



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY 2021

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INTRODUCTION

ČOSIV is committed to practice which protects children from harm. Staff and volunteers within this organisation accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

ČOSIV is also committed to review the Child Protection Policy and Procedures at regular intervals. This version of ***Child Protection Policy*** has been agreed on 25 February 2020 by Executive Committee of ČOSIV and edited on 10 June 2021. It replaced previous document *Protection of Rights of Children and Youth in ČOSIV*.



WHO TO CONTACT

ČOSIV has designated senior members of staff to take specific responsibility for child protection matters within ČOSIV. These **designated Child Protection Representatives** are:

Klára Šimáčková Laurenčíková, chairwoman

Email: klara.laurencikova@cosiv.cz

Mobile phone: 00420 777 563 533

Address: Krásný život 286, Stará Huť, 262 02, Czech Republic

Lenka Felcmanová, vice-chairwoman

Email: lenka.felcmanova@cosiv.cz

Mobile phone: 00420 777 612 257

Address: Krásný život 286, Stará Huť, 262 02, Czech Republic

All cases of alleged or suspected abuse should be immediately reported to designated Child Protection Representative. In the absence of any of the above named Representatives, you should contact your **local Child Protection Office or Police Station**.

WHO DOES THIS AFFECT?

This document is designed as a **guidance of all staff and volunteers at ČOSIV, as well as all children and youth and their families who are utilizing the services of ČOSIV.** The policy and procedures are available to all of the above-mentioned individuals/groups.

A child is defined as any individual under the age of 18 years. The policy and procedures may also be relevant for use in the case of any vulnerable young person over the age of 18 years who is utilizing the services of ČOSIV.

Child Protection policy and procedures **apply to all children and young people** regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or religion.





PROCEDURES

- 1. Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately*

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Child abuse occurs when the behaviour of someone in a position of greater power than a child causes harm. Harm cannot always be easily categorised as children can be abused in a number of ways, but **four broad definitions of abuse** can be identified:

Physical: Any physical act that harms or controls another human being e.g. punches, kicks, pushing, biting, stabbing, strangling, attacks with various objects. Physical abuse always includes mental abuse. Witnessing physical abuse is also considered as abuse.

Emotional: Persistent or severe emotional neglect or rejection, for example, by not being given enough love or attention, made to feel worthless, or being intimidated by threats or taunts.

Sexual: Sexual intercourse between children and adults where children are encouraged or forced to observe or participate in any form of sexual activity including sexually abusive or inappropriate behavior, such as verbal sexual hints or encouraging a child to sexualized behavior .

Neglect: Children's physical and/or psychological needs are persistently or severely neglected, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger.

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Children with disabilities including children with sensory impairment, may be **more vulnerable to abuse than other children**. Safeguards are essentially the same as those for non-disabled children.

Where a child has communication or learning difficulties, **attention must be paid to the child's special needs and to ways of ascertaining his/her perception of events**. The child's wishes may be identified by use of non-verbal communication systems, interpreters or facilitators.

Particular attention needs to be paid to promoting **high standards of care** and raising awareness of the risks to children with disability in order to strengthen the capacity of children and their families to protect themselves.

Measures include:

- Helping children with disability make their wishes and feelings about their care and treatment known.
- Ensuring that all children with disability know how to raise concerns if they are worried or angry about something.
- They should have access to people with whom they can communicate.
- Children with communication difficulties should have a means of being heard available to them at all times.
- Commitment to and understanding of all children's safety and welfare needs among providers of services.
- Close contact with parents and carers and a culture of openness on the part of services.

AWARENESS OF ABUSE

Awareness is the key issue in both the detection and prevention of abuse. **A staff member, volunteer, parent or carer may become aware or suspicious of abuse of a child by:**

- Being told in confidence by the individual child.
- Being told by another person as hearsay or as a witness.
- Observing symptomatic behaviour.
- Observing outward signs of physical abuse/injury.

The abuse may:

- Have take place a long time ago – even in early childhood and the child may still be suffering the consequences.
- Be an on-going form of which takes place outside of ČOSIV – e.g. typically at home.
- Be a current or very recent abuse that has taken place within ČOSIV.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE SIGNS OF ABUSE

Physical Abuse

Possible indicators may include:

- Any visible injuries particularly not normal child-like bumps and scrapes.
- Children who find it painful to walk, sit down, to move their jaws or demonstrate other pain.
- Being furtive or secretive, or displaying uncharacteristic aggression or withdrawn behaviour.
- Compulsive eating or sudden loss of appetite.
- Having difficulty in staying awake or suddenly becoming un-coordinated.
- Giving confused or conflicting explanations of injuries.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE SIGNS OF ABUSE

Emotional Abuse

Possible indicators may include:

- Poor attachment relationship between the child and parent/carer.
- Parent/carer displaying unresponsive or neglectful behaviour towards the child or making negative comments about the child.
- Child demonstrating emotional indicators such as low self esteem, unhappiness, fear, distress or anxiety.
- Child demonstrating behavioural indicators such as attention seeking, opposing, withdrawing or insecurity.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE SIGNS OF ABUSE

Sexual Abuse

Possible indicators may include:

- Awkwardness in walking or sitting down.
- Tummy pains.
- Tiredness.
- Extreme variations in behaviour, such as anxiety, aggression or withdrawal.
- Sexually provocative behaviour or knowledge that is incompatible with the child's age and understanding.
- Drawings and/or written work which are sexually explicit.
- Direct disclosure – it is important to recognise that children have neither the experience nor the understanding to be able to make up stories about sexual assault.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE SIGNS OF ABUSE

Neglect

Possible indicators may include:

- Underweight or obese
- Unkempt dirty appearance, inadequate/unwashed clothes
- Hunger
- Listlessness
- Indiscriminate friendliness or poor social relationships
- Poor concentration
- Low self esteem

RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED ABUSE

No member of staff, volunteer, parent or carer should investigate reports of physical or sexual abuse him/herself. Alleged victims, perpetrators, those reporting abuse and others involved should not be interviewed beyond the point at which it is clear that there is an allegation. **Medical attention should be sought immediately for the child if required.**

Any individual to whom an allegation of child abuse is made should then:

Step 1: Limit any questioning to the minimum necessary to seek clarification only, strictly avoiding “leading” the child by making suggestions or asking questions that introduce their own ideas about what may have happened.

Step 2: Stop asking any more questions as soon as the child has disclosed that he/she believes that something abusive has happened to him/her or to someone else.

Step 3: Tell the child that the relevant designated Child Protection Representative will now be made aware of the issue.

RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED ABUSE

Step 4: Depending on the age of the child, ask the child what steps he/she would like taken to protect him/her now that an allegation has been made and assure him/her that ČOSIV will try to follow those wishes.

Step 5: Report the information immediately to the designated Child Protection Representative for that area. If the allegation or suspicion is about the designated person, the report should be made to Social Protection Office. If the volunteer or member of staff would prefer to speak to someone other than designated persons within ČOSIV, he/she should contact Social Protection Office directly. All contact details are as given on page 4 of this document.

Step 6: If the report has been made to a staff member or volunteer, inform the child's parents/carers unless there is a suspicion of their involvement.

Step 7: Complete a Record of Concern form and pass this to the designated Child Protection Representative, or relevant Authority if required. Records of Concern must be stored confidentially, in a secure place accessed only by a designated Child Protection Representative.

Additionally, any staff member, volunteer, parent or carer who is told indirectly of any incident or witnesses or suspects any form of child abuse must report the information immediately, as detailed in Step 5.

DOES AND DON'TS - DO

- Treat any allegation seriously.
- Display belief in what the child is telling you.
- Tell the child he/she is right to tell you.
- Reassure that he/she is not to blame.
- Be honest about who you have to tell and why.
- Take further action immediately.
- Write down everything said and what was done.
- Seek medical attention if necessary.
- Inform parents/carers unless there is suspicion of their involvement.

DOES AND DON'TS - DON'T

- Don't make promises you can't keep.
- Don't interrogate the child.
- Don't cast doubt on what the child tells you.
- Don't interrupt or change the subject.
- Don't say anything that makes the child feel responsible for the abuse.



PROCEDURES

2. Adopting child protection guidelines through a code of behavior for staff and volunteers

APPROPRIATE CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR

It is essential that children and young people involved with ČOSIV are:

- Valued and respected as individuals.
- Listened to.
- Involved in decision making as appropriate.
- Encouraged and praised as appropriate.

Staff members, volunteers, parents and carers should:

- Be aware of a visually impaired child's need for physical contact, but ensure that contact is appropriate and given only with the consent of the child or young person – in the case of restraining a child to prevent injury or comforting a distressed child, ensure physical contact is ceased at the earliest possible moment.
- Avoid initiating physical expressions of emotion such as kissing or hugging, but remember that a visually impaired child or young person may need to physically express emotion in these ways – if a child initiates such expressions, cease it at the earliest possible moment without causing the child to feel rejected.
- Avoid intrusive forms of play (i.e. tickling, horseplay) – if physical contact is offered from a child, cease it at the earliest possible moment without causing the child to feel rejected.

APPROPRIATE CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR

Staff members, volunteers, parents and carers should further:

- Not allow children and young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Ensure that at least two adults are present when supervising children or young people.
- Not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children, away from others – meetings with individual children or young people should take place as openly as possible. If privacy is required, the door should be left open and other staff or volunteers informed of the meeting.
- Avoid taking individual children on car journeys, however short – where this is unavoidable, it should be with the full knowledge and consent of parents/carers and a member of management.
- Not meet with children outside organised activities, unless it is with the knowledge and consent of parents and a member of management.
- Never do things of a personal nature for a child or young person that they can do themselves.
- Never let allegations a child or young person makes go without being addressed and recorded.

IMPERMISSIBLE CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR

The following forms of behavior between staff members or volunteers and children or young people **are not allowed under any circumstances:**

- Sexual conduct.
- Lending or borrowing of money or property.
- Giving or receiving gifts.
- Exclusive or secretive relationships.



PROCEDURES

3. Following the procedures for safeguarding children on trips

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TRIPS

Trips involving children and young people will normally also include parents and carers. However, it is important that the following procedures are adhered to in order to keep children and young people safe:

- Ensure children and young people are aware of how they are expected to behave.
- Gain written consent from parents/carers for children to participate in an outing, as well as a written statement of any specific needs or requirements for their child.
- Ensure at least one staff member or volunteer participating in the outing is trained in first aid and has access to first aid equipment.
- Ensure all those attending are aware of their roles and responsibilities and are appropriately qualified and experienced.

EXTERNAL PROVIDER

If using an activity centre or other external provider:

- Use reputable organisations which have in place any licences or accreditation required (some adventure activities require specific licences).
- Visit the centre beforehand wherever possible.
- Gain agreement from parents/carers and the children and young people on the trip on the activities to be undertaken.
- Ensure external providers have proper safety procedures in place (e.g. insurance, equipment/transport maintenance, health and safety policy, Child Protection Policy etc).
- Ensure the accommodation is suitable.
- All planned activities and trips must be appropriate for the group of children and/or young people participating.



PROCEDURES

4. Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers

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INFORMING CHILDREN

It is essential that **children and young people understand that any concerns they may have will be listened to and taken seriously.** It is also essential that parents and carers are aware of and understand the procedures ČOSIV has in place for maintaining the welfare of children and young people using its services.

ČOSIV management is responsible for ensuring that **relevant information is available to and exchanged** between all those involved in the operation of ČOSIV and its activities. Confidential information should only be shared on a need to know basis.



ACCESIBILITY FOR CHILDREN

Management and staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring children and young people have information about how and with whom they can share their concerns, complaints and anxieties.
- This information must be shared in a manner appropriate to the age of the child/young person.
- Ensuring all information is available in multiple formats including those for the blind and visually impaired.
- Ensuring parents and carers are aware of the nature of relationships with adults with whom their children form friendships.
- Publicising information to parents and carers about ČOSIV's activities, its Child Protection Policy and Procedures, and the name of the person(s) to contact in the event of concerns or complaints.
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers have the information required to deal with emergencies and child protection issues.



PROCEDURES

*5. Following carefully the procedures
for recruitment and selection of staff
and volunteers*

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RECRUITMENT OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

When a vacancy is identified, a job description or task/project brief must be drawn up which should identify the skills required for that post. The vacancy should be advertised as widely as possible through the most appropriate means.

All volunteers and staff, including temporary or casual workers, must be subject to **ČOSIV's selection and recruitment procedures as follows:**

- All candidates must complete an application form.
- The recruiting manager should verify the person's identity by his/her birth certificate, passport or other formal document, preferably something bearing their photograph.
- The recruiting manager should verify any qualifications stated on the application form.
- All suitable candidates must have an interview or meeting, with the recruiting manager and one other senior staff member.
- Any gaps in employment or inconsistencies in the candidate's history must be identified and reasons given.
- Written references should be taken up prior to the employment of the successful candidate, and verified by a telephone call.

RECRUITMENT OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

When a vacancy is identified, a job description or task/project brief must be drawn up which should identify the skills required for that post. The vacancy should be advertised as widely as possible through the most appropriate means.

- All successful candidates, including volunteers who may come into contact with children and young people, must be subject to Enhanced Disclosure through checks by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB).
- No unsupervised access to children is to be allowed until references have been reviewed and results from the CRB are obtained.
- Advice should be sought prior to recruiting someone with a criminal record or record of other offences.
- New members of staff or volunteers must undergo a supervised probationary period including a comprehensive induction which must cover the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.



PROCEDURES

6. Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training

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STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS AWARENESS

ČOSIV will ensure that **all staff and volunteers are well informed and supported**, by the following process:

Induction: As part of their general induction, new staff and volunteers will be familiarised with this Child Protection Policy document, as well as other policies such as Health and Safety. This may include training in child protection issues.

Probationary Period: The development and suitability of the employee or volunteer will be reviewed during the first six months of taking up the post.

Supervision and Support: Regular meetings, whether individual or on a group basis, will provide an opportunity for staff/volunteers to share concerns, anxieties or worries about their work or the environment. Meetings should also be an opportunity to identify areas of concern and/or training needs.

Specific training will be provided for all Designated Child Protection Representatives.



PROCEDURES

7. Monitoring and evaluation of Child Protection Policy

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MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF POLICY

The aim of monitoring and evaluating the Child Protection Policy is to **learn from practical case experiences**, which will contribute to inform policy reviews and changes to the Child Protection Policy.

Monitoring and evaluation will be done **annually** by checking whether the standards from the Child Protection Policy are implemented and whether safeguards are working. This will be done by carrying out a **survey among ČOSIV staff, interns and volunteers** on how the standards from the Child Protection Policy are being met, how effective they are and what needs improving.

Next to the overall monitoring and evaluation of the Child Protection Policy, **reactive monitoring** will take place, after incidences have occurred, which will contribute to a learning process for ČOSIV and if necessary changes to the Child Protection Policy or reporting procedures.

Čosiv Child Protection Policy is **living document** and will be revised again if necessary.



APPENDIX I: RECORD OF CONCERN

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APPENDIX I: RECORD OF CONCERN

Name of Child:

Age:

Child's Address:

Name of Parent/Carer: Telephone no:

Is the person making this report expressing his/her own concerns or passing on those of someone else?

What is said to have happened or what was seen?

When and where did it occur?

Has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?

Who else, if anyone, was involved and how?

What was said by those involved?

Were there any obvious signs, e.g. bruising, bleeding, changed behaviour?

Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser?

Have the child's parents been contacted?

Who else has been told about it and when?

Signed..... Date..... Print Name



APPENDIX II: GUIDELINES FOR CHILD PROTECTION REPRESENTATIVES

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APPENDIX 2: GUIDELINES FOR CHILD PROTECTION REPRESENTATIVES

The responsibilities of a designated Child Protection Representative are:

1. To ensure that ČOSIV's Child Protection Policy and Procedures are followed.
2. To undertake training in the recognition and investigation of child abuse.
3. To develop knowledge of the procedures involved in reporting abuse.
4. To make this knowledge available to all staff, volunteers, parents, carers and children as appropriate.
5. To manage the process of referring cases or suspected cases of abuse to Social Services by:
6. Ensuring all staff, volunteers, parents, carers and children know who is the designated Child Protection (CP) Representative
7. Ensuring that all staff, volunteers, parents, carers and children know that concerns about abuse or possible abuse must be brought to the designated CP Representative or in his/her absence, the most senior member of staff.
8. Deciding, after discussion with the relevant parties, if the case should be referred or not, or if further clarification should be sought from the parents/carers at any point.
9. Ensuring decisions and facts are recorded using a Record of Concern.
10. Reporting the case to Social Services, confirming the referral in writing under confidential cover
11. To ensure all staff and volunteers undergo basic Child Protection awareness training as appropriate.
12. To be a contact point for external agencies needing to contact ČOSIV about child protection matters.
13. To ensure written records are stored securely with access available to designated people only.
14. To ensure ČOSIV recruitment procedures are followed and CRB Enhanced Disclosures are obtained for all new staff and volunteers.
15. To identify the need for support that any employee or volunteer may have when involved in an abuse case and to liaise with necessary parties to establish how this support can be offered.

 **ČOSIV**

