

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Vukovar Municipal Museum (VMM) was founded in 1946. It is situated in the Baroque Palace of Eltz counts on the right bank of the Danube in the city centre of Vukovar. The permanent exhibition presents the historical development of Vukovar over the span of 8000 years depicting the archaeological history, the historical development from the first written document dating from 1220 until today, the traditional way of life in the surrounding towns and villages, the Croatian War of Independence, the time of exile and return, and life in Vukovar as a multinational community today. After the devastation in the War in 1991, the exiled museum continued its work in Mimara Museum in Zagreb. It was returned to the destroyed Eltz Palace in 1997 and continued its activities and events, becoming a place for artists and citizens returned from exile. For its work on the cultural restoration of Vukovar, revitalizing the devastated city and involving the local community in its work, the Vukovar Municipal Museum received the prestigious European Silletto award – EMYA 2016, awarded by the European Museum Forum. Young people and minors are one of the target groups of VMM's activity.

In all its activities involving minors, VMM is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in its care. It recognizes the responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures a child is recognized as someone under the age of 18 years. Staff and volunteers will work together to embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of children and young people.

I. Definitions

We define **safeguarding** as protecting children from abuse and maltreatment, preventing impairment of children's health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care as well as taking steps to ensure the best outcomes for all children.

Promoting the welfare of children includes ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

Safeguarding involves aspects of care, including children's and learners' health and safety and wellbeing, meeting the needs of children and learners with medical conditions as well as the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities, providing first aid, caring for emotional wellbeing, ensuring online safety and associated issues.

Also the **protection of data** is to be secured, which means that collected data will be processed confidentially and used exclusively for record purposes and will not be forwarded to third parties or used for marketing purposes. Collected personal data are kept only as long as necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed, all in accordance with legal regulations. For the usage of pictures of children for public purposes, the agreement of the children as well as the parents/legal guardian needs to be signed.

Safeguards may be needed to **protect children and learners from** neglect, physical, sexual, emotional abuse, bullying, including online bullying, racist, disability-related, gender-based violence/violence based on sexual orientation, radicalization and/or extremist behaviour, sexual exploitation and child trafficking, substance abuse, group violence and other problems that pose a risk to children.

All **staff will be made aware** that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. Abuse or neglect can take the form of inflicting harm to a child, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger, for example via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

We define **physical abuse** as physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Emotional abuse may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person, not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate, it may involve serious bullying (including online), feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, it may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of other people. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, the activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing, they may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

We define **neglect** as the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It involves a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Neglect may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Special circumstances in child protection cases, include bullying, including cyberbullying, child sexual exploitation, domestic violence, drugs, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, gangs, serious youth violence and violent extremism and radicalisation, 'Honour'-based violence (HBV), not attending school, parental lack of control, parental mental illness, parents who misuse substances,

pregnancy, self-harming and suicidal behaviour, sexually active children, trafficked and exploited children, young carers, gender-based violence/violence against women and girls, hate, relationship abuse.

II. Responsibilities

The museum director takes the **lead responsibility for child protection**, including support for other staff and information sharing with other agencies, developing policies. They are also the first authority to respond to allegations made against members of staff.

Their **responsibilities include** reporting all suspected abuse and neglect as well as allegations made against members of staff to the local authorities, developing and updating the Child Protection and other safeguarding policies, ensuring that staff and children/families/parents are aware of them, providing support and advice to all members of staff within the setting regarding child protection concerns, ensuring that cover is provided for the role when absent from the setting, ensuring that all staff receive appropriate Child Protection and Safeguarding Training, cooperating with any requests for information from the local authorities.

It is the **responsibility of all other members of staff** to ensure that all safeguarding concerns, both minor and serious, are reported to the museum director as soon as reasonably possible, because minor concerns may take on greater significance within the wider context of knowledge of a child or family. Furthermore, all staff members should be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and should always act in the best interests of the child, and should receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated.

Safer Recruitment procedures are enforced, in order to deter potential abusers by setting high standards of practice and recruitment, reject inappropriate candidates at the application and interview stages, prevent abuse to children by developing robust policies and agreeing on safe practice. Any new staff member will be checked to ensure they are not prohibited from working with children. Volunteers are appropriately supervised.

Allegations against staff can be made by children and young people and they can be made by other concerned adults. All allegations against staff or volunteers should be immediately brought to the attention of the museum director. All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in safeguarding procedures and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the museum director.

In case of allegations against the staff the museum director should ensure that the child reporting the allegation is safe and away from the member of staff against whom the allegation is made, contact the parents/carers of the child, review the member of staff's working arrangements, and if no safe alternative identified suspend the member of staff pending the investigation and carry out necessary disciplinary investigation once the child protection investigation has been completed. Suspension should be considered when there is a cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, the allegation warrants investigation by the police or the allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.

All members of staff are **forbidden to use any kind of physical force**, any degree of physical contact that is deliberately intended to punish a child, or that is primarily intended to cause pain or injury or humiliation. Staff is only allowed to use reasonable force to control or restrain children, in order to

protect them and others. Any concerns or allegations that a member of staff may have acted inappropriately should be brought to the museum director immediately.

In order to protect children, young people and members of staff, we encourage staff to follow our professional **code of conduct of appropriate behaviour**. This covers appropriate dress, the use of appropriate boundaries, social contact outside the setting (including on social networking sites), the receiving and giving of gifts and favouritism, and the safe use of technology.

Consideration needs to be given to being alone with the child / young person, physical contact / restraint, social contact outside setting / appropriate boundaries, gifts and favouritism, behaviour management, safe use of technology (Security / Internet / mobile phones / digital images of children, etc.), appropriate use of social networking sites.

III. Commitments

All staff will work to ensure that children and young people feel listened to, valued and respected, that staff are aware of indicators of abuse and know how to share their concerns appropriately, that all staff, volunteers and people involved in VMM's work are subject to rigorous recruitment procedures, and are given appropriate support and training.

All staff and volunteers included in the work of VMM who work with children will read this policy within the framework of:

- EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Regulation on Measures for the Protection of Personal Rights and Child Welfare by the Croatian Vice President of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and Minister of Social Policy and Youth

We are committed to recognize situations that may pose a risk for minors and know how to manage them, to refer concerns, suspicion or awareness of possible abuse or mistreatment of minors, as defined in this policy, to local authority children's social care, contributing to the assessment of a child's needs and, where appropriate, to ongoing action to meet those needs. All staff have read and understand the Child Protection Policy and are aware of the indicators of child abuse and how to respond to concerns or disclosures of abuse by children.

The museum director takes responsibility as governor for safeguarding, and reviews this child protection policy on an annual basis.

This document is available online before the activities involving children are implemented, at the following link: www.muzej-vukovar.hr, transparent to all those who come in contact with VMM.

The documents will be revised on an annual basis by the museum director.

This policy has been reviewed and approved by:


Museum Director **Gradski MUZEJ**
Vukovar, 11.07.2023. Vukovar 