

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Haver Srbija

Adopted: December 18, 2023.

Updated: December 18, 2024.

Haver Srbija is fully committed to safeguarding the rights, safety, and wellbeing of all children who come into contact with our programmes and activities. Children have the right to grow, learn and develop in a safe and supportive environment, free from all forms of abuse, exploitation, neglect, and discrimination.

This policy outlines our organizational framework for preventing child abuse, promoting awareness, ensuring effective reporting and response mechanisms, and embedding child protection principles into every aspect of our work.

Our Child Protection Policy applies to all staff, volunteers, board members, consultants, interns, and external partners engaged in any capacity with Haver Srbija.

THIS POLICY IS GROUNDED IN

- The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**
- The **vision, mission, and values** of Haver Srbija
- International best practices and standards, including the **Keeping Children Safe Coalition** framework
- Contributions and insights from children, families, and partner communities
- Serbian Law on protection of children **Zakon o osnovama sistema obrazovanja i vaspitanja („Sl. glasnik RS“, br. 88/2017 i izmenama)**

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

- **Best interests of the child** must always guide our decisions.
- **Zero tolerance** for any form of abuse or exploitation.
- **Shared responsibility** – every individual connected with Haver Srbija has a duty to act in ways that protect children.
- **Transparency and accountability** in all prevention, reporting, and response actions.

THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AIMS TO

1. Prevent incidents of child abuse and reduce risks within programmes, communities, and partner networks.
2. Ensure all children engaged with Haver Srbija are aware of their rights and feel safe to speak up.
3. Build staff and volunteer capacity to recognize, prevent, and respond to abuse.
4. Establish clear reporting and referral mechanisms.
5. Promote advocacy and awareness on child rights in broader society.
6. Guarantee safe, respectful, and inclusive working environments.
7. Strengthen collaboration with external partners and stakeholders to ensure consistent child protection standards.

Haver Srbija recognizes that child abuse and neglect occur across all societies and can take many forms. According to the UNCRC, a *child* is defined as any person below the age of 18, unless under national law majority is attained earlier.

CATEGORIES OF ABUSE

- **Physical abuse** – any act causing physical harm or injury, including hitting, shaking, burning, poisoning, or suffocation.
- **Sexual abuse** – involvement of a child in sexual activities by an adult or another child in a position of power, including exposure to sexual materials.
- **Neglect** – failure to provide for a child's basic physical, emotional, educational, and developmental needs, including inadequate supervision.
- **Emotional abuse** – persistent actions that harm a child's self-worth, such as humiliation, threats, bullying, or rejection.

AWARENESS, PREVENTION, REPORTING, RESPONSE

- **Awareness** – Training staff, volunteers, and partners to recognize signs of abuse and to understand their responsibilities.
- **Prevention** – Embedding safeguarding principles into programme design, ensuring safe recruitment practices, and maintaining environments where children feel safe.
- **Reporting** – Establishing straightforward, confidential, and accessible channels to raise concerns.
- **Response** – Taking immediate, proportionate action in suspected or confirmed cases, prioritizing child wellbeing and involving relevant authorities when necessary.

All individuals associated with Haver Srbija are required to follow the Child Protection Code of Conduct:

Do:

- Treat all children with respect, fairness, and without discrimination.
- Prioritize children's health, safety, and wellbeing in all activities.

- Be alert to signs of abuse and report concerns promptly to the Child Protection Officer.
- Seek informed consent from parents/guardians before photographing or recording children.
- Ensure at least two adults are present during activities with children.
- Promote children's voices and participation in matters that concern them.

Do Not:

- Engage in sexual or exploitative relationships with children.
- Use language, behaviour, or gestures that are degrading, discriminatory, or abusive.
- Be alone with a child in situations that may raise suspicion.
- Hit, humiliate, or otherwise harm children.
- Use children's personal information or images for purposes unrelated to Haver Srbija without consent.

PRIVACY AND DATA PROTECTION

- Personal information, photos, and videos of children must be handled confidentially.
- Children must never be portrayed as objects of pity or used for exploitative fundraising.
- Publication of a child's identity alongside sensitive personal data is prohibited.
- Written consent from parents/guardians is required for any use of images or stories.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Peer-to-peer abuse: Allegations involving one child harming another must be addressed sensitively, ensuring protection for victims while supporting rehabilitation of perpetrators.
- Children with disabilities or vulnerable backgrounds require additional safeguards and accessible environments.
- Overnight stays, trips, and hosting arrangements must follow strict supervision and consent protocols.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Child Protection Officer (CPO):**
Mina Pasajlić (mina@haver.rs) – responsible for implementation, monitoring, and annual review of this policy.
- **Staff, volunteers, and board members:**
Required to read, sign, and comply with this policy.
- **External partners:**
Must review and sign acknowledgment of compliance before engaging with children in Haver Srbija's activities.

COMPLAINTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Any concerns or complaints must be reported immediately to the CPO.
- Reports will be treated with urgency, confidentiality, and seriousness.
- Documented incidents will be securely stored and reviewed to improve practices.

- Whistleblowers will be protected from retaliation.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

- Criminal background checks will be conducted for staff directly working with children.
- Induction training on child protection is mandatory for all new employees.
- Annual refresher training and policy review will be organized.
- The policy will be updated annually by the CPO and approved by the Board.

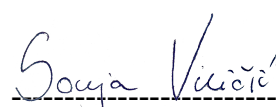
STAKEHOLDERS AND KEY MESSAGES

- **Children:** You have rights, your voices matter, and violence is never acceptable.
- **Parents and caregivers:** We work in partnership with you to ensure children's wellbeing.
- **Staff, volunteers, educators, social workers:** You are role models and have the responsibility to protect children.
- **Partners, donors, contractors:** Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and compliance with our CPP is mandatory.

REFERENCES

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Keeping Children Safe Coalition standards and tools
- WHO (1990) definitions of child abuse
- EveryChild, *Training for Child Protection Toolkit*
- *Zaštita deteta od zlostavljanja i zanemarivanja, Primena Opšteg protokola, Center for children rights, Ministry of labor and social politics, 2011.*

This Child Protection Policy was adopted by **Haver Srbija** on December 18, 2023 and updated on December 18, 2024.



Sonja Viličić
Executive Director
Haver Srbija

