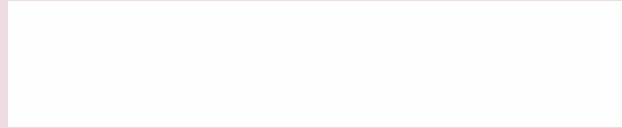




CHILD



PROTECTION



POLICY



2024



**POLICY GUIDELINES, PRINCIPLES, AND PROCEDURES
FOR CHILD SAFETY AND PROTECTION AT MYARTIST**

Applicable to: All MYARTIST staff, experts, research associates,
volunteers and external staff

This policy will be reviewed regularly:

- In line with changes in legislation or official guidelines on the protection of children and young people on the EU or Greek national level.
- Following any changes to the internal policy or regulations at MYARTIST.
- Otherwise, at least every three years.

PREAMBLE

In MYARTIST our main priority is to provide a safe environment for all children. As part of our work and activities, which aim to promote art as a means of social change and empowerment for adults and young people, we adopt the appropriate national, european and international legal frameworks, fully recognising the necessity to safeguard and protect the well-being and the rights of children.

We acknowledge that the protection of children is a moral and legal obligation of everyone and we support their fundamental rights based on the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). At the same time, our activities are always conducted in full respect of the fundamental principles relating to child protection as set out in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In addition, our commitment to upholding children's rights applies the regulations and recommendations of international organizations such as UNICEF (see "Guidelines for the Protection of Children's Rights") and UNESCO (see "Recommendation on the Status of Teachers"), ensuring a healthy and secure environment for children during the planning and implementation of our activities.

Acknowledging the need for every child to feel protected from all forms of violence, exploitation or neglect, our policy complies with the guidelines communicated by the International Child Protection Standards (Keeping Children Safe) on best practices for preventing and responding to child abuse.

MYARTIST, following the EU guidelines and regulations on child protection, has adopted a zero tolerance policy to any form of child abuse, physical, emotional, verbal or sexual, and takes all necessary actions to prevent and respond to such incidents.

Accordingly, all employees and associates of MYASRTIST have the obligation to comply with the Child Protection Policy and, if they become aware of an incident of abuse, they are obliged to report it immediately and responsibly and to cooperate with the competent authorities in order to take the necessary protective measures in compliance with the law.

MYARTIST is committed to upholding and continuously improving its policy on child protection, respecting children's right to develop and live in a safe and protective environment.

INTRODUCTION



The present document belongs to the **MYARSTIST's Code of Conduct**. The document represents MYARTIST's policy, principles, and procedures regarding child safeguarding and protection actions implemented by MYARTIST staff members in the execution of their professional responsibilities. Children with whom MYARTIST employees, volunteers, interns, external collaborators, and associates come into contact will be guaranteed the rights specified in the UNCRC. MYARTIST's work aligns with the EU Strategy for the Rights of the Child and promotes action to support children's involvement in political and democratic life, their economic and social inclusion, their right to health and education, providing equal opportunities to all children, preventing violence against children and protecting them from violence, promoting a justice system that responds to children's needs, and promoting a safe digital experience.

MYARTIST is very concerned about preventing child abuse. MYARTIST acknowledges that child abuse and inappropriate interaction with children is a pervasive problem that must be handled aggressively. As a result, the creation of this policy reflects MYARTIST's commitment to taking proactive measures to safeguard and protect children in its programs, facilities, and networks. MYARTIST is committed to making decisions and acting in accordance with the **"best interest of the child"** principle.

The document counts extended context and the extended framework in Greece with seven different sections which address

1. Definitions used in the policy and MYARTIST's work.
2. Principles and values, which should be respected and promoted by all staff members.
3. Responsibilities.
4. Screening and hiring practices at MYARTIST.
5. Principles of conduct & procedures of staff in contact/working with children.
6. Reporting procedures in case of any child abuse concerns staff members.
7. Cooperation with external other organizations, networks, and agencies.

MYARTIST's Child Protection Policy is developed by the Child Protection Officer. The document is evaluated against EU criteria and actual experience and updated at least every three years.

CONTEXT AND THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN GREECE



The Greek Constitution requires that Greek boys and girls complete at least nine years of obligatory education (art. 16.3). In Greece, in addition to the constitutional provisions for education, the Ministry of Education regulated two-year compulsory preschool education with art. 33, L.4521/2018, with the goal of preventing school failure, functional literacy, reducing school dropout, and ensuring the inclusion of students from vulnerable social groups. In November 2018, the Minister of Justice, Transparency, and Human Rights introduced the 'Action Plan for the Rights of the Child'.

The Minister highlighted that the National Plan, produced by the Ministry of Justice's General Secretariat of Human Rights, bringing Greece in line with international norms by promoting and ensuring the implementation of the principles of the International Convention on Human Rights. Law 2101/1992 is the legal tool that recognizes the International Convention of the Rights of the Child, and there are specific references to the Best Interest of the Childlike in articles 3 (decision-making from private and public entities keeping in mind the BIC), 9 (right of the state to separate child from parents when it is for the BIC/right of the child to communicate with parents), 18 (child custody), 20 (child without family), 21 (regarding adoption), 37 (dignity and freedom of the child) and 40 (Judicial process).

In Greece, following an intervention, the Ministry of Education, Research, and Religions confirmed the right of a parent who does not have custody of their children but has other parental responsibilities to be notified about the child's school condition. Clarifications were made by the Ministerial Decision (Y10645 / YΔ4 / 2018 on the subject: "Registrations, transcripts, studies and issues of organization of school life in secondary schools". The Ombudsman additionally recommended the Ministry to confirm that the official document on the Rights of Children-Students whose parents are separated or divorced and one of them does not exercise custody is still in force. On the other hand, there are in Greece several plans for the inclusion of children especially with disabilities (physical or mental) while differentiated classes and courses are beginning to occur.

Furthermore, in regards to refugee children, migrants, and integration, throughout Greece's long history, refugee and migration movements have been an important variable in its socioeconomic development, culminating in the 20th century, when large flows of refugees entered Greek territory, with the most important mass influx of 1,200,000 people from Asia Minor, Thrace, the Pontus, and the Balkan countries.

With the rapid increase in refugee flows in Greece, mainly as a result of the Syrian civil war, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs began planning actions for the support, care, and education of refugee children in Greece, taking into account the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, which the Hellenic Republic ratified with L. 2101/1992, and in particular articles 22, 28, 29, 30, which address refugee children's education.

UNICEF Greece's Country Programme 2022-2026, presented in November 2021, emphasizes a lack of comprehensive national statistics on children affected by all forms of violence. Children's rights to protection from violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect have long been promoted by Greece's solid legal system. Children from vulnerable groups, such as immigrants, migrants, and Roma populations, face additional protection concerns, especially those living in risky or insecure conditions.

Despite considerable progress in fulfilling children's rights in Greece in the post-WWII era, there is still a significant unfinished agenda in terms of achieving full implementation of those rights as required by the CRC. As a result, the first official framework of cooperation between UNICEF and Greece establishes a new platform for collaboration to overcome the systemic difficulties that continue to leave children behind. This involves strengthening national capacities for strategic policy development and implementation in the following areas:

- Child poverty & social exclusion
- Quality inclusive education
- Protection from abuse and neglect
- Adolescent & youth participation

1. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of the present policy, the following are defined:

- **CPP – Child Protection Policy**

- **Best Interest of the Child – BIC**

The concept of the best interests of the child is complex and its content must be considered and determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the personal context, circumstances and needs of the child. Consequently, the concept of the best interests of the child is flexible and adaptable. In general, the assessment and determination should be made with full respect for the rights contained in the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and its Optional Protocols. The full implementation of the concept of the best interests of the child requires the development of a rights-based approach, involving all parties, to safeguard the child's physical, psychological, moral and spiritual integrity and to promote the child's human dignity.

- **Child**

According to the UNCRC, the term “child” refers to all persons under the age of 18.

- **Child Protection**

According to UNICEF it is the prevention and response to violence, exploitation and abuse of children in all contexts.

- **Unaccompanied minor / unaccompanied child**

1. A person under the age of eighteen who is "separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who has a legal or customary obligation to do so" (UNHCR). Unaccompanied minors come to the EU to:
2. escape wars and conflicts, poverty or natural disasters, discrimination or persecution, or serious harm, i.e. international protection (asylum),
3. in search of a better life for economic and aspirational reasons,
4. to join family members,
5. as victims of human trafficking destined for abuse, such as sexual exploitation and forced labor.

- **Child participation**

Children, every person under the age of 18, individually or in groups, have the right, means, space, opportunity and, where necessary, support to freely express their opinions, to be heard and to contribute to decision-making on matters concerning them, and their views are given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. To be able to participate effectively and genuinely, children and young people should be provided with all relevant information and offered sufficient support for self-advocacy, appropriate to their age and circumstances.

- **Child safeguarding**

It focuses specifically on preventive measures to ensure that all children are protected from intentional or unintentional acts that lead to danger or actual harm. The aim of child protection is to create and sustain a child-centred and community-led safe culture through sustained and meaningful engagement with children, their families, communities and all representatives.

- **MYARTIST Staff**

Refers to individuals who receive a regular salary for work in any part of MYARTIST, including all Greece Offices in Greece.

- **MYARTIST experts and research associates**

Refers to a range of paid individuals with scientific expertise who have committed to work with MYARTIST in our projects and programs in Greece and internationally.

- **MYARTIST volunteers**

Refers to a range of persons working voluntarily in our project and programs and may meet children as part of the program/project activities.

- **MYARTIST external staff**

Refers to a range of external experts who work with MYARTIST in our projects and programs in Greece and internationally (involved in any activities with children).

MYARTIST takes all measures to ensure the protection of the child from all types of child abuse and inappropriate behaviour. Child maltreatment is abuse and neglect that occurs to children under the age of 18. It includes all types of physical and/or emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, negligent treatment and commercial or other exploitation which results in actual or potential harm to the health, survival, growth or dignity of the child in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or authority both in the presence of and through information technology (As defined by WHO - Violence Against Children, Child Maltreatment).

MYARTIST carefully monitors any type of potential maltreatment:

- **Physical child abuse**

According to Kids Matters Physical, abuse is an injury deliberately inflicted upon a child by any person, including adults. Physical abuse includes fractured or broken bones, burns, severe and/or frequent bruises, and any other intentionally inflicted physical harm.

- **Child emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse, as defined by Kids HelpLine, happens when a child is repeatedly made to feel worthless, unloved, alone, or scared. For instance: physically or socially isolating a child, forcing a child to do things by scaring them, constantly criticising, humiliating or blaming a child, bullying, teasing, insulting or belittling a child, not allowing a child to explore, express themselves, learn or make friends etc.

- **Child Sexual Abuse**

It refers to the involvement of a child in sexual activity that the child does not fully comprehend, is unable to consent to after being informed, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot consent, or which violates the laws or social taboos of society. Sexual abuse of a child is evidenced by such activity between a child and an adult or another child who, because of age or development, is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, with the activity intended to satisfy or meet the needs of the other person.

- **Child pornography**

According to the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, is any material that visually depicts a child engaged in real or simulated sexually explicit conduct or any depiction of a child's sexual organs for primarily sexual purposes.

- **(Child) Grooming**

Grooming, as defined by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or trafficking. Children and young people can be groomed online or face-to-face, by a stranger or by someone they know for example a family member, friend or professional, family member, friend or professional.

- **Bullying**

Bullying, as defined by the COE, is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.

- **Neglect or negligent treatment**

The failure to meet children's physical and psychological needs, protect them from danger or obtain medical or other services when those responsible for children's care have the means, knowledge, and access to services to do so (UNICEF definition).

- **Child Exploitation**

Child exploitation includes child domestic work, child soldiers, the recruitment and involvement of children in armed conflict, sexual exploitation and pornography, the use of children for criminal activities including the sale and distribution of narcotics and the involvement of children in harmful or hazardous work.

- **Online Sexual Violence**

The use of computer systems to cause, facilitate, or threaten violence against individuals (including children), that results in (or is likely to result in) physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm or suffering and may include the exploitation of the individual's circumstance, characteristics, or vulnerabilities.

2. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

MYARTIST is committed to the following values and principles, which must be respected and fostered by all members of its staff:

- MYARTIST values and treats every individual **without discrimination of any type**, regardless of age, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other beliefs, national, ethnic or social origin, gender identity or sexual orientation, property, disability, birth or other status.
- MYARTIST has a **zero tolerance policy** for any kind of inappropriate behaviour, violence or abuse, including of children..
- MYARTIST acknowledges the **right of every child to be protected from harm and abuse** resulting from inappropriate behaviour. The organisation will take all **necessary measures to prevent** any harm to children and to report abuse against children to the above.
- The best interests of the child always have priority in the activities of our organisation.
- MYARTIST **promotes children's right to be heard, to be involved and to share their opinions** on issues that concern them and supports this approach in its activities.
- MYARTIST conducts all its activities, from project design, risk management to implementation, ensuring that child protection plays a key role and in accordance with child-centred and trauma-informed approaches.
- MYARTIST wishes to provide all necessary guidance to its staff members, experts, research associates and volunteers, external staff who work in close contact with children.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone working and involved with MYARTIST has a responsibility to ensure the protection of all children. The responsibilities mentioned below are mandatory for all those involved in the implementation of this policy. MYARTIST staff, experts and research associates, volunteers and external staff must:

- 1. Never abuse and/or exploit a child or act/ behave in a way that puts a child at risk of harm.**
- 2. Notify the relevant authorities (Child Protection Department by area) when they receive a report of violence.**
- 3. Record any information/warning regarding abuse on a form and enter it into a joint record. The information recorded in the file is kept in strict confidentiality, which is only broken if it is in the best interest of the child.**
- 4. Report any child abuse and child protection concerns they have in accordance with applicable local office procedures and this policy.**
- 5. Respond to a child who may be being abused or exploited in accordance with the local office's applicable procedures and this policy.**
- 6. Cooperate completely and confidentially with any investigation into concerns or allegations of child abuse.**

7. Contribute to the creation of an environment where children are respected and encouraged to discuss their concerns and rights.

8. Always treat children in a way that respects their rights, integrity and dignity, takes into account their best interests and does not expose them to harm or put them at risk of harm.

9. Never ask for or accept personal contact information (this includes email, phone numbers, social media contacts, address etc.) from any child or family who is or has been previously associated with MYARTIST's work or share your own personal contact information with such persons. For MYARTIST staff, the exception is when this is expressly authorized for professional purposes in a manner consistent with MYARTIST policies and procedures, has the consent of the child's parent or guardian, and is supervised by the appropriate line manager or supervising director.

10. Never disclose or encourage the exchange of information that identifies supported families or children, unless it is in accordance with MYARTIST's regular rules and procedures and/or has MYARTIST's express consent. Media includes documents, photographs, and social media.

11. Never contact a child or family member involved in MYARTIST's work unless supervised by a (or another) member of MYARTIST employees. Visits, as well as communication via social media, emails, and letters, are examples of such contact.

MYARTIST staff should:

12. Comply with the behavior detailed in MYARTIST's Code of Conduct.

13. All MYARTIST staff members must ensure that, while working with MYARTIST, MYARTIST experts and research associates sign up to either MYARTIST's Code of Conduct or guidance on appropriate behavior toward children that is appropriate to their involvement with MYARTIST and is developed by MYARTIST staff using the Code of Conduct as a guide.

14. All MYARTIST staff must ensure that all MYARTIST workers who have reported child protection concerns or have been accused of child abuse receive appropriate support and protection in dealing with all aspects of the case, including any safety concerns and potential repercussions due to the incident or the reporting of such concerns.

4. SCREENING AND HIRING PRACTICES

MYARTIST establishes and maintains correct hiring and selection methods, such as completed applications, reference checks, criminal background checks, social security checks, and documented personnel files, and its Code of Conduct specifically mentions child protection.

4.1 Applications

- All potential staff members will fill out an application form to work, volunteer, or intern, which will include questions about their previous employment history, volunteer experience, and education.
- All application forms will include a statement clarifying that MYARTIST has a zero-tolerance policy for any inappropriate behavior, aggressive behavior, or abuse directed at children by staff members.
- All staff members who may be involved in working with children and young people, or who are likely to meet children while fulfilling their duties, will be required to provide a certificate of their national criminal record in accordance with national legislation and the National Criminal Records Portals.

4.2 Reference checks

MYARTIST maintains the right to:

- Contact references submitted by interested applicants, including close family members, during the hiring process.
- Contacting past employers/agencies to confirm eligibility for rehire and assess the applicant's abilities to work with children.

- Verifying written references over the phone or other forms of communication.
- Conducting online research on a candidate and looking for suspicious activity related to working with children.

4.3 Interviews

- At least two staff members should conduct interviews with hiring candidates. A 'Working Interview' fits this condition; it is important that the candidate be evaluated by more than one staff member.
- Interviews will be documented using an association-approved form to guarantee consistent questioning. MYARTIST interview evaluation forms can be utilized during the interview process.

5. PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT & PROCEDURES OF STAFF IN CONTACT / WORKING WITH CHILDREN

When engaging or working with children, the following principles apply:

5.1. Compliance with MYARTIST's Code of Conduct & Child Protection Policy

- Before completing any work responsibility, staff members will sign and date a copy of the organization's code of conduct, which includes the Child Protection Policy. When changes or updates are made every three years, all staff members will receive the new version, which must be signed as acknowledgement and acceptance.
- The Code of Conduct will be maintained in personnel files and attached to employment contracts.
- External partners will be provided with the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct and asked to sign it if they work with children under 18 years old.

5.2. Data protection mechanisms

The Code of Conduct specifies the rules for collecting and handling data about children and young people. Data privacy and protection concerns have to comply with relevant EU regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679.

To correctly handle child-sensitive material, the following requirements apply:

- **Written informed consent:** If personal data about children needs to be gathered, their parents/legal guardians' written consent will be requested. The data will be collected and used exclusively for the purposes mentioned. Staff who work with children and need to gather personal data about children or young people must follow MYARTIST's Data Protection Policy and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679. MYARTIST does not share the personal information submitted to any other entity.
- **Declaration of confidentiality:** Before conducting research, staff who may come into contact with research participants' personal information must sign a statement of secrecy. Each case/project requires a unique confidentiality declaration.
- **Disclosure of information:** identifies children who interact with our staff members and anyone who works with MYARTIST is restricted by worldwide, European, and Greek regulations and laws. The parents'/legal guardians' written informed consent shall be specifically requested. In general, and in accordance with Article 3 of the UNCRC, the child's best interests will be the primary goal in all circumstances. This includes revealing any type of information (including photos) about the children we encounter in any form, whether written, online, or other. Specifically, data, including pictures, of children are only gathered if absolutely necessary and planned as a specific activity of the organization or a project that the organization undertakes. Their use is consequently restricted to the term of the project and the specific purpose for which they were provided and gathered. The employees of the organization executing the activity will ask for specific permission from the child's parents/legal guardians, as well as the child's approval, in accordance with the legislation. Acquired photos and data are kept on MYARTIST's local server and are only available to staff with proper authorization and who have signed up for the Code of Conduct. The data on the local server is password protected and cyber-secured against any form of external access.
- **Publications:** All publications must comply with the Child Protection Policy, before being publicized or shared.

5.3. Training on Child protection

Each new staff member will be informed of the guidelines and standards, which will be reviewed on a regular basis with current workers. This will be accomplished through **new staff training, children's rights training, and the implementation of a detailed code of conduct.**

- All paid staff, volunteers, and interns who work directly with children will receive comprehensive child protection training, including information on children's rights (UNCRC, Lanzarote Convention, National regulation), communication with children, children's participation and best interests, sexual abuse prevention and early detection, and reacting. The training programmes are formed by current resources and are built by building on the programs already developed through our relevant project.
- External collaborators who may come into contact with children while performing MYARTIST-assigned tasks will receive the same child protection training.

6. COOPERATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS, NETWORKS AND AGENCIES



When interacting with external entities such as organizations, networks, and/or agencies, MYARTIST will proceed as follows:

- The selection of new partnerships with external organizations, networks, and/or authorities **will take into consideration the entity's child protection history.**
- MYARTIST reserves the right to **conduct a reference check** on the Partner's previous history with child protection and child-friendly policies.
- MYARTIST **does not accept inappropriate communication** with children.
- A clear statement on child protection and MYARTIST's zero-tolerance viewpoint for child abuse and inappropriate behavior must be included in the form for entities interested in becoming MYARTIST partners on the MYARTIST website.
- MYARTIST must take serious action against any partner accused of child abuse while implementing its projects and programs.

7. REPORTING PROCEDURES

- All staff members and outside partners are required to report any child abuse concerns they have or suspect, both internally and externally. Staff members will be instructed to report any inconsistencies between policy and practices. Staff personnel who engage with or encounter children will also receive training on the internal processes to follow if they suspect or have knowledge of a situation involving child abuse, depending on the circumstances.
- Reporting a suspected violation of the Child Protection Policy follows a standard procedure, which includes a reporting form (annexed here under the Annex section).
- Reports in confidentiality will be handled by the Child Protection Policy Officer at MYARTIST, who will analyze the case based on the perpetrator and the situation and either refer the case to local support services or report it to Human Resources if necessary. To date, the Child Protection Officer of MYARTIST is **Sofia Mastrokoukou, Co-Founder of MYARTIST, email: info@myartist.gr**.
- Any member of staff found to be in violation of the Child Protection Policy, as defined in the code, **will be examined on an individual case basis**. Disciplinary action may be taken, including termination of employment/suspension of professional involvement with MYARTIST and referral to authorities. (Depending on the case).
- If a serious breach is discovered, the following external inquiries should be considered for reporting:

- Local Authorities: Police of Athens
- Child Protection Centre by PRAKSIS Association, Greece
- Protection for All Minors by INTERSOS HELLAS, Greece
- Shelters for unaccompanied minors by ARSIS, Greece

Annex – MYARTIST’s Child Protection Policy

Reporting form for inappropriate behaviors

Information on the reporting subject	
Name	
Surname	
Position within the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Intern • Volunteer • Collaborator
Information on the alleged inappropriate behavior reported	
Type of the alleged breach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical child abuse • Child emotional abuse • Child sexual abuse • Bullying • Neglect or negligent treatment • Child exploitation • Other types of child maltreatment or inappropriate behavior:
Context of the alleged breach	
Date	
Place	
Circumstance (training, event, etc.)	
Description of the alleged inappropriate behavior	
PLEASE PROVIDE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION	

HAVE YOU OBSERVED THIS BEHAVIOR PERSONALLY? IF NOT, HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW ABOUT IT?	
HOW WOULD YOU JUDGE THE GRAVITY OF THE BEHAVIOR YOU DESCRIBED?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low • Medium • High • I don't know
TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE, IS THIS BEHAVIOR REITERATED?	
NAME OF THE CHILD VICTIM	
Information on the alleged author of the breach	
Name	
Surname	
Position within the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Intern • Volunteer • Collaborator

Declaration

By submitting this report, the reporting subject declares that:

- Is aware that, should the report give rise to legal action on behalf of MYARTIST, it may be used as an official statement.

- Is in good faith and that all the information provided above is correct and truthful.
- Is aware that purposely providing false accusations against someone is a breach punishable by the Greek law.

**The reporting subject
(Read and approved)**

Date