



RESEARCH &
EXPERTISE

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Mission and Vision

The foundation and strength of our college is the appreciation for each employee, student and partner as unique links in the whole. As an organization, we are committed to a pleasant and inspiring working and learning environment, in which respect for others is central. In our organisation's mission, safeguarding and protecting children is key. Respect and appreciation for others can only be achieved when the privacy, opinion and safety of the children we work with, are respected.

Child Protection Principles and Values

Awareness: UCLL Research & Expertise will fully commit to raising awareness on its child protection policy at all levels of the organisation.

Participation: implementation and evaluation of the policy at a structural level can only be achieved when all departments and organisation members have a voice.

Privacy: throughout the policy, privacy is the starting point. Protecting the privacy of all parties involved is at the core of each action and procedure.

The need for a Child Protection Policy at UCLL Research & Expertise

As a higher education institute, organising educational and pedagogical activities, such as workshops, courses or research activities, that directly involve children, is at the core business. Therefore, in order to build child-safe projects and programmes, a Child Protection Policy that stipulates how staff members and students can safeguard children they work with, is indispensable. It will help ensure that children can participate safely in the activities, as well as it protects staff and students from being a risk to children. Moreover, a policy that outlines reporting procedures and internal safeguarding procedures, will protect the organisation's reputation, as it will be less vulnerable to complaints and accusations.

Scope of the Child Protection Policy

UCLL's Child Protection Policy has both an internal and external reach. On an internal level, all board members, staff members, interns, students and volunteers are asked to comply with and adhere to the policy, by signing their employee, internship or volunteering contract and the Informed Consent (ANNEX I). External partners are informed about UCLL's policy, and when working directly with children, are also asked to sign the Informed Consent and UCLL's data protection policy as part of the partnership agreement.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Management

Implementation and monitoring of the Child Protection Policy falls under the responsibility of Social Ethics Committee (SMEC) of the KU Leuven, the associated university of UCLL, as well as UCLL's Data Protection Officer. The SMEC is composed of ethics experts from each department in the Human Sciences at KU Leuven. The board evaluates each research project on different levels, going from data protection to risk mitigation measures. The SMEC also offers support and information to all staff concerning child protection. Legal cases and issues and sensitive information are dealt with by this department, and names and information of the parties involved are known and protected only by them,

and only shared with the parties involved. Staff members who witness or are informed about a violation of the CPP, are urged to send the report form (ANNEX II) directly to the SMEC Department at smec@kuleuven.be. Legal cases and issues that specifically fall under data protection or privacy, are assigned to the Data Protection Officer. Any complaints or incidents can be addressed to privacy@ucll.be.

Staff

Each staff member working for UCLL Research & Expertise is required to present a document that states they have no criminal record. Staff members working with children are at all times obligated to adhere to the procedures concerning data protection and privacy stipulated in their employment contract. Each staff member carrying out research, will also sign an Informed Consent (ANNEX I) that describes how they will ensure a safe space for participants and their privacy and data will be protected.

Students

Students involved in research projects with direct contact with children, are asked to sign a student contract that includes UCLL's Data Protection and Privacy Policy, as well as a Code of Conduct that is in line with UCLL's mission and Child Protection Policy principles. Before the start of the research, they will also sign the Informed Consent. Training on the principles of the Child Protection Policy is part of their learning programme.

DEFINITIONS

General definitions

Child: a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Child Protection: child protection is a broad term to describe philosophies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm.

Direct contact with children: being in the physical presence of a child/children in the context of UCLL's work, whether contact is occasional or regular, short or long-term.

Indirect contact with children: having access to information on children in the context of UCLL's activities, such as children's names, locations (addresses of individuals or projects), photographs and case studies.

Definitions of harm

Staff and students working directly with children should be able to detect signs of abuse and violence. A good understanding of 'harm' to children is therefore imperative. The following definitions according to the European Commission can serve as a guideline in defining harm to children.

Physical abuse: actual or potential physical harm perpetrated by another person, adult or child. It may involve hitting, shaking, poisoning, drowning and burning. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Sexual abuse: forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities that he or she does not fully understand and has little choice in consenting to. This may include, but is not limited to, rape, oral sex, penetration, or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching. It may also include involving children in looking at, or producing sexual images, watching sexual activities and encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Child sexual exploitation: a form of sexual abuse that involves children being engaged in any sexual activity in exchange for money, gifts, food, accommodation, affection, status, or anything else that they

or their family needs. It usually involves a child being manipulated or coerced, which may involve befriending children, gaining their trust, and subjecting them to drugs and alcohol. The abusive relationship between victim and perpetrator involves an imbalance of power where the victim's options are limited. It is a form of abuse that can be misunderstood by children and adults as consensual. Child sexual exploitation manifests in different ways. It can involve an older perpetrator exercising financial, emotional or physical control over a young person. It can involve peers manipulating or forcing victims into sexual activity, sometimes within gangs and in gang-affected neighbourhoods. It may also involve opportunistic or organised networks of perpetrators who profit financially from trafficking young victims between different locations to engage in sexual activity with multiple men.

Neglect and negligent treatment: allowing for context, resources and circumstances, neglect and negligent treatment refers to a persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in serious impairment of a child's healthy physical, spiritual, moral and mental development. It includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm and provide for nutrition, shelter and safe living/working conditions. It may also involve maternal neglect during pregnancy as a result of drug or alcohol misuse and the neglect and ill treatment of a disabled child.

Emotional abuse: persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts on a child's emotional development. Emotionally abusive acts include restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, bullying (including cyber bullying), and threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

Commercial exploitation: exploiting a child in work or other activities for the benefit of others and to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. It includes, but is not limited to, child labour.

CODE OF CONDUCT

This code of conduct stipulates a list of guidelines that all staff and students working with children should follow. UCLL staff members and students who agree to UCLL's mission and data protection policy, also agree to comply with these guidelines. The code of conduct is also included as guidelines for conducting research in the Informed Consent, signed by all researchers working with children in a research project.

All staff working with children should:

- be informed about the definitions and signs of child abuse and exploitation
- be able to recognise signs of abuse and to report suspect behaviour
- know where to report abuse
- respect authority and procedures
- respect basic rights of others and treat others with dignity and respect
- treat all children equally
- impose a high standard of personal professional behaviour on themselves
- be aware of high risk situations between peers
- be informed about the way in which language, actions and relations with children can be interpreted by others
- respect and encourage children's opinions and ideas
- respect the confidentiality of sensitive information of children
- ask children and their parent/guardian for consent to photograph, film or ask for personal information
- be aware of how and when to use age and child appropriate communication
- inform children about the scope, purpose and follow up of the activities they take part in

All staff working with children should NOT:

- engage in sexual activities with children
- discriminate against children, humiliate, belittle or degrade them (everything that falls under emotional abuse)
- hit or physically attack children
- be alone with a child in circumstances that could be perceived as suspicious by others – this also counts for online situations such as an online meeting or call (ideally, an adult is always involved)
- let children behave in a sexually provocative way with each other
- kiss, hug or grab a child in an inappropriate manner or culturally insensitive way
- encourage inappropriate behaviour or relationships, or encourage a child's crush
- take pictures or film or ask for personal information when this is not necessary for an activity
- take pictures or film or ask for personal information without consent, when this is necessary for an activity
- use contact information for other purposes than activities organised by UCLL
- publish information (e.g. full name or school) about a child online after obtaining consent for pictures or film

COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA GUIDELINES

Informed Consent

Each person working with children should always ask for consent when taking pictures, videos, or asking for personal information. The Informed Consent needs to be signed by the child and a parent or legal guardian if the child is under 16. UCLL has drawn up a template for an Informed Consent, which has been added in the annexes. This document includes reference addresses for the Ethics Commission and the Data Protection Officer.

Interviewing children

When interviewing children, for example in the scope of research, always ask to sign the informed consent. Next, make sure there is extra support that the children can rely on in a difficult situation. Always mention that there is the possibility to say no – to signing the consent form, or to participate in certain parts of the interview. It is also worth noting that sufficient attention should be paid to gender: boys and girls might have different needs when talking about a certain topic. Lastly, each interviewer or researcher should respect the right to information: interviewees have the right to know what you will do with notes or recordings.

External journalists, photographers or film crews

If the organisation invites external individuals who photograph, interview or film children, these individuals are also required to sign the Informed Consent with code of conduct and GDPR guidelines. They cannot have contact with children without supervision. Through a separate consent form, children, parents and guardians are informed about how the images will be used.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

The safety of the child is always the starting point when reporting violations of the Child Protection Policy. UCLL foresees a standard reporting form. All violations of the Child Protection Policy should immediately be reported to the SMEC department at smec@kuleuven.be, using this form.

For incidents where a staff member or anyone related to UCLL violates the Child Protection Policy, the internal reporting procedure is followed. In each case, the organisation decides whether the incident needs to be reported to the authorities.

As part of their policy, UCLL staff members make sure that all activities with children can take place in a safe environment. This encompasses clear group rules, providing information about a support network

to report incidents to or to find personal support, and signing an Informed Consent in activities with sensitive information or topics.

In the case of an external incident, where there is an accusation of an incident with someone outside of the organisation, a different procedure is followed. The department that is concerned with Child Protection will store/list relevant contact details for child protection services, local services department, policy, emergency medical help and help lines that are readily available and easily accessible. The department contacts the relevant service and informs them about the incident, who in turn will decide to contact the family. UCLL does not have the responsibility to contact the family directly.

For each incident, a report is filed that documents the details of the case. An assessment is made in order to document the specific needs of the child.

INTERNAL SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

When a complaint or accusation of violation of the policy is filed, the procedure is closely monitored by the Child Protection Department at the SMEC. The complaint and the incident are investigated by documenting all the details of the incident and involving all necessary parties to come to a complete and correct overview of the situation. Based on the investigation, the department decides on the severity of the case and the measures or action to be taken. Depending on the severity of the case, the behaviour of the party involved will be discussed, or external services will be involved in order to take action. Criminal offences will be reported to the police and can result in an investigation and conviction.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Implementation

The SMEC board checks if UCLL's researchers adhere to the policy and procedures for reporting and safeguarding are followed. This is achieved by reviewing each research project and its ethical procedures at the start of the project, and by monitoring the research process carefully in terms of ethical and data protection guidelines.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the content of the Child Protection Policy will take place regularly, by the HR department and the legal department of UCLL. A focus group with representatives from all departments can also contribute to a continual improvement of the policy.

SIGNATURE



Pieter Willems
Director Research

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Informed Consent

Geïnfomeerde Toestemming Deelname impact- & procesevaluatie

Onderzoeksproject: --

Hoofdonderzoeker Naam: --

e-mail: --

telefoonnummer: --

Duur onderzoek: --

U bent uitgenodigd om deel te nemen aan een onderzoekstudie uitgevoerd binnen UC Leuven-Limburg. Dit document voorziet u van alle nodige informatie over de studie zodat u kan beslissen al dan niet hieraan deel te nemen. Om deze beslissing te nemen wordt u verzocht dit document grondig door te nemen en aanvullende vragen te stellen aan de onderzoeker. Indien u bereid bent om deel te nemen aan de hieronder beschreven studie, gelieve het geïnfomeerd toestemmingsformulier te ondertekenen.

Beschrijving van het onderzoek

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Wat wordt er van u verwacht binnen deze studie?

Bent u leerling van een deelnemende school, tussen de 14 en 16 jaar, en bereid vrijwillig deel te nemen aan het onderzoek, dan willen we u vragen om:

- dit formulier te ondertekenen
- een vragenlijst te beantwoorden
- deel te nemen aan een focusgroep

Wat zijn de risico's voor de deelnemer?

Het kan voor de deelnemers tijdens de focusgroep of het invullen van de vragenlijsten moeilijk zijn om ervaringen te delen over het thema. De onderwerpen kunnen gevoelig zijn voor de deelnemers.

Wie kan ik contacteren voor verdere informatie?

Je kan de onderzoeker of de begeleider altijd vragen stellen of vertellen over je bezorgdheden. Ook na deelname kan je bij de onderzoeker terecht met vragen over de onderzoeksresultaten of bezorgdheden over het gebruik van je gegevens. Meer informatie over deze rechten vind je in de privacyverklaring van de hogeschool: <https://www.ucll.be/privacyverklaring>. Voor vragen of klachten over persoonlijke gegevens of privacy: Data Protection Officer van UC Leuven-Limburg via privacy@ucll.be

Voor andere vragen of informatie rond geweld kan je altijd terecht bij een van de volgende diensten: het CLB op school, het JAC in uw buurt of het algemeen nummer 1712.

Voor klachten of andere bezorgdheden over ethische aspecten van dit onderzoek kan je contact opnemen met de sociaal-maatschappelijke ethische commissie van KU Leuven: smec@kuleuven.be

Mag ik van mening veranderen over mijn deelname aan de studie?

Uw deelname aan het onderzoek is vrijwillig. U heeft steeds het recht om de deelname aan het onderzoek op ieder moment stop te zetten.

Wordt de informatie vertrouwelijk behandeld?

Alle documenten met persoonlijke gegevens worden opgeborgen in een veilige omgeving in een afsluitbare onderzoeksruimte binnen UCLL, enkel toegankelijk voor UCLL medewerkers. De onderzoekmedewerkers van UC Leuven-Limburg verbinden zich ertoe deze informatie, afgezien van de betrokkene projectpartners, niet te delen met anderen. Al de onderzoeksmedewerkers hebben in het arbeidscontract een geheimhoudingsbeding onderschreven, dat zorgt voor de bescherming van vertrouwelijke gegevens.

Alle gegevens en/of resultaten op de computer wordt opgeslagen op een beveiligde UCLL-server. Technische beveiligingsmaatregelen (via paswoorden) zorgen ervoor dat de gegevens enkel toegankelijk zijn voor de onderzoekmedewerkers. De data worden bijgehouden zolang deze nodig zijn om het onderzoek uit te voeren. Daarna worden de gegevens gewist.

De resultaten van dit onderzoek kunnen gebruikt worden voor wetenschappelijke doeleinden en mogen gepubliceerd worden. Persoonlijke gegevens worden daarbij niet gepubliceerd, anonimiteit en de vertrouwelijkheid van de gegevens wordt in elk stadium van het onderzoek gewaarborgd.

Akkoordverklaring

DEELNEMER

Ik, ondertekende deelnemer, verklaar hierbij dat ik, als deelnemer aan het onderzoek '—'

- (1) vrijwillig deelneem aan het onderzoek;
- (2) begrijp wat er van mij verwacht wordt tijdens dit onderzoek
- (3) toestemming geef voor een observatie door onderzoekers van de UC Leuven-Limburg en een geluidsopname tijdens gesprekken
- (4) op elk ogenblik me de mogelijkheid geboden wordt om bijkomende informatie te verkrijgen en vragen te stellen
- (5) het recht heb om de deelname op elk moment stop te zetten.
- (6) op de hoogte ben dat de resultaten van dit onderzoek gebruikt kunnen worden voor wetenschappelijke doeleinden en gepubliceerd mogen worden.
- (7) toestemming geef voor het gebruik van geanonimiseerde uitspraken

Gelezen en goedgekeurd te(plaats) op(datum)

Naam deelnemer

Handtekening deelnemer

Naam ouder

Handtekening ouder

ONDERZOEKER

Ik, ondertekende onderzoeker verklaar hierbij dat ik de deelnemer voorzien heb van de nodige informatie over de studie 'Youth For Love'. Ik verklaar hiermee dat de informatie in dit toestemmingsformulier werd opgesteld naar best vermogen, en dat de stand van kennis wordt meegedeeld op het ogenblik van wijzigingen in het protocol.

_____(datum)

Naam onderzoeker

Handtekening onderzoeker

Rapporteringsformulier Child Protection Policy

Gelieve dit formulier te gebruiken bij elk vermoeden van risico voor een kind, zij het op fysiek of psychisch vlak. Het formulier vermeldt de details van het incident, zodat de juiste maatregelen genomen kunnen worden. Bezorg het ingevulde formulier zo snel mogelijk aan de SMEC, via smec@kuleuven.be. Bezorg dit formulier ook enkel aan deze bevoegde persoon, om de vertrouwelijkheid en de bescherming van de privacy te garanderen.

Info werknemer

Naam: _____

Contactgegevens: _____

Functie: _____

Relatie met het kind: _____

Info kind

Naam: _____

Geslacht: _____

Leeftijd: _____

Adres: _____

Behandeling (indien van toepassing): _____

Info incident

Gelieve een korte beschrijving van het incident te geven: handelingen, betrokkenen, reactie van het kind, ...

Tijd van het incident: _____

Locatie van het incident: _____

Vermoedelijke dader: _____

Waren er andere kinderen betrokken bij het incident? _____

Lopen andere kinderen een risico op gevaar? _____

Actie ondernomen door jou:

Datum: __ / __ / __

Handtekening: _____