

Child Protection Policy

Center for Gender Equality and History



September 2024



1. Introduction

The Center for Gender Equality and History (KIIF) is committed to promoting a culture of respect, inclusion, and equality for all individuals, including children. This Child Protection Policy outlines KIIF's commitment to ensuring the safety, well-being, and rights of children involved in or affected by its activities. The policy aligns with the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). It serves as a guiding framework for all KIIF staff, associates, volunteers, interns, and Members of the Board that are involved, as part of their work in KIIF, in activities which include and/or affect children.

2. Policy Statement

KIIF is dedicated to fostering a culture of respect, inclusion, and equality. We aim to ensure that all individuals—be they young adults or children—have access to safe spaces regardless of gender, ability, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, place of origin, or socio-economic status. KIIF recognizes that specific groups, including young women and men, girls and boys, LGBTQI+ persons, individuals with disabilities, those with migrant backgrounds, and members of marginalized communities, are disproportionately impacted by bias, stereotypes, and resulting social inequalities. We are committed to taking active steps to ensure equal and unhindered access to our work by all and to provide a secure environment that promotes meaningful participation.

3. Organisation's Profile

The Center for Gender Equality and History (KIIF) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization founded in 2017 with a mission to promote gender equality through scientific research and knowledge-based actions. Initially emerging in 2015 as a grassroots initiative, KIIF focused on combating gender-based discrimination by exploring and understanding the historical roots of patriarchy, homophobia, and gender hierarchies. Over time, the organization has evolved into a formal NGO with a strong commitment to inclusion, equality, and the defense of human rights for all, including children. Governed by a nine-member administrative Board, KIIF engages in a wide range of activities, including educational programs, research, advocacy, policy recommendations, and community empowerment.

4. General Rules for Child Protection

4.1. COMMITMENT TO QUALITY EDUCATION



KIIF recognises the right of every child to receive a quality education. To support this, KIIF provides activities and educational materials that:

- Foster the development of critical and historical thinking, particularly regarding social structures and gender relations.
- Help children develop their talents to reach their fullest potential by removing gender-related obstacles and examining and questioning gender stereotypes and biases that limit their natural growth.
- Promote respect for human rights and gender equality.
- Inspire a love for peace, equality, and acceptance.
- Cultivate empathy and the ability to form friendships with all people, free from discrimination.
- Encourage respect for both their own and other cultures while maintaining a healthy critical perspective.
- Instill a sense of care and responsibility for the environment.

4.2. COMMITMENT TO NON-DISCRIMINATION

KIIF is committed to ensuring and respecting the rights of every child, free from discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender, language, religion, national or ethnic origin, disability, or socio-economic class. Specific measures include:

- **Accessibility:** Ensuring venues are accommodating for children with disabilities.
- **Dietary Considerations:** KIIF respects and accommodates dietary restrictions due to religious beliefs when providing food and beverages, ensuring that all children feel included and respected.
- **Financial Accessibility:** KIIF offers its workshops, trainings, and meetings for free, allowing children from lower socio-economic backgrounds to participate without any financial barriers.
- **Language Inclusivity:** KIIF provides workshops, trainings, and meetings in multiple languages, such as English, Greek, and Turkish, to ensure that children from different communities, including the Turkish-Cypriot community, can participate.



4.3. COMMITMENT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

KIIF fosters an environment where children are empowered to freely express their opinions and views, especially on matters that directly affect them. The organization places great importance on respecting and giving appropriate consideration to these perspectives, always taking into account the children's age and maturity levels.

To achieve this, KIIF takes deliberate steps to create safe and inclusive spaces where children can openly and respectfully share their thoughts during its educational, research, and other activities. These environments are designed to ensure that every child feels appreciated, heard, and valued, promoting active participation and confidence in expressing themselves.

Through this approach, KIIF not only acknowledges the importance of children's voices but also supports their development into engaged and thoughtful individuals who are comfortable contributing to discussions and decisions that impact their lives.

4.4. COMMITMENT TO DECISION-MAKING AND AGENCY

KIIF is committed to fostering children's agency and empowering them to participate in decision-making processes appropriate to their age and maturity levels through:

- **Interactive, Child-Centered Activities:** Offering educational workshops, activities, and resources that are participatory and centered around the needs and perspectives of children.
- **Involvement in Projects:** Actively involving children in various age-appropriate stages of activities and projects, from project development to implementation and dissemination. This includes research projects and educational activities, and other organizational work where children can contribute meaningfully.
- **Promotion of Democratic Participation:** Advocating for children's rights to participate in decision-making processes.

4.5. COMMITMENT TO ACCESS TO INFORMATION

KIIF recognizes the importance of making content and information accessible to children in a manner that is tailored to their age and developmental needs. This

approach not only supports their learning and effective use of relevant knowledge and tools but also upholds their right to be informed through diverse media and sources, empowering them to form their own opinions. Additionally, it fosters transparency by clearly communicating the organization's rules, procedures, and processes to children.

To uphold this commitment, KIIF:

- Publishes a Child-Friendly Version of its Child Protection Policy: KIIF is currently in the process of creating and publishing a brief, child-friendly summary of the CPP which will be available online on KIIF's website.
- Creates Age-Appropriate Materials: Develops age-appropriate materials and child-friendly versions of announcements, guidelines, and educational resources whenever appropriate, ensuring that communications are accessible to children.
- Maintains an Open Access Policy: Follows an open access policy for its [publications](#), ensuring they are free and accessible online. Additionally, KIIF provides its activities and educational workshops free of charge, making them accessible to all children, regardless of socio-economic background.

4.6. COMMITMENT TO PRIVACY



KIIF acknowledges that children have the right to privacy and takes deliberate measures to protect them from exposure that could harm their reputation or safety. This includes:

- Protection of Identity: Avoiding the sharing of information that could identify a child or their location.
- Secure Handling of Information: Storing children's information in secured files accessible only by authorized staff.
- Respectful Representation: KIIF ensures that any images of children used in its materials portray them in a respectful and appropriate manner, avoiding any depiction that could cause shame or embarrassment.
- Obtaining Consent: Securing informed consent from children and their parents/guardians for participation in any activity and/or media use.

4.7. COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO PLAY



KIIF acknowledges that children have a fundamental right to play. To honor this right, KIIF ensures:

- **Incorporation of Play in Activities:** KIIF workshops, trainings, and meetings include ample time for recreation, allowing children to explore their creativity, develop their talents, and engage in play as an essential part of their learning experience.
- **Advocacy for Play-Based Education:** Promoting play-based, child-centered approaches in the educational system of Cyprus.

4.8. COMMITMENT TO NON-VIOLENCE



KIIF recognizes that children are particularly vulnerable to various forms of violence, including physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. It also acknowledges that children can be victims, witnesses, and even perpetrators of violence in various settings, including their homes, schools, extracurricular activities, and both offline and online environments. Understanding that no violence against children is justifiable or acceptable, KIIF is committed to addressing such issues and promoting a culture of zero-tolerance for violence against children.

To uphold this commitment, KIIF has implemented the following measures:

- **Child Protection Policy:** KIIF has introduced the present Child Protection Policy and requires all staff, associates, volunteers, interns, and members of the Board of Directors to read and sign the document, acknowledging their commitment to non-violence.
- **Zero-Tolerance for Violence:** KIIF makes it clear to all stakeholders that the organization, including its staff, associates, volunteers, interns, members, and Board of Directors, is committed to practicing non-violence. Any behavior that deviates from this principle will result in disciplinary measures or removal from the organization.
- **Culture of Peace and Non-Violence:** KIIF is dedicated to cultivating a culture of peace and non-violence in all aspects of its work. The organization is particularly conscious of embodying non-violence in communication, interactions, and overall behavior. This principle is integrated into the methodology and content of its educational activities, the organization's overall approach, and the language used in publications and public speaking.

5. Staff, associates, volunteers, and interns' commitments

All KIIF staff, associates, volunteers, and interns commit to:

- **Awareness and Compliance:** Understanding and following relevant child protection laws.
- **Informing Children of Their Rights:** Clearly communicating children's rights in an age-appropriate language.
- **Obtaining Consent:** Securing informed consent from children and their parents/guardians for participation in any activity and/or media use. This includes seeking informed consent from the children themselves and their parents/guardians before taking photos, videos or recordings of a child. Inform the children and their parents/guardians a) how their photos, videos or recording will be used, for what purpose, and via what platforms will they be published, b) where and for how long their photos, videos or recordings will be stored, c) that their consent to be photographed, videoed or recorded is not required for their participation in KIIF's activities, and d) that they can withdraw their consent at any time.
- **Upholding the Two-Adult Rule:** Staff/associates/volunteers/interns should always be accompanied by another member of staff or another responsible adult when working with children. Adults should avoid being alone or out of the sight of another adult when working with a child.
- **Maintaining Professional Boundaries:** Avoiding personal contact with children outside of KIIF's work.
- **Using Organizational Communication Channels:** Communicating with children must happen via official KIIF channels only (i.e. KIIF email and/or KIIF facebook/messenger). Staff/associates/volunteers/interns should avoid the use of their personal email, phone, or social media to communicate with children as part of KIIF's work. When direct communication for logistical matters is necessary the contact must be made with the parent/guardian/teacher instead of the child.
- **Promoting Non-Violence and Non-Discrimination:** Creating a safe environment for the children and making sure that they do not feel threatened or frightened. For this, staff/associates/volunteers/interns should not allow children to be bullied or humiliated by their peers. They should also use language that is age appropriate and does not insult children on the basis of their race, culture, gender, disability, religion, sexuality, or any other ground.
- **Avoiding Unhealthy Attachments:** Being aware of the existence of power dynamics between adults and children, and avoiding inappropriate

relationships with children. Children are vulnerable individuals that can easily grow attached to adults in an unhealthy or inappropriate way. Staff/associates/volunteers/interns should therefore not encourage non-appropriate attachment or show favouritism.

- **Reporting Concerns:** Reporting any suspicions or cases of child abuse to the Child Protection Designated Person (see Chapter 6 of this policy). When appropriate, providing the child with contact information with regards to seeking help and reporting incidents (see Chapter 6.5. of this Policy).

6. Reporting and Handling of Concerns and Incidents

6.1. REPORTS OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

KIIF is deeply committed to ensuring the safety and protection of all children involved in its activities. If a child reports abuse, or if abuse is suspected, all KIIF staff, associates, volunteers, and interns must:

- **Listen to the child carefully:** Provide a supportive and attentive environment for the child to share their experience.
- **Acknowledge the child's courage:** Reassure the child that speaking up was the right thing to do and that their concerns are taken seriously.
- **Avoid promises of secrecy:** Explain that while confidentiality will be maintained as much as possible, the information shared cannot be kept entirely secret due to the need for appropriate action.
- **Keep the child informed:** Clearly communicate the steps that will be taken following the report to ensure the child feels supported and aware of the process.
- **Report the incident:** Immediately report the incident to the Child Protection Designated Person. A detailed report must be made and handed out to the Designated Person including facts, the child's account, and pertinent details such as dates, locations, and names.

6.2. ACCOUNTABILITY AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

If an allegation of child abuse is made against a KIIF staff member, associate, volunteer, or intern:

- The individual will be suspended pending the outcome of an independent investigation conducted by a three-person committee appointed by the

Board of Directors. The committee members will be independent, having no affiliation with KIIF.

- The accused will have the opportunity to present their account of events to the committee.
- If the investigation confirms a breach of the rules and regulations outlined in this document, the individual will face disciplinary action as decided by the Board of Directors, which may include dismissal.

6.3. THE CHILD PROTECTION DESIGNATED PERSON: TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To ensure that any reported concerns or incidents are taken seriously, KIIF designates Marilena Zackheos, Member of the Board of Directors, to be KIIF's 'Child Protection Designated Person'. Any concerns with regard to violations of the Child Protection principles as described by this policy must be reported to the Child Protection Designated Person.

In terms of the Designated Person's tasks and responsibilities, we highlight that the Designated Person:

- Has NO legal responsibility with regard to KIIF's actions and behaviours on any matter related to child protection. Their role is purely administrative and their accountability lies only against KIIF's Board of Directors.
- Has the administrative role of coordinating KIIF's responses to potential reports of concerns or incidents which may violate our Child Protection principles as demonstrated in this policy. Particularly, once a concern or an incident is reported to the Designated Person, they are expected to take the actions described under Section 6.4. of this policy.

6.4. ACTIONS BY THE CHILD PROTECTION DESIGNATED PERSON

If a report is made about a concern or a deviation from the organisation's policy, the Designated Person must:

- Report the issue to the Board of Directors during the next regular Board Meeting in order for the Board to decide how to proceed to the correction of the issue. If the Designated Person considers that an issue may be urgent (because it needs an immediate response or because it may be more serious than it shows), they should request an urgent Meeting of the Board.
- Keep a record of the report in KIIF's archive. For confidentiality reasons, the archive must be accessible only to the Designated Person, the President of

the Board, and the Directress of KIIF. Any other person will be authorized to access it on a need-to-know basis.

If a serious allegation (i.e. child abuse) is made to them which involves a KIIF staff member, associate, volunteer, or intern, they must:

- Confidentiality: Ensure the confidentiality of both the child and the accused adult, maintaining personal information on a need-to-know basis.
- Protect the child: Implement measures to protect the child from further harm by ensuring that the accused adult has no further contact with the child within the framework of KIIF's work. This involves notifying the Board of Directors and collaborating on further steps with KIIF's Directress.
- Seek assistance from authorities: Contact relevant authorities, as listed above, for further guidance and support.
- Preserve evidence: While not responsible for investigating the allegation, the Designated Person should ensure any evidence provided is safely preserved in a detailed report and forwarded to the authorities.
- Contact the accused individual: Inform the accused individual that they are suspended pending the outcome of an independent investigation as described in Chapter 6.2. of this Policy.

If the allegation concerns an adult outside KIIF's immediate environment:

- Contact authorities: Support the child in submitting an official complaint and seeking the help they need, using the contact information provided above.
- Forward the report: Submit the detailed report to the relevant authorities.
- Confidentiality: To ensure the confidentiality of both the child and the accused adult, the Board of Directors should not be informed unless there is any relevance to their work. If they need to be informed, information should be released on a need-to-know basis.

If the allegation concerns another child:

- Seek assistance from authorities: Special attention must be paid to protecting all parties involved, including both victims and alleged perpetrators. Contact the relevant authorities for support.
- Forward the report: Submit the detailed report to the authorities for further action.

- Confidentiality: To ensure the confidentiality of the children, the Board of Directors should not be informed unless there is any relevance to their work. If they need to be informed, information should be released on a need-to-know basis.

6.5. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR REPORTING AND SUPPORT

To ensure the safety and protection of children, KIIF provides the following contact information for reporting incidents or seeking help:

- Child Protection Designated Person: Marilena Zackheos
Position: Member of the Board
Contact Information: zackheos.m@gmail.com
- Office of the Commissioner for Children's Rights: 22 873200
- Police (Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office): 22 808442
- Social Welfare Services: 22 406600

Helplines:

- European Helpline for Children and Adolescents: 116111
- Hope for Children Helpline: 1466
- Cyber Safety Helpline: 1480
- Abuse and Domestic Violence Helpline: 1440
- Youth Board of Cyprus Helpline: 1410

7. Human Resources and Compliance

- All KIIF staff, associates, volunteers, and interns must read and sign this document, acknowledging their understanding and commitment to the outlined policies. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal in serious cases.
- During recruitment, successful candidates will be required to read and sign this policy document and provide a Clean Criminal Record before finalizing their employment contract.

8. Document Review and Updates

This document will be reviewed and, if necessary, updated every three years, coinciding with the election of a new Board of Directors. Additionally, it will be reviewed before the expiration of this period under the following circumstances:

- Significant changes within the organization, such as a shift in staff or board composition.
- New insights or requirements arising from state or EU legislation on child protection.
- Lessons learned from addressing specific incidents within KIIF.

9. Definitions

For the purposes of the present Child Protection Policy:

Child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Violence against children includes all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, physically, online, or in virtual worlds.

Child Abuse means any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm.

Signed by:



Evanthia Tselika
President of the Board of Directors




Marilena Zackheos
Child Protection Designated Person



Eirini Kyritsi
Secretary of the Board of Directors



Antrea Neophytou
Member of the Board of Directors



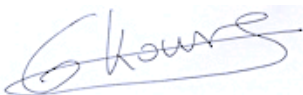
Antria Kyprianou
Member of the Board of Directors

Βασιλική Φαραώ

Vasiliki Farao
Member of the Board of Directors



Koral Özkoralıtay
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