Child Protection Policy

1. Introduction

RCN Justice & Démocratie is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and rights of all children we encounter through our work. This policy outlines our values, commitments, and procedures to protect children from all forms of harm, abuse, exploitation, and neglect, in accordance with European and international standards.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff, volunteers, board members, interns, contractors, and partners.
- All projects, events, and services involving direct or indirect contact with children.

3. Definitions

Child: Any person under the age of 18 (UNCRC, 1989).

Child Abuse: Includes physical, emotional, sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harm through acts or omissions.

4. Guiding Principles

- **Best Interest of the Child** is the primary concern in all decisions.
- **Zero Tolerance** for child abuse and exploitation.
- **Equality and Inclusion** regardless of gender, origin, religion, or ability.
- **Do No Harm:** All actions and omissions must avoid causing harm to children.
- **Participation:** Children are encouraged to express views and participate in decision-making.

5. Legal and Policy Framework

This policy is aligned with:

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- EU Charter of Fundamental Rights

- GDPR (for data protection)
- EU Directive 2011/92 on combating sexual abuse of children

6. Risk Assessment

We conduct child safeguarding risk assessments for all events and projects. Special precautions are taken for high-risk activities (e.g. travel, sport, residential stays).

7. Code of Conduct

All staff and affiliates must:

- Treat children with respect at all times.
- Avoid being alone with a child in private settings.
- Not engage in any behaviour that could be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Immediately report concerns or incidents.

8. Informed Consent and Participation

- Children and their legal guardians must be fully informed about the activities they join.
- Participation must be voluntary, and children may withdraw at any time.
- Personal data and media consent must follow GDPR standards.
- The CPP is available online : https://rcn-ong.be/integrite/ and shared before any activity involving children.

9. Use of Images and Social Media

- Children's photos or personal details will only be used with informed consent.
- No images showing nudity, distress, or inappropriate situations.
- No geotagging of images or identifying locations.

10. Reporting and Response

All suspicions, disclosures, or allegations of abuse must be reported to the **Child Protection Officer**.
Confidentiality is maintained unless there is a legal requirement to report.
Reports will be acted upon promptly, following internal and legal procedures.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

Child Protection Officer (CPO): Coordinates safeguarding measures, responds to incidents.

- **All Staff:** Must adhere to this policy, attend safeguarding training, and report concerns.
- **Managers:** Ensure compliance, support the CPO, and facilitate training.

12. Safe Recruitment and Training

- Background checks and references are mandatory for all staff working with or around children.
- All staff must complete safeguarding training at induction and regularly thereafter.

13. Monitoring and Evaluation

- The policy is reviewed annually or when legislation changes.
- Feedback from staff, partners, and children (where appropriate) will be incorporated into policy updates.

Date of Approval: **August 1st 2025**

Approved by: **Joël PHALIP - General Coordinator**

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