted by CSC’s personnel (including interns, volunteers and collaborators) while in the exercise of their professional duties.

The policy outlines the basic principles that guided its draw up and the behaviors it aims to regulate. It specifically addresses several aspects of the professional life of its staff members (including interns, volunteers and collaborators), within and outside its premises: screening and hiring procedures; conduct to be adopted when working with children; in-service training; and professional interaction with Partners.

Our Principles and Values.

CSC affirms its commitment to the following values and principles, which should be respected and promoted by all its staff, including interns, volunteers and collaborators:
i. CSC values and treats every person without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the age, race, skin color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, language, gender identity or sexual orientation, property, disability, or other status.

ii. In the undertaking of the Organisation’s activities, the best interest of the child always comes first.

iii. CSC recognizes the right of every child to be protected from harm and abuse. The Organization takes all necessary action to prevent any harm from being done against children, and to report abuse against children.

iv. CSC promotes the right of every child to be listened to and have their opinion valued; and supports this approach in its activities.

v. CSC is committed to provide all necessary guidance to its employees, interns, volunteers and collaborators who work in close contact with children for the correct implementation of these guidelines.

Our Screening and Hiring practices.

CSC establishes and sustains thorough hiring practices (including volunteers and interns selection), consisting in: complete applications, reference checks, Criminal Background Checks, Social Security checks and documented personnel files, and includes specific reference to Child Protection in its Code of Conduct.

Applications:

i. All prospective staff members/volunteers/interns will provide a complete application in order to work or volunteer or intern composed of a CV and cover letter including information regarding past work history, volunteer experience, and education.

ii. All applicants shall be informed that CSC has a zero-tolerance standard for abuse and inappropriate behaviour by staff members in written form (e.g. email confirming reception of application).

iii. All staff/volunteers/associates who may be involved in working with children and young people, or who are deemed likely to come in contact with children in the fulfilment of their duties, will be requested to provide a certificate of their national criminal record, according to national legislation (Decreto Del Presidente Della Repubblica 14 novembre 2002, n. 313 – specifically art. 25 bis).

Reference checks:

CSC reserves the right to apply the following reference check procedures to any candidate applying for a position:
i. Contacting references indicated by prospective staff and volunteers, including close family member of the applicant.

ii. Contacting previous employers/agencies to check if the prospective staff or volunteer is eligible for rehire, as well as to ask about the ability of the applicant to work with children.

iii. Verbally verifying written references via telephone or other means of contact.

iv. Researching a candidate online and checking for red flags for working with children (i.e. Google Search, any national sexual predator web sites, and social networking sites).

Interviews:

i. Prospective staff members should be interviewed by at least two separate staff members. A ‘Realistic Job Preview’ or ‘Working Interview’ meets this requirement; it is important that the candidate is assessed by more than one staff member.

ii. All interviews will be documented on an association-approved interview form that ensures the consistency of the questions asked. CSC’s interview evaluation forms may be used during the interview process.

Children’s rights training.

a. All staff members are required (especially all staff members/volunteers/interns working directly with children and youth) to participate in a comprehensive initial children’s rights and child abuse prevention training and in further training throughout their employment period, that includes information on the Rights of the Children (UNCRC, Lanzarote Convention, National regulation), Communicating with Children, Sexual abuse, Prevention, Early Identification, Responding, Documenting, and Reporting. The training programs are inspired by existing resources and are developed by building on the programs already developed through our relevant projects.

b. Participation in the above-mentioned child abuse prevention training will be required also from external collaborators and associates who may come in contact with children and young people in the fulfilment of their tasks as assigned by CSC.

Cooperation with other organizations and agencies.

a. The selection of partners should take into account the child protection history of the Partner Organization.
b. CSC reserves the right to conduct a reference check on the Partner’s previous history related to child protection and its policies towards children.

c. CSC will not tolerate any improper communication towards children.

d. A clear statement related to child protection and the zero-tolerance policy of CSC in relation to child abuse and inappropriate behavior shall be included in any partnership agreement between CSC and other organizations.

e. CSC must take serious action towards any partner convicted for child abuse during the implementation of its projects/programs.

Principles of conduct when coming in contact/working with children

a. Prior to performing any work duties for CSC, staff members/volunteers will sign and date a copy of the Code of Conduct of the Organisation, to which the Child Protection Policy is annexed. They will be provided with an updated copy of the Code of Conduct and of the Child Protection Policy annually.

b. The Code of Conduct will be maintained in the personnel file and is annexed to their employment contract.

c. CSC’s Child Protection Policy is periodically (minimum once per year) reviewed, and shared with the Human Resources, all Coordinators, who will in turn share it with all staff/interns and volunteers. The Code of Conduct is developed by the Human Resources and will be available electronically and in its printed version. Staff, interns and volunteers will receive a copy and be requested to sign it.

d. All external collaborators and associates will view the Child Protection Policy and the Code of Conduct and will be requested to sign it if they work or may come in contact with children and young people of less than 18 years of age.

e. The Code of Conduct includes the procedures for data collection and treatment of data about children and young people. Data privacy and protection issues shall comply with relevant EU rules (especially the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679). If personal data about children and young people needs to be collected, written informed consent will be sought from their parents/legal guardians. The data will be collected and used only for the specific purposes for which they are provided. Staff working with children and needing to collect personal data about children or young people shall refer to the Data Protection Policy of CSC and to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679. CSC does not share the personal data provided with any other entity.

f. Staff who may come in contact with personal data of participants to research and surveys is required to sign a declaration of confidentiality before engaging in research. The declaration of confidentiality is specific to each case/project.

g. All publications must comply with the Child Protection Policy, before being advertised or shared.
h. Disclosing of information that identifies children who come in contact with our staff, volunteers, associates, and anyone having a role within CSC, is restricted by the terms of international and European regulations and Italian legislation. Written informed consent of the parents/legal guardians shall be sought. In accordance with article 3 of the UNCRC, the best interests of the child will be the fundamental principle applied in all cases. This includes disclosing any type of information (including images) regarding the children we come in contact with, on any media, including printed, online or other.

i. Data, including images, of children and young people is only collected if strictly necessary and foreseen as a specific activity of the Organisation or of a project that the Organisation implements. Their use is therefore only limited to the duration of the project, the specific purpose for which they were provided and collected. Specific permission of the child’s legal guardians as well as the approval of the child will be sought by the staff of the Organisation implementing the activity, according to law requirements. Acquired images and data are stored on the local server of CSC and are accessible only by the staff who are in possession of specific credentials and who have subscribed the Code of Conduct. The data in the local server is protected by password and cyber-protected by any kind of external access.

j. The rules and expected behaviors will be shared with each new employee/volunteer and intern and will be regularly reinforced with existing staff and volunteers. This will be done in new employee training, children’s rights training, and the use of a comprehensive Code of Conduct.

k. All members of staff, volunteers, interns, external collaborators and associates have the obligation to report any child abuse concerns they may have or suspect. Staff/volunteers will be instructed to report anything they notice regarding a gap between protocols and practices. Staff and volunteers working with or coming in contact with children will be also instructed, through training, on the procedures to apply in case they suspect or have knowledge of a situation of child abuse.

l. CSC provides a standardised reporting form (annexed to the Code of Conduct) that allows staff members, volunteers and collaborators to report any suspected breach of the present policy or of the Code of Conduct of the organization. Anonymous and non-anonymous reports will be treated by the Child Protection Policy Officer at CSC:

   Mr. Alberto Biondo, alberto.biondo@danilodolci.org

m. Any member of staff/volunteer/intern/external collaborator or associate found in breach of the Code of Conduct, or of the Child Protection Policy on which the code draws, will be immediately suspended from their position. Pending investigation, internal or by statutory authorities will depend on the specific case. Disciplinary action will be undertaken, including and up to termination of employment/cessation of the professional engagement with CSC. In case of an alleged or ascertained crime, the staff will be immediately removed from their position and their contract terminated.