

Child Protection Policy Statement

1. Objective of the Policy

ALDA – The European Association for Local Democracy acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice.

ALDA's child protection aims at supporting the rights of children and their safety and well-being. This policy will guarantee that all staff involved in the action will share a common responsibility and commitment to the awareness, prevention and responding to child abuse in the course of their work.

Through this statement, ALDA assures its engagement:

- To prevent ALDA staff and partners from unfair practices and processes;
- To Provide ALDA staff and partners with guidelines on what to do in case of suspected child abuse;
- To promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people;
- To ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people;
- To ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern;
- To ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored;
- To prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals;
- To ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation

2. Definitions

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For the purposes of this policy, in line with the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**, a “child” is defined as a person under the age of 18 (UNCRC Article 1).

ALDA adopt the definitions proposed by the World Health Organisation¹, stating that:

- Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.
- Physical abuse of a child is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of an interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. There may be a single or repeated incidents.
- Emotional abuse includes the failure to provide a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment, including the availability of a primary attachment figure, so that the child can develop a stable and full range of emotional and social competencies commensurate with her or his personal potentials and in the context of the society in which the child dwells. There may also be acts towards the child that cause or have a high probability of causing harm to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. These acts must be reasonably within the control of the parent or person in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Acts include restriction of movement, patterns of belittling, denigrating, scapegoating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.
- Neglect is the failure to provide for the development of the child in all spheres: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers and causes or has a high probability of causing harm to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as is feasible.
- Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violate the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by this activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. This may include but is not limited to:

¹ World Health Organisation, Report of the Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention, Geneva, 1999

- The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity.
 - The exploitative use of child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices.
 - The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.
- Commercial or other exploitation of a child refers to use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour and child prostitution. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, or spiritual, moral or social-emotional development.

3. Principles of Child Protection

ALDA adopt the following basic Principles of Child Protection:

- To guarantee equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation to all children, without any distinction based on nationality, ethnic origin, gender, religious and political beliefs, age, physical or mental health, socio-economic and cultural background
- To provide condition for ensuring children's rights to protected from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation, according to the definitions stated in paragraph 1.
- To ensure zero-tolerance for child abuse, and place the child as the first priority when facing identified or suspected cases of abuse.

ALDA Child Protection Policy applies to all staff, including paid and volunteers individuals who have committed to work with ALDA.

4. Staff obligations:

- Never act in any way that could place a child at risk of harm and abuse
- To report any abuse in accordance with this policy and applicable national laws
- To Ensure a full cooperation in any investigation regarding child abuse

5. Implementing and Monitoring

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in ALDA. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the Association.

The policy will be reviewed every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- as required by the Safeguarding Children requirement of French
- as a result of any other significant change or event.

ALDA Members and Partners are expected to respect this Policy and to support ALDA in protecting children and securing their rights.

ALDA Children Protection Policy has been reviewed and approved on the 1st October 2018

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