CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Korça Institute for Development of Children (KIDC)

Organisation-wide policy | Public website edition | October 2026

Document owner	**Çiljeta Simaku, Executive Director, KIDC**
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Review cycle	At least annually and after a significant safeguarding incident or legal change

1. Purpose and commitment

KIDC is committed to protecting every child from violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination and avoidable harm. The safety, dignity, rights and best interests of the child take priority in all KIDC programmes, partnerships, services, research, communications and digital activities. This policy is guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the best interests of the child, protection from violence and respect for children's views, and by applicable Albanian child protection legislation.

This policy establishes minimum mandatory standards for preventing harm, recognising concerns, responding safely, reporting concerns and ensuring accountability. KIDC adopts a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, exploitation, retaliation and deliberate concealment of safeguarding concerns.

2. Scope and definitions

This policy applies to all KIDC employees, management, board members, consultants, volunteers, interns, contractors and anyone acting on KIDC's behalf. Partner organisations must meet equivalent safeguarding standards for joint activities and must follow agreed reporting and referral arrangements.

A child is any person under 18 years of age. Safeguarding means the measures taken to prevent and respond to harm associated with KIDC activities and personnel. A safeguarding concern includes suspected or disclosed physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying, unsafe practice or inappropriate conduct involving a child.

3. Guiding principles

- Best interests and child rights: decisions prioritise the child's safety, wellbeing, dignity and evolving capacities.
- Do no harm: activities are designed to minimise risks, stigma, retraumatisation and unnecessary disclosure.
- Non-discrimination and inclusion: equal protection for all children, including children with disabilities, Roma and Egyptian children, and those affected by poverty or exclusion.
- Child participation: children are listened to through age-appropriate, voluntary and accessible processes, without transferring protection responsibilities to them.
- Confidentiality and data minimisation: information is shared only with authorised persons who need it to protect a child or meet legal obligations.
- Accountability: every concern is taken seriously, recorded securely and referred or escalated without retaliation.

4. Roles and responsibilities

- Executive Director: ensures formal adoption, resources, oversight, staff compliance, and appropriate referral to competent authorities.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): a named, trained person appointed in writing to receive concerns, assess immediate protection needs, maintain secure records and coordinate lawful referrals. A trained deputy should be designated.
- Managers and activity leads: complete activity risk assessments, ensure safe staffing and supervision, and brief participants on reporting routes.
- All personnel and representatives: comply with the Code of Conduct, report concerns promptly, cooperate with safeguarding processes and preserve confidentiality.
- Partners and external providers: receive relevant safeguarding instructions, apply equivalent standards and notify KIDC of concerns arising in joint activities.

5. Prevention and safe programme delivery

- Apply appropriate recruitment screening, reference checks, role-specific vetting where legally permitted, and written safeguarding commitments before child-facing work.
- Provide induction and refresher training on recognising harm, safe responses to disclosures, professional boundaries, referrals, privacy and accessible communication.
- Assess risks before home visits, counselling, training, transport, online sessions, photography, events and activities with children; apply appropriate supervision and safe environments.
- Use child-friendly information and accessible complaint channels; obtain appropriate parental/legal guardian permission and the child's informed assent where required, while respecting applicable law and the child's best interests.
- Never require a child to disclose experiences of violence in group activities, research, evaluation or publicity; avoid unnecessary repeated questioning.

6. Mandatory Code of Conduct

All personnel must maintain professional boundaries and behave respectfully. They must never:

- Engage in sexual activity, sexualised communication or exploitative relationships with any child, regardless of purported consent.
- Use corporal punishment, humiliating language, threats, intimidation, discriminatory treatment or degrading practices.
- Exchange money, gifts, services or favours for access to or influence over a child; exploit dependency or unequal power.
- Arrange unnecessary unsupervised contact, private messaging or personal social-media relationships with children outside authorised programme arrangements.
- Take or share photographs, videos, names, case histories or identifying details without proper permissions, safeguarding review and a legitimate purpose.
- Ignore, conceal or investigate suspected abuse personally instead of using the approved reporting and referral pathway.

7. Responding to a disclosure or concern

If a child is in immediate danger or needs urgent medical attention, prioritise safety and contact the competent emergency, health or child protection authority without delay. Staff must follow applicable Albanian legal reporting duties and institutional referral mechanisms.

When a child speaks about harm: remain calm; listen without blame; reassure them that speaking was right; do not promise absolute secrecy; ask only what is necessary for immediate safety; do not interrogate, mediate with an alleged perpetrator or seek to verify the allegation yourself.

Record the concern promptly and factually, using the child's own words where possible, noting date, time, persons present, observations and actions taken. Share it promptly with the DSL through a secure channel. Where the DSL is implicated, report to the Executive Director or directly to the competent authority. Where senior leadership is implicated or internal reporting is unsafe, use the competent external authority directly.

The DSL will assess immediate risk, coordinate referral to the legally competent child protection services and other relevant authorities, document actions and follow up within KIDC's remit. Statutory case-management decisions remain with the competent public authorities.

8. Reporting routes and protection from retaliation

Internal safeguarding contact: KIDC Designated Safeguarding Lead (name and direct contact to be published after appointment). General institutional contact: director@kidcalbania.org. This email is not an emergency service and should not replace direct reporting to the competent authorities.

Children, families, personnel and community members may raise concerns verbally, in writing or through accessible supported communication. Reports made in good faith will be treated seriously. Retaliation, intimidation or adverse treatment for raising a concern is prohibited. Allegations against KIDC personnel will be managed impartially, with appropriate protective measures and referral to authorities where required.

9. Confidentiality, records and digital safeguarding

KIDC will collect the minimum information necessary for safeguarding and lawful programme delivery. Sensitive records must be securely stored, access-restricted, retained only for a justified period and shared solely on a lawful need-to-know basis. Personal information will not be circulated in general project-management channels.

Online tools must incorporate access controls, privacy-by-design, secure communication and incident-response arrangements. Digital cooperation tools must not replace statutory reporting channels or official child protection case-management systems. Suspected data breaches must be escalated promptly to the responsible personnel and handled under applicable law.

10. Images, stories, research and communication

Images and stories involving children require a legitimate purpose, risk assessment, appropriate permissions and age-appropriate assent. Children may decline participation without loss of services. Avoid publishing identifying information, precise locations or details that could expose a child to harm, stigma or unwanted attention. Consent does not override safeguarding concerns; KIDC may decide not to publish material even when permission exists.

11. Implementation, monitoring and review

This policy will be shared with personnel and relevant partners, supported by induction, signed Code of Conduct acknowledgements, activity-level risk assessments and documented referral arrangements. Compliance and safeguarding risks will be reviewed by management. The policy will be reviewed at least annually and whenever a significant incident, operational learning or legal change requires revision.

KIDC will ensure that children and caregivers can access a concise, age-appropriate explanation of their rights, expected staff behaviour and how to report concerns.

Formal approval and adoption

Policy approved by KIDC Board Decision No. 16, dated 16 May 2024.

Signed by: Çiljeta Simaku, Executive Director, KIDC

Signature: 

Official KIDC stamp: 

Designated Safeguarding Lead and secure contact (to be completed before publication):

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