



Association “Education Builds Bosnia and Herzegovina – Jovan Divjak”

Child Protection Policy

The child protection policy is an obligatory document and binding all employees, associates and volunteers of the Association “Education Builds Bosnia and Herzegovina - Jovan Divjak” (“EBBiH-JD”) who participate in direct and indirect work with children and play an active role in protecting their rights.

The Association “Education Builds Bosnia and Herzegovina - Jovan Divjak” is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and it recognizes the responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures a child is recognized as someone under the age of 18 years.

The aim of this document is to outline the rules of legal, professional and ethically based practices in the Association “Education Builds Bosnia and Herzegovina – Jovan Divjak” – and, with the aim of protecting children against exposure to violence, abuse and neglect, or in risk, and in their best interest.

The policy is based on the following principles:

- The welfare of children is the primary concern.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse.
- Child protection is everyone's responsibility.
- Children have the right to express views on all matters which affect them, should they wish to do so.
- The Association shall work in partnership together with children and parents/guardians and other organizations to promote the welfare, health and development of children.
- The applicable legal regulations in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- On relevant knowledge about all forms of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional), neglect and exposure to family and peer violence in children and young people as well as the consequences for children.
- On professional knowledge with children, young people and their families.



The policy of the Association is in accordance with the legislation of BiH and its regulations that protect the welfare of the child or in accordance with international standards, whichever provides better protection. The child protection requirements of this policy are in addition to all other positive regulations, including but not limited to donor requirements.

The applicable legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina on which the work of the Association is based on:

- Convention on the Rights of the Child,
- Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms,
- European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights,
- The BiH Constitution, and a number of laws dealing with this area (Law on Protection against Domestic Violence, Family Law, Criminal Law, Law on Protection of Patients' Rights, Law on Health Care, Law on Medical Care, Law on Personal Data Protection).

In the thirty-one years of its work, the Association has been at the daily service of children and youth victims of war, children and youth with disabilities, as well as talented children / youth, children / youth of the Roma national minority and those in social needs. The Association – with open doors, fully realized the basic part of the mission – we were first moral, and then material support to children, youth and their parents / guardians in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Over the past 31 years, 63,457 children, youth and their families have benefited from services and support totaling BAM 13,816,228.72 (EUR 7,064,125.57/ USD 7,343,866.34). We have awarded 8,541 annual scholarships to children and young people in a total value of BAM 7,795,945 (EUR 3,986,003.38/ USD 4,143,879.91). We have supported twenty-six schools in BiH by donating various equipment and assisting in renovating school buildings and gyms, more than 50,000 beneficiaries have received other direct material support or have participated in educational projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina and abroad.

Over the years, the Association has undertaken numerous significant initiatives, including:

- Providing emotional and psychological support to individuals affected by trauma (e.g., post-traumatic recovery programs for children, youth, parents, and guardians).
- Promoting peace education and trust-building at local and international levels (e.g., organizing and participating in related programs in BiH and abroad).
- Hosting the educational-inclusive camp 'Boračko Jezero,' fostering education and inclusion among children and youth from diverse social and cultural backgrounds.
- Offering training and resources to young people, equipping them with professional skills and supporting their career development.
- Creating opportunities for young people from returnee families, helping them achieve social inclusion and personal development.

The Association provides funds for scholarships and other activities through: membership fees, organizing philanthropic cultural events (concerts, exhibitions, etc.), publishing activities, educational projects, donations from businesses and individual contributions. It is important to mention that the Association has its own property and material and technical resources, which enables uninterrupted work with users.



Terminology and definitions /basic terms

A. Child or Children: Anyone under 18 years of age.

B. Child abuse: Any action (or activity) that persons, institutions or parties do or do not prevent direct or indirect abuse of children or harm their safety and healthy development into adults. The main categories of child abuse are:

- *Physical abuse:* Intentional use of physical force that, with or without intention, causes the risk of actual injury or suffering to the child. Physical force includes not only hitting (hand or foot), but also shaking, pinching, pushing, pulling, grabbing, burning, female genital mutilation, torture, and other physical acts. Physical injury or suffering may include, but is not limited to, bruising, scarring, soft tissue swelling, hematomas, fractures, sprains, dislocations, burns, organ damage, death, permanent neglect and other serious injury.

- *Emotional abuse:* Harm the child's emotional, intellectual, mental or psychological development. This can occur as a special case or as part of regular activities. Emotional abuse includes, but is not limited to, humiliating or degrading (e.g., calling him bad names, threatening, shouting, cursing, teasing, constantly criticizing, humiliating, constantly shaming, etc.), failure to recognize the child's emotional needs, rejection, ignoring, terrorizing, isolation or confinement.

- *Neglect:* Failure to recognize the child's basic physical or psychological needs, either intentionally or unintentionally. Neglect includes, but is not limited to, providing adequate nutrition, sufficient or seasonally appropriate clothing or housing, but also failure to avoid injury, failure to provide adequate supervision, failure to provide adequate medical care or treatment, or failure to provide inappropriate medical treatment (e.g., giving medication when not authorized), or failure to provide an environment that is physically safe (e.g., exposure to violence, staying in an unsafe place, unsafe sleeping practices, leaving a child with an unauthorized person, access to weapons or injurious objects, failure to secure for children safe space etc.).

- *Sexual harassment:* All forms of sexual violence and coercion, sexual demands, manipulation or cheating including incest, early and forced marriage, rape, involvement in or exposure to indecent images/videos (pornography), sexual slavery/human trafficking, and statutory rape. Sexual harassment may include but is not limited to indecent touching or exposure, explicit sexual language directed at or about a child and gaining the child's trust. Sexual harassment does not always involve touching. Sexual exploitation is any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential strength, trust for sexual purposes including but not limited to financial profiting, social or political, from the sexual exploitation of another. Be sure that technology is sometimes used as a tool to sexually exploit a child. Sexual abuse and harassment of children under the age of 18 is child harassment and a violation of the Policy. Criminal charges can also be used there, depending on the age of the supporter, local laws and customs.

- *Electronic violence* is any intentional, continuous use of electronic and digital media (computers, smartphones, internet applications, social networks...) of an individual or group with the intention of causing harm or discomfort to others (spreading embarrassing or confidential information, publishing photographs and recordings without permission, social disconnection, privacy attacks, etc.).



- *Fetal abuse* includes excessive use of alcohol and drugs during pregnancy, excessive exercise by a pregnant woman, and taking drugs that are not allowed.

- *Shaked child syndrome* is the violent shaking of a child by an adult (most often with the aim of soothing the child), which can cause bleeding in the brain and brain trauma.

- *Manipulation of a child in case of divorce* is a set of behaviors and verbal and non-verbal messages by which a parent sends a negative message to the child about the other parent in order to exclude him from the child's life and alienate the child from him, regardless of whether the child lives with that parent or the other, manipulations are possible by both parents.

- *Witnessing family violence* is when a child or young person in the family watches or listens to violent events, tries to protect one of the parents or observes injuries caused to the parent. Although sometimes the parent is not violent towards the child directly, living in a family where violence is witnessed can have serious consequences on the further psychophysical development of the child.

- *Gaining trust* is the process in which an adult builds a relationship with a child or the child's guardian in order to gain the child's or guardian's trust for the purpose of sexually harassing or abusing the child. Gaining trust typically occurs in stages and it is sometimes difficult to detect. These are some of the indicators that show that an adult is trying to gain the trust of a child or their guardian:

- Gives more attention to one child
- Provides the child with rewards or privileges
- Isolates the child from other children
- Expresses an interest in a child who is particularly vulnerable or in a state of need (e.g., a child who has previously been exploited by another person)
- Befriends parents or guardians who are responsible for the child's protection
- Provides the child with alcohol or drugs
- Creates intimacy (i.e., jokes in a way that only the two of them can understand or tells the child that no one understands him as a person trying to gain trust)
- Threatens, blackmails, intimidates or assaults a child by telling them they are going to do something to their family or friends.

- *Exploitation*: Actual harassment or attempted harassment using a position of vulnerability, power differential, or trust in favor of an individual using a position of power, power, privilege or wealth (through enticement, manipulation, coercion or deception) with the aim of involving a child in labor, domestic servitude, forced criminality, recruitment into the army or for the needs of organs for transplantation. Typically, the person or persons who exploit the child do so in order to profit financially, socially or politically. This can happen to one child or a group of children, in the place of birth, outside the place of birth, or internationally. Child exploitation may include but is not limited to:

- Domestic servitude (e.g., cleaning, child care, cooking, etc.)
- Forced labor (mainly in industry or agriculture)
- Forced criminal activities such as pickpocketing, begging, transporting drugs, producing drugs, selling plagiarized goods used for the benefit of fraud
- Forced mobilization of children or involvement in gangs



C. Children's Information: Paper or electronic information that contains personal information for the purposes of our work.

D. Child Protection: Child protection means ensuring a safe environment for children. We strive to protect children from all forms of harassment and exploitation in all the places we work, including vulnerable communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and countries in the region, and we promote the rights and child protection at the international level.

E. Child Protection Policy: This policy contains the definitions, terminology, procedures and practices we use to make the Association “EBBiH-JD” a child-safe organization. The child protection policy obliges every person involved in the work of the Association “EBBiH-JD” to individual and collective responsibility and preventive actions with the aim of ensuring and protecting children from intentional or unintentional actions that lead to the risk of actual injury by Association’s employees, representatives, external associates or partners who have contact with the child or influence them through our project activities.

F. Child Welfare: Child welfare means arranging the community to be safe for children. This includes reports of child molestation that occurs outside of the Association “EBBiH-JD” and/or is required by law or local regulations to be reported to local authorities, which may include family, public or institutional allegations of child molestation.

G. Guests: Everyone who is not employed by the Association “EBBiH-JD” and is not its representative, and is invited to attend projects or participate in activities provided by the Association.

H. Communication with the public: Dialogue in a public space with the aim of sending a message to a specific audience. Events, conferences, book promotions, TV, radio or magazines, e-mail and social networks are some of the forms of public communication.

I. Representatives: Employees, volunteers, interns, partners and others who work with children for the benefit of the Association.

J. Social Networks: Forms of electronic communication/content used to share information, comments, messages, images, video and other content through the Association’s social networks.



General rules

Interactions of the Association's employees and collaborators with children are always founded on respect for the dignity of the child, for their empowerment and their rights, with special focus on the right to protection against abuse.

Any and all activities involving contact with children take into account the child's right to privacy.

Direct contact of our employee/collaborator with children is adapted to the child's needs and happens only if the child consents to it.

In the course of interaction, children are always addressed with respect and the language used in conversation is adapted to their capacity.

As well as this, all employees and collaborators of Association "Education builds BiH – Jovan Divjak:

- treat all children equally, no matter their origin, appearance, convictions;
- show respect for the child's otherness, other convictions, other experiences, other child-like perspective;
- listen to children attentively;
- use non-judgmental language, no labels, express themselves in a way adapted to the child's level of development;
- create within the Association a culture of openness and mutual responsibility, facilitating discussion of numerous topics and issues regarding child protection.

Confidentiality in matters of Child protection policy

Association "Education builds BiH – Jovan Divjak" has an obligation to manage sensitive information with due care, professionally and in accordance with relevant laws.

Staff must keep all information regarding any report of suspicion or actual incident strictly confidential and may disclose information only to Association's management.

Values/principles in working with children

Child protection ensures that employees, field workers, volunteers, associates and guests will not expose children to risk or abuse.

Values and principles in working with children:

- Children's safety, health and well-being come first;
- It is necessary to respect the rights of children prescribed by the Convention on the Rights of Children, as well as to promote, respect and improve them;
- Children should be protected from any form of abuse and exploitation;
- Children's opinions must be accepted and respected;
- Children, users of any type of services, or the target group of the project implemented in the Association will participate and contribute to the development of activities;
- Children's interests should be protected and promoted;



- It is unacceptable to discriminate, exclude or marginalize a child;
- The partners we work with must respect and accept child protection standards in each project;
- Respect for children's privacy and confidentiality of information.

We will realize the values and principles by:

- Always work in the interest of the child, respecting his individuality;
- At every opportunity, treat the child with respect and respect for his needs;
- Work on the protection and promotion of children's rights, prescribed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Appreciate and respect the opinions and attitudes of children;
- Work with children with the aim of meeting their needs and strengthening their capacities, abilities and developing their potential;
- Understand children in the context in which they live, develop empathy for differences;
- Work in partnership with parents/guardians and professionals, in order to ensure, protect and improve children's rights;
- Employees, volunteers, field workers and outside collaborators must not be left alone with the child.

Children with different opportunities or with developmental difficulties

When children with special needs take part in our projects, representatives will make every effort to ensure inclusion and safety.

In order to promote the best way of providing services to children with different opportunities or difficulties, it is best to:

- Consult with the child to better understand his or her needs
- Consult with the parent/guardian to better understand the child's needs, as well as limitations, if any, on the activities offered
- Be aware of the attitudes that the child, his or her family, the community and other children in the projects or activities may have towards the child with developmental difficulties and encourage inclusion and participation to the highest possible limits.

Projects and activities must be inclusive and well designed for children with special needs and developmental difficulties. For children whose different capabilities or disabilities may be invisible or non-obvious, staff will, within their capabilities, make reasonable efforts to adapt project activities, to promote inclusion, and to offer alternative activities in which all children can participate. The validity of a special need should never be questioned or dismissed.

Violation of children's privacy

The protection of the child's privacy refers to the child's private data, as well as photos, texts, movies, etc. about children produced for public display purposes.

Any information about the child's history, health condition or family origin must be carefully stored in the Association's administration. This information must be treated with confidentiality and discretion.



A child's privacy is, for example, violated by the production of unauthorized material for public display (photos, films, texts, etc.) depicting a boy or a girl; or disclosure of sensitive information within a context that reveals the child's identity.

Children or even their parents or guardians may not always be aware of a certain form of emotional abuse that can occur during a fundraising campaign, and various activities related to public relations or communication.

The Association "EBBiH-JD" respects the child's right to privacy. All collaborators and external partners involved in the dissemination of information about children and the production and distribution of material for public display shall act in accordance with the following guidelines:

- When producing material for public display that depicts a child, we ask both the child and his or her legal guardian (or at least an adult who cares for the child) for permission to do so.
- We don't actively ask children to do or say anything that might make them feel portrayed as 'objects of pity' (e.g., talk about their past or ask for donations).
- We use children's names carefully, especially when they are associated with sensitive information about the same children (e.g., family background, their health, disability or negative behavior).
- We act carefully when it comes to combining textual and visual information whenever the text includes sensitive information about a child and whenever a photo or video shows sensitive aspects of a child's life and reveals his or her identity.

Acting according to these guidelines ensures respect for the child's privacy, and at the same time prevents and raises awareness of violations of that privacy. Based on these guidelines, representatives who work directly with children have the right and obligation to protect children from any attempt to violate their privacy - regardless of whether it is intentional or not.



Procedures

Prevention of incidents within the Policy on protecting children

A. Mitigation of child protection risks in project planning and implementation

To promote safety, inclusion and fair participation for all children regardless of their abilities, race, nationality, religious beliefs, languages, gender or gender association, LGBTQ+ identity and medical/physical conditions, all projects and activities will be assessed to see if they take these factors into account, from the beginning of the project inception process to their completion. The above factors are not final.

A risk assessment will be conducted for all projects and activities involving children or those that have a direct impact on children. All projects from their inception to completion will be evaluated to ensure they meet child protection standards. In addition to projects, other activities carried out by the Association, implementers or partners may include but are not limited to research, advocacy, media campaigns and events (including children's participation).

Where possible, the "Two-Adult Rule" will be practiced, whereby two or more adults, members of managements supervise and monitor all activities in which children are involved and present at all times. The two-adult rule must be used because it (1) significantly reduces the risk of an abuse incident, (2) protects against false accusations, (3) reduces liability and possible claims of neglect, and (4) offers additional assistance in the event of an accident or emergency.

Representatives must never:

- Behave in ways that may be violent or put children at risk of abuse
- Hit, physically assault or physically harass children or threatening to do so
- Engage in behavior that is physically inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Engage in sexual activity or have a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 regardless of age of majority/consent or local custom
- Staying alone overnight with one or more children participating in the Associations projects or activities who are not family members, either in their home, the premises of the project or somewhere else
- That a child participating in the project, who is not a member of their family, stays overnight in their house
- Sleep in the same bed with a child participating in the project or sleep in the same room where the child sleeps, without being a member of their family
- Exchange personal contact information or ask children for their personal information
- Develop relationships with children that may be exploitative or violent
- Use language, suggest or offer advice to children that is inappropriate, abusive or violent
- Offer children things of a personal nature that they can do themselves (e.g., toileting, dressing, feeding, washing, etc.)
- Contribute to or participate in child behavior that is unsafe or illegal
- Act in ways that are embarrassing, humiliating, belittling or degrading towards children, or perpetuate any form of emotional harassment



- Discriminate, show unfair preference or different treatment towards individual child users, excluding others;
- Asking to meet with children away from adults or spending too much time alone with a child away from others in a way that can be interpreted as inappropriate and/or,
- Expose children to inappropriate images, movies, music and websites including adult content, inappropriate images (pornography) and violence.

This list is neither complete nor limited to the above. Representatives must, at all times, avoid actions that could be interpreted to constitute malpractice or potentially abusive behavior. Representatives should never be put in a position to be attacked and accused of misconduct.

B. Active supervision of visitor representatives

All representatives and visitors will be monitored and supervised by Association's staff when working directly with children to ensure that their behavior complies with the Policy. Before making contact with the children, they will be familiar with the full version of the Policy. The same procedure is carried out with all individuals, institutions, partners and external collaborators who will work with children through the projects of the Association.

C. Protection of children in all partnerships

Protection of children will be respected by all partners, representatives, external collaborators and all other individuals or organizations/institutions with whom we will work on project activities. All partners are obliged to respect the Policy.

D. Visitors and Child Protection Policy

All visitors will be familiarized with the Child Protection Policy in its full size in English and BCS language.

Intervention in cases of suspected child abuse

We take all expressed concerns seriously and take appropriate measures. Quick and transparent measures are taken that take into account legal responsibilities.

All representatives are responsible and have an obligation to report any suspicion of child abuse (or other concerns in the field of child protection). Any adult who denies any information or conceals any incident of abuse is considered an accomplice.

All forms of child abuse are taken seriously, without exception, and all must be reported according to severity. Our job is always to respond, regardless of whether the abuse is considered severe or mild. In responding, we ensure that a transparent and fair process is followed so that no one is wrongly convicted and that the rights of all involved are protected.

Concerns related to the protection of children can be reported to the Executive Staff, who will form a team of three people that will adequately respond in an appropriate manner in accordance with the policy and keep records of every reported case of child abuse. This team consists of the director and two other members of the staff. The alleged abuser or abusers must not be members of the team.

Confidentiality is of the utmost importance in the conduct of abuse cases; information should be treated with care. The child or any other person who manages information about children must be aware that, if a case is reported, information about said abuse is shared only with persons authorized to access the information, i.e., the team and other involved persons.



Children, co-workers or other cases of reporting adults are supported and protected. A person accused of child abuse has the right to a fair hearing.

In all cases of potential or proven child abuse, the priority is custody and protection of the child. At the same time, the protection of all persons involved is guaranteed.

Allegations or concerns about child abuse by another child should be handled with particular care; however, they must be dealt with through child protection procedures. Overall work with young people who have committed abuse requires an effective approach that ensures the protection of victims while at the same time supporting the young person in facing and changing his/her behavior. Any such approach requires:

- Understand that a child who has abused another child is significantly different from adults who have committed similar crimes, because the child is not fully aware of why he committed the abuse and what the consequences are;
- keep in mind that the best interest of the child is the highest priority when making all decisions - for both the victim and the abuser.

If an adult commits abuse, legal measures are taken in accordance with the legislation.

There is clear leadership where one person is responsible for handling information and internal and external communication about child abuse cases. The team is helping the person.

Decisions and measures are taken quickly.

Cases are reported to child welfare authorities in accordance with the legislation. The person in charge of internal and external communication should inform the competent authorities for social welfare and police authorities.

Written records of all reported cases of abuse and their outcomes are kept in the archive.

Procedure in case of child disclosure of abuse

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, a staff member or volunteer should:

1. Listen to what happened without showing a state of shock or disbelief
2. Accept what was said and allow the child to speak openly
3. Reassure the child, but do not make promises that may not be possible to keep
4. Never promise the child that you won't tell anyone - because that is ultimately not in the best interest of the child
5. Reassure him or her that what happened was not his or her fault
6. Emphasize that it was the right thing to say
7. Listen, only ask questions when something needs to be clarified
8. Explain what needs to be done next and who needs to be told
9. Create a written trail and report the incident without delay



Policy implementation and monitoring

This Child Protection Policy comes into force at the moment of its signing by the Executive Director and all staff will receive a copy.

This Child Protection Policy will be reviewed at the latest 2 years from coming into force to make sure it remains effective and appropriate. Any revision to the Policy document must be communicated to all employees and collaborators.

The Executive staff is responsible for implementation and execution of Child Protection Policy.

Any violation of this Policy is considered a disciplinary offense, which may result in the cancellation of all employment contracts signed with the personnel involved.

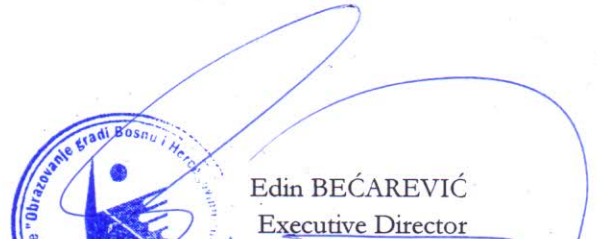
Code of conduct for representatives

All representatives, will sign the following statement:

By signing this statement, I undertake to comply with the Child Protection Policy:

- that in my work I will be guided by humanistic, moral and ethical values of the profession as well as laws, protocols and other binding documents for the purpose of protecting children's rights and protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation;
- that I will regularly participate in additional educations and supervisions;
- that I will treat all children equally, regardless of sex, skin color, race, language, religion, political or other belief, national or social origin, property, birth or any other circumstance;
- that I will encourage children's participation in decision-making;
- that I will promote positive behaviors and non-violent communication by my example and responsible behavior;
- that I will teach children how to protect themselves from violence;
- that I will take care of the anonymity and confidentiality of all data about children, parents and other involved users;
- that, if there is suspicion or knowledge that a child is at risk, i.e., exposed to any form of abuse or neglect by peers or an adult, conduct a conversation with the child in an appropriate manner and inform the management of the findings, i.e., that I will comply with the written protocols and guidelines of the Association.

Sarajevo, March 13, 2025



Edin BEĆAREVIĆ
Executive Director