

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Terraforming strongly condemns all forms of child abuse and exploitation.

Terraforming is committed to providing and maintaining a caring learning environment and preventing and addressing child abuse and exploitation.

Terraforming is committed to presenting this policy, and providing mechanisms for our board members, co-workers, employees, representatives, volunteers, and all other participants in our activities to raise awareness, aid prevention, encourage reporting, and ease response to any form and any case of proven, alleged or attempted abuse within our field of function and influence according to its nature. They range from human resource development actions such as training and counseling to legal actions where needed.

Our Child Protection Policy is based on

- [Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child](#) (2016-2021), including:
 - Equal opportunities
 - Participation of children
 - A life free from violence
 - Child-friendly justice
 - Children's Rights in the digital environment
- [The European Convention on Human Rights](#)
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC)
- [The National Strategy for Protection of Children and Prevention from Violence of the Republic of Serbia](#)
- [General and Special Protocol](#) for Protection of Children and Students from Violence, Neglect, and Abuse in Educational Institutions, developed by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia

- [The Law on Ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child by the Republic of Serbia](#), including the protection of the child against:
 - physical and mental violence, abuse and neglect (Article 19);
 - all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation (Article 34);
 - kidnapping and trafficking in children (Article 35);
 - all other forms of exploitation (exploitation) detrimental to any kind of child's welfare (Article 36);
 - inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment (Article 37).
- [Other relevant laws and treaties](#) ratified by the Republic of Serbia

Terraforming's Child Protection Policy is created following the UNCRC principal:

The best interest of the child is our primary consideration. Every child has the right to develop to his or her full potential, to quality education, participation, and non-discrimination. Everybody is responsible for protecting children from all forms of abuse, abandonment, exploitation, violence, and discrimination.

In this policy, particular attention is focused on specific mechanisms to prevent and respond to child abuse.

Introduction

This policy document is binding for all Terraforming's board members, co-workers, employees, representatives, volunteers and all other participants in our activities, including partnering institutions and organizations.

Every child is potentially at risk of abuse and exploitation. Some girls or boys may be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation due to various forms of discrimination and marginalization relating to their socio-economic status, gender, disability, religion, ethnicity, living situation, political, legal, or other parameters.

Therefore, every person connected with Terraforming must understand child abuse and their role and responsibilities in protecting children.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child like this:

A child is a human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, the majority is attained earlier

Terraforming is committed to broad awareness-raising, prevention, and advocacy work within families, schools, communities, and national authorities to promote the protection of children's rights.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child provides an international framework outlining children's rights to:

- protection from abuse and neglect (article 19),
- discrimination (article 2)
- different forms of exploitation (articles 32-36)
- special consideration is given to children deprived of parental care (article 20),
- refugee children (article 22),
- children at risk of developing a drug habit (article 33),
- children who are deprived of their liberty (articles 37, 40),
- children in situations of armed conflict (articles 38, 40).

Terraforming further recognizes the importance of children's participation, empowering girls and boys to speak up against all forms of abuse, acting as agents of self-protection, and protecting their peers.

Key Parts of Child Protection Policy

- A. AWARENESS:** Raise awareness of child abuse and its risks
- B. PREVENTION:** Provide guidance on how to safeguard children from abuse
- C. REPORTING:** Set up and adhere to a clear and simple reporting procedure
- D. RESPONDING:** Ensure clear action is taken when child abuse is suspected or reported

Goals of the Child Protection Policy

This policy aims at:

- preventing cases of child abuse and reducing the number of incidents (child-to-child, adult-to-child) in families, schools and all other environments of Terraforming's influence,
- making children aware of their rights and their active role in child protection,
- informing children, co-workers, board members, family, school and community members, volunteers and partners (sponsors, donors, journalists, governmental authorities, etc.) about the child protection policy and related procedures (awareness, prevention, reporting, responding),
- encouraging co-workers directly involved with children to apply the skills needed to contribute to each child's development and protection,

- ensuring that all co-workers have the working conditions needed to contribute to each child's development and protection,
- fostering open and honest discussions on child abuse in meetings and workshops in all programs and facilities amongst all stakeholders (children, young adults and their families, child and youth care co-workers, management staff, board members, PR and fundraising staff, teachers, maintenance and security staff, etc.)
- putting in place fair, secure, and transparent reporting channels in all types of programs that guarantee the right of stakeholders (children, parents, staff) to be heard,
- forming an active network of protection so that all children and adults in our sphere of influence are safe and protected. Within and across all co-workers and partners, we strive together for the protection of children.

What is Child Abuse?

Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse is the actual or potential physical harm caused by an action or lack of action which is reasonably within the control of the parent or person in a position of responsibility, power, or trust. Physical abuse may involve hitting, spanking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, and suffocating. It can also mean causing physical harm to a child by fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health to a child. The incidents may be single or repeated.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse is evidenced by an 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. Child sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to participate in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact and penetrative or non-penetrative acts. This may also include involving children in looking at or in the production of pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect and Negligent Treatment

Neglect and Negligent Treatment is the inattention or omission on the part of the caregiver to provide for the development of the child in health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers and which causes, or has a high probability of causing, harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. This includes failing to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as feasible.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child that adversely affects his or her self-perception and development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless, unloved, and inadequate, or there only to meet another person's needs, or imposing inappropriate expectations upon him/her. Acts include restricting movement, threatening, scaring, discriminating, scapegoating, corrupting, ridiculing, degrading, bullying, humiliating (e.g., asking embarrassing questions, demanding embarrassing action), or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

Specific Considerations

Child-to-Child Abuse

Allegations or concerns regarding the abuse of a child by another child need to be responded to with particular sensitivity; nevertheless, they have to be dealt with through child protection procedures. All work with young people who have committed abuse requires an effective approach that ensures the protection of people affected while at the same time supporting the young person in challenging and changing his/her behavior. Any such approach requires:

- the recognition that a child who has abused another child differs significantly from adults who have committed similar offenses, as the child is not fully aware of why he or she has committed abuse and what the consequences are
- keeping in mind that the best interest of the child is the primary consideration in all decisions made - for both the victim and the abuser.

Violation of Children's Privacy

Protecting a child's privacy refers to private data of the child as well as pictures, texts, films, etc., about children produced for publicity purposes. This includes information about a child's history, medical condition, and family background. All such information has to be stored carefully and be handled confidentially and with discretion.

Children and even their parents or caregivers might not always be aware of a specific form of emotional abuse which might occur in fundraising, public relations, or communication. For instance, a child's privacy is violated by the production of unauthorized publicity material (pictures, films, texts, etc.) or by presenting sensitive information within a context that reveals the child's identity.

All co-workers and external partners involved in spreading information on children and in creating and distributing publicity material act according to the following guidelines:

- When producing publicity material featuring a child, we need to ask both the child and his or her legal guardian (or at least an adult caregiver of the child) for permission to do so.
- We do not actively ask children to do or say anything that might make them feel displayed as 'objects of pity' (e.g., to speak about their past or ask for donations).
- We handle children's names carefully, especially concerning sensitive information about the same children (e.g., the family background, their medical condition, disability, or negative behavior).
- We act cautiously when combining textual and visual information whenever a text includes sensitive information about a child and whenever a photo or video track shows sensitive aspects of a child's life and reveals his or her identity.

Following these guidelines ensures the respect of the children's privacy while at the same time preventing, and raising awareness for, violations of that privacy. Based on these guidelines, coworkers directly involved with children have the right and obligation to protect the children from any attempted violations of their privacy – be they intentional or not.

Child protection is everyone's business. It is an integrated part of our work and affects everyone and anyone who comes in contact with our organization.

Key message

All persons below 18 years of age Terraforming consider as children.

All persons 18 – 30 years of age are considered as young adults.

Our message to all children and young adults:

- You have rights, including the right to say No.
- Violence is not allowed.
- We listen to you and take you seriously.

Our message to the board members, co-workers, employees, representatives, volunteers, and all other participants in our activities:

- You are role models and are listened to.
- You have our support in developing positive and participatory processes.
- Listen to children: pay attention to possible signs of abuse; take your responsibility and be there for them when they need your support!
- Protection is everybody's business; you are part of the team.
- You are obliged to respond to any form and any case of proven, alleged, or attempted abuse within our field of function and influence by:
 - immediately informing the authorities,
 - immediately inform the project manager and director of Terraforming.

This document was approved at the Terraforming Annual Assembly in February 2020.