



HCISR
Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Date of issue: August, 2025

HCISR Public Statement on Child and Youth Safeguarding

Hellenic Center of Interdisciplinary Studies and Research (HCISR)

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This Public Statement summarizes the core commitments and mandatory principles that guide the Hellenic Center of Interdisciplinary Studies and Research (HCISR) regarding the protection of children and young people who engage with our programs.

1. Mission and Foundational Commitment

HCISR is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing interdisciplinary education and research through academic programs, study abroad initiatives, and cultural projects.

Our work is founded on the principles of equality, inclusivity, solidarity, and respect for democratic values. This Safeguarding Policy, formally approved by the HCISR Administrative Council, reflects our commitment to international legislation and standards concerning the rights and protection of children and youth.

Scope: This Policy applies to and is binding on all directors, managers, staff, consultants, volunteers, interns, and partners of HCISR in any situation where they act on behalf of the organization. All covered individuals must sign a formal declaration confirming compliance.

2. Core Safeguarding Principles

The welfare of children and youth is paramount and will always be actively promoted.

HCISR's core principles are:

- **Right to Protection:** HCISR recognizes the right of every child and young person to safety, dignity, and protection.
- **Zero Tolerance for Abuse:** All HCISR representatives must respect and uphold children's rights in all contexts, ensuring that no child or young person is subjected to any form of abuse. Abuse is defined in accordance with Greek law and international standards, including physical, emotional, sexual, neglect, exploitation, bullying, or discrimination.
- **Best Interests Priority:** Individuals in positions of responsibility must always act in accordance with the best interests of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.
- **Voice and Participation:** The rights, wishes, and voices of children, youth, and their families will be respected and heard. HCISR staff must respect the right of children and young people to be heard and to participate in decisions that affect them, empowering them to exercise and realize their rights.

Definitions:

- Child: Any person under the age of 18.
- Youth: Individuals aged 15–25, consistent with main provisions of Greek legislation.

3. Mandatory Code of Conduct and Professional Boundaries

Professional boundaries are essential to maintain professional integrity and ensure a respectful and safe relationship between HCISR personnel and beneficiaries.

Actions Strictly Prohibited (Examples)

- Sexual Misconduct: Any form of sexual relationship with a person under 18.
- Harmful Contact/Language: Inappropriate touching, language, or proposals towards any beneficiary, regardless of age, gender, or background. Staff must never provoke, harass, degrade, or act in ways that could harm a child's trust or self-esteem.
- Exploitation: Exploiting children for labor (including domestic work).
- Inappropriate Relationships: Developing personal relationships (including on social media or sharing personal contact details) with a beneficiary until their participation in HCISR programs has formally ended. Official organizational channels are the only acceptable means of communication.
- Abuse/Punishment: Using abusive language, responding to inappropriate behavior with punishment, or engaging in any abusive conduct.
- Pornography: Viewing, producing, distributing, or sharing pornographic material involving children, or exposing children to such content.

Data, Images, and Confidentiality

- HCISR personnel must respect principles of trust, confidentiality, and personal data protection.
- Any personal data, images, or stories concerning a beneficiary may only be published with explicit consent (written parental or guardian consent for minors).
- Information, images, or personal experiences may never be disclosed in ways that could victimize, stigmatize, or endanger the beneficiary.
- Children's faces should never be shown in presentations or publications if the sharing of stories or images may endanger, stigmatize, or expose the child, family, or community.

4. Policy Implementation and Reporting Procedures

The Safeguarding Policy is realized through complementary policies covering safe recruitment, contracting, training, and reporting.

Safe Recruitment

All recruitment announcements clearly state that hiring is conducted in line with safe recruitment practices. This includes:

- Requiring clear role descriptions that include competencies related to child protection.
- Requiring shortlisted candidates to provide a signed declaration confirming no criminal record relating to offences against children.
- Conducting appropriate suitability checks before formal job offers are made.

Training and Support

HCISR provides systematic and continuous (refresher) safeguarding training for all staff, partners, and volunteers. Support mechanisms are in place for staff who encounter stressful or high-risk situations, including access to specialized counseling or supervision when required.

Mandatory Reporting and Accountability

HCISR has established a structured process for handling safeguarding concerns:

- Immediate Reporting: All directors, staff, partners, and volunteers are required to report any concern, suspected violation, or confirmed violation of this Policy without delay.
- Designated Contact: Reports must be made to the immediate manager and the Principal Contact (Referral Person). If the concern involves the manager, the report goes directly to the Principal Contact.
- Escalation: The Principal Contact refers reports to the HCISR Board.
- Action: The HCISR Board determines the appropriate course of action, which may include protective actions to safeguard the child, referral to local authorities, disciplinary procedures, or termination of cooperation.
- Non-Compliance: Refusal to commit to or comply with this Policy and the Code of Conduct will result in termination of the involvement (e.g., volunteering, partnership, or visit).

HCISR ensures that all beneficiaries are informed of the Safeguarding Policy and clear explanations of complaint and reporting procedures, appropriate to their age and background.

For further information on this Policy, please contact HCISR at: info@hcisr.com