



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY 2021

Policy Guidelines, Principles and Procedures on Child Protection at Science and Research Centre Koper

History of changes

Version	Publication date	Change
1.0	2. 11. 2021	Initial version
2.0	3.4.2023	Part II: point 11 Part III: point 14 Part IV: point 16 , point 18 Part V: point 23

PREAMBLE

The Science and Research Centre Koper (hereinafter SRC Koper) is determined to ensure that all necessary measures are taken to protect the safety and well-being of children who are on SRC Koper premises, and who participate in the programs and activities (research activities, workshops, and trainings) associated with SRC Koper. The SRC Koper is entirely dedicated to promoting, protecting and respecting the rights of the child, therefore this policy establishes the SRC Koper's position, role and responsibilities and clarifies what is expected from everybody involved in its activities.

The SRC Koper recognizes that it is important to understand the feelings of involved children, therefore every child who participates and/or is otherwise involved in the SRC Koper's activities have a right to participate in a comfortable and safe environment and to be protected from harm and/or any other impairment and/or damage. This is the responsibility of every adult involved in the SRC Koper activities.

Through its work, SRC Koper aligns with the *EU Strategy for the rights of the child* and promotes actions to support children's participation in political and democratic life, their economic and social inclusion, their health and educational rights, to provide equal opportunities for all children, to prevent violence against children and to protect them from violence, and to promote a justice system that responds to the needs of children. In doing so, SRC Koper adheres to the principles from the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*, the *Council of Europe Convention on Human Rights*, the *Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse* (Lanzarote Convention) and all other relevant international and national instruments on human rights and the rights of the child. Consequently, SRC Koper expects all adults involved in the SRC Koper to fully encompass and implement the principles enshrined therein.

This policy sets out the basic principles on child protection and specifically addresses all aspects of the professional lives of employees, interns, volunteers, collaborators, partners and associates working at and/or with ZRS Koper, both inside and outside its premises.

PART I: GENERAL EXPLANATIONS

1. According to the *United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which defines as a child any person who has not reached the age of 18 years, the present policy defines as a child any person under the age of eighteen years.
2. This policy has been developed to ensure the highest standards of professional behavior and personal practice ensuring no harm occurs in any situation to children during their involvement in any SRC Koper research or other activities.

3. This Child Protection Policy applies to all SRC Koper activities involving children and to all SRC Koper staff, volunteers, interns, external collaborators, partners and associates of the SRC Koper and to contractors engaged by the institution, who may come into contact with children in course of their work.
4. The SRC Koper is fully committed to promoting, protecting, and respecting the rights of the child. All adults involved in its activities must fully respect, protect and promote these rights.
5. Child abuse is a term used to describe the ways in which children are harmed, usually by adults and often by people they know and trust. It refers to the damage **done to a child's physical or mental health. The SRC Koper expects all persons** involved in its activities to fully understand and acquaint themselves with this term.
6. The SRC Koper is determined to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to protect children from harm and/or other impairment and/or damage. All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately following the ZRS Koper's policies and guidelines and other relevant laws.

PART II: PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

7. SRC Koper values and treats every child without discrimination of any kind, regardless of their age, race, color, sex, language, religion, opinions, national, ethnic, or social origin, language, gender identity or sexual orientation, property, disability, or other status.
8. The SRC Koper values children and their protection from harm and abuse. The SRC Koper will take all necessary action to prevent any harm from being done against children and to report abuse against children.
9. This policy determines the best interest of the child as the key principle to be considered in all activities SRC Koper conducts with or for children.
10. SRC Koper promotes the right of children to be heard and to share their views and supports this approach in its activities.
11. The SRC Koper will give clear instructions to its staff, volunteers, interns, external collaborators, partners and associates in situations that may be stressful for all persons, involved in its activities, including children.

PART III: PROTECTION CODE OF CONDUCT

12. SRC Koper is committed to designing and conducting research and other activities that are safe for children. Risk assessments and mitigation strategies are therefore carried out and developed accordingly with designing projects and related activities.

13. All SRC Koper`s external collaborators and associates will be given the Child Protection Policy and will be requested to sign it if during their work for SRC Koper may encounter children.

14. Data privacy and protection issues at SRC Koper is carried out in accordance with relevant national and EU legislation (in particular the *General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679*). In all research including children where personal data about children need to be collected, written informed consent will be obtained from their parents/legal guardians. Informed consent means that children or their parents/legal guardians and whenever it is possible to include also the consent of the child, are informed about how SRC Koper may use the information, data, or images/movies and that they are under no obligation to consent to the use. The data will only be collected and used for the specific purposes for which it is provided.

15. SRC Koper establishes and sustains proper hiring of personnel who may be involved in working with children in the fulfilment of their duties, including completed applications, reference checks and criminal background checks according to national legislation (Criminal Procedure Act, Article 143.a).

PART IV: REPORTING PROCEDURES

16. All SRC Koper staff, volunteers, interns, external collaborators, partners and associates must report any child abuse concerns they have or suspect to their supervisor/head of their institute or infrastructural unit. Staff/volunteers will be instructed to report anything they notice regarding a gap between protocols and practices.

17. SRC Koper reserves the right to apply the following reference check procedures to any candidate applying for a post:

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

18. If someone discloses that he/she is being abused, SRC Koper's staff, volunteers, interns, external collaborators, partners and associates upon receiving the information, must:

- Respond calmly.
- Reassure the child that telling was the right thing to do and that they are not to blame and take what the child says seriously.
- Be careful not to put words in **the child's mouth**; the easiest way to avoid this is to ask questions.
- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Inform the child what are you going to do next.
- Make a full and written record of what has been said as soon as possible and do not delay in passing on the information.

19. The report has to include:

- The known details of the child, including name, date of birth, address, and contact numbers if possible.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation, including date, time, specific factors, and other relevant information.
- A clear distinction between a fact, opinion, or hearsay.
- A description of any visible injuries. Also, any indirect signs, such as behavioral changes.
- Details of any witnesses to the incidents.
- **The child's account**, if possible, of what happened and how the injuries occurred.
- Accounts from others, including colleagues and parents.

20. Any action to be taken will be determined by the urgency and seriousness of **the circumstances. Where there are serious concerns to the child's safety**, act immediately.

21. If member of SRC Koper staff is working on an outreach project or a project **that takes place in school or in a children's centre then he/she must discuss the matter** with a representative from the school or centre e.g., the class teacher, who will then take the matter to the relevant member of staff, besides it must be ensured that supervisor at the SRC Koper is also informed.

22. If the personal safety of the child is immediately threatened, urgent action must be taken. In most cases, this will mean contacting the competent authorities (Public Prosecutor for Minors, competent Police Departments and competent Social Services). A List of direct contact services is also provided in Annex 1.

PART V: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

23. staff, volunteers, interns, external collaborators, partners and associates working with children, will be given a copy of this policy, and this policy will be also available in electronic form on the SRC Koper website.

24. The SRC Koper states that all provisions of this policy are material and that all persons involved in the SRC Koper`s activities must comply with them.

25. The Ethical Commission at SRC Koper will review the Child Protection Policy at least once a year.

Prof. dr. Rado Pišot, director

ANNEX 1: National contact services

[Pristojni centri za socialno delo](#)

[Društvo SOS telefon za ženske in otroke – žrtve nasilja](#)

[Društvo za nenasilno komunikacijo](#)

[Društvo ključ](#)

[TOM Telefon za otroke in mladostnike](#)