

Child Protection Policy

Leichtag Foundation recognizes the personal dignity and rights of children towards whom it has a special responsibility and duty of care and respect. We believe that all children have equal rights to protection from harm as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Foundation does not tolerate child abuse, neglect, violence or exploitation in any form. The Foundation, and its staff, volunteers and representatives, are committed to create a safe environment for children and young people and to prevent their physical, sexual or emotional abuse. Given the vulnerability of children, Leichtag Foundation will ensure that the particular needs of children will remain at the forefront of our response.

The primary goal of the Child Protection Policy is to ensure that all the Foundation does serves the needs and protects the well-being of children on our premises and who participate in programs and events that the Foundation sponsors or hosts. Leichtag Foundation demonstrates its commitment to serving the best interests of children under its care by designing and implementing programs that protect children from abuse, neglect, and exploitation and keep them safe. The Foundation recognizes children's rights to participate in its programs and to be protected in all ways while doing so. The organization expects all staff to promote the core values of the organization and to uphold the dignity of all beneficiaries, particularly children, by ensuring that the conduct of staff is of the highest standard at all times and by collaborating with all relevant stakeholders to keep children safe from harm.

Definitions

- **Child or minor** is any person under the age of 18, according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Minors are considered unable to evaluate and understand the consequences of their choices and give informed consent, especially for sexual acts.
- **Sexual exploitation** means any act or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, sexually or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.
- **Sexual abuse** means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions including exposure to sexually inappropriate behavior or language.
- **Physical abuse** is actual or likely physical injury to a child, such as hitting, kicking or shaking, where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was intentionally or negligently inflicted or not prevented intentionally or through negligence.

- **Emotional abuse** is harm done by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection, such as degrading punishments, threats, bullying, abusive or aggressive language, and not giving care and affection, which could result in adverse effects on the behavior and emotional development of a child or young person.
- **Neglect** occurs when basic needs such as food, warmth and medical care are not met, or when there is failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, resulting in serious impairment of a child's or young person's health or development.

How the Foundation Protects Children

- The Foundation requires all programs involving children to establish procedures to protect children. These will be routinely reviewed and monitored, to ensure that they conform to the Foundation's current policies and standards regarding conduct.
- The Foundation requires all staff, volunteers, contractors and representatives to sign and abide by a Code of Conduct.
- The Foundation will address all allegations of any form of abuse, including but not limited to those forms defined above, promptly and will impose corrective action upon perpetrators of abuse, up to and including immediate termination of employment (in the case of employees) or other relationship with the Foundation (in the case of non-employees) and prohibiting the individual's return to the Foundation's premises.
- The Foundation will establish a comprehensive system (confidential and safe receipt of complaints, reporting, investigation, and referral system to Child Welfare Services through the Child Abuse Hotline of the County of San Diego) to address Code of Conduct violations.
- The Foundation will support and accompany partners in the development of child protection policies and procedures through sharing of resources and information.
- Substantiated allegations of child abuse on Foundation premises or at Foundation programs or events, or involving individuals who work at or provide support (e.g., volunteers or interns) at our programs or events, must be reported to Foundation senior leadership by Foundation partners for follow-up with the relevant partner organization(s).

Scope

These standards apply to all staff, volunteers, interns, consultants, contractors, advisors, official guests of the Foundation, and representatives of partner organizations, as well as anyone brought into contact with children while working for or officially traveling on behalf of the Foundation.

Child Protection Code of Conduct

The aim of the Code of Conduct is to protect children from abuse. By setting standards for appropriate behavior, it also protects children from improper conduct and is meant to deter adults who come into contact with children from engaging in improper or abusive conduct. It clarifies unacceptable forms of behavior that will result in a formal investigation and that, if such unacceptable behavior is substantiated in the investigation, could lead to disciplinary actions, up to and including the termination of employment or other relationship with the Foundation and prohibition from the Foundation's premises, or criminal proceedings. Additionally, the Code of Conduct gives guidance on expected standards for behavior of adults towards children, and also of children towards other children. This Code of Conduct applies to Foundation staff and anyone acting as a representative of, or on behalf of, the Foundation who may come into direct contact with, or be responsible for, bringing children into contact with adults.

Minimizing Risk Situations

Do not

- Condone or participate in behavior that is illegal or unsafe.
- If you are unsure if a behavior is illegal or unsafe, please consult Foundation senior leadership immediately.
- Be alone with a single child, in the following situations: in a car, overnight, in your home, or in the home of a child.
- Show favoritism or spend excessive amounts of time with one child.

Do

- Avoid placing yourself in a compromising or vulnerable position.
- Be accompanied by a second adult whenever possible.
- Meet with a child in a central, public location whenever possible.
- Immediately note, in writing to a supervisor, the circumstances of any situation that occurs which may be subject to misinterpretation by a third party as abuse, including but not limited to one of the forms of abuse defined above in the Child Protection Policy; neglect; or other inappropriate conduct.
- Avoid doing something that could be misinterpreted by a third party as abuse, including but not limited to one of the forms of abuse defined above in the Child Protection Policy; neglect; or other inappropriate conduct

Sexual Behavior

Do not

- Engage in physical/ sexual conduct of any kind with a child.
- Behave physically in a manner that is inappropriate or sexually provocative.
- Engage in or allow sexually provocative games with children to take place.

- Do things of a personal nature that a child could do for themselves, including dressing, bathing, and grooming.

Physical Behavior

Do not

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse a child.

Do

- Do not initiate physical contact of any kind with a child. Wait for appropriate physical contact, such as holding hands, to be initiated by the child. You should bear in mind that some children may not be aware of appropriate boundaries and, therefore, even certain actions initiated by the child (such as hugs) may be inappropriate. For this reason, adults should limit and not reciprocate such contact.
- Ask permission from a child's parent and obtain the consent of the parent, prior to taking photographs of a child/children.

Psychosocial Behavior

Do not

- Use language that will mentally or emotionally harm a child.
- Suggest inappropriate behavior or relations of any kind.
- Act in any way that intends to, or may have the result of, causing embarrassment, shame, humiliation or degradation of a child.
- Encourage any inappropriate attention-seeking behavior, such as tantrums, by a child.
- Discriminate, harass, or mistreat any child (or any member of our staff, volunteers, interns, consultants, contractors, advisors, official guests of the Foundation, representatives of partner organizations, and/or others on The Foundation's premises and/or at our events), on the basis of race, color, national origin, culture, age, gender, gender identity, disability, religion, sexuality, political persuasion, or any other classification protected by applicable federal, state, and local laws and ordinances.

Do

- Be aware of the power imbalance between an adult and child, and avoid taking advantage of this dynamic in any fashion.
- Understand that the best way to protect children is to empower them to protect themselves by demonstrating, among other actions, that you will listen to any concerns they bring forward and treat them with respect.

Peer Abuse

Do not

- Allow children to engage in sexually provocative games with each other or anyone else.

Do

- Be aware of the potential for peer abuse.
- Encourage Foundation partners to develop special measures/supervision to protect younger and especially vulnerable children.
- Avoid placing children in high-risk peer situations (e.g., unsupervised mixing of older and younger children).
- Respond quickly and consistently to bullying behavior to send the message that it is not acceptable. Research shows this can stop bullying behavior over time.

What to do if you suspect or witness an abuse/potentially abusive behavior

Immediately bring to the attention of a supervisor (this may not be appropriate if the available supervisor is the person against whom the allegation is to be made, or if you do not feel comfortable bringing the matter to a supervisor), Human Resources, or Senior Management any instance of witnessed or suspected abuse, and any action or behavior that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive, neglectful, or inappropriate. The Foundation will report to police or Child Protection Services in accordance with legal requirements as soon as possible if required.



Confirmation of Child Protection Policy

I have received my copy of Leichtag Foundation's Child Protection policy. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read and familiarize myself with this policy.

I understand that the Foundation is committed to providing a work environment that is free from harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. My signature certifies that I understand that I must conform to and abide by the rules and requirements described in this policy.

Employee's Signature _____

Employee's Printed Name _____

Date _____