CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

# SA Omanäolise Kooli Arenduskeskus

## 1. Purpose

This policy ensures that all children engaged in the activities of SA Omanäolise Kooli Arenduskeskus are protected from harm, abuse, and exploitation. It establishes our commitment to uphold and protect each child's rights and safety in all our activities. Children's participation must take place in a safe, informed, and meaningful manner.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff members, trainers, volunteers, subcontractors, partners, and external stakeholders involved in the activities of SA Omanäolise Kooli Arenduskeskus in Estonia and in international cooperation. It applies to both physical and online interactions with children.

## 3. Guiding Principles

- The best interests of the child are the primary consideration in all actions.

- Zero tolerance for any form of abuse or exploitation.

- Meaningful and age-appropriate participation of children.

- Non-discrimination based on gender, disability, cultural, or socio-economic background.

- Confidentiality and respect for privacy.

- Respect for children's dignity and rights at all times.

## 4. Definitions

- Child — A person under the age of 18.

- Child protection — Measures and systems to prevent and respond to abuse, violence, and exploitation.

- Child participation mechanism — A structured activity that allows children to express their views and participate in decision-making processes.

## 5. Preventive Measures

- All staff, volunteers, and contractors working with children must undergo background checks (including criminal record checks) prior to engagement.

- All individuals must be informed about the Child Protection Policy and complete a mandatory safeguarding training before starting their work.

- All project activities and materials will be designed to be age-appropriate, safe, and inclusive.

## 6. Risk Assessment and Safety Measures

- Risk assessments will be conducted for all activities involving children to identify potential risks and develop appropriate mitigation strategies.

- Safety protocols will be implemented for all physical and online engagements with children.

## 7. Safe Participation of Children

- Children will participate in safe environments appropriate to their age and background.

- Formats such as moderated focus groups and anonymous feedback tools will be used.

- Special support measures will be provided for children from vulnerable groups.

## 8. Meaningful Child Participation

Children have the right to freely express their views in all matters affecting them. Their views will be considered according to their age and maturity. Children will be consulted and involved throughout activities, including:

- Focus groups before trainings and campaigns.

- Feedback forms and participatory workshops during implementation.

- Co-creation of learning materials and activities where appropriate.

- Inclusive participation methods will be adapted for children from vulnerable groups.

## 9. Reporting Mechanisms

- Clear and confidential reporting channels will be provided for reporting concerns about child abuse, inappropriate behavior, or risks to children's well-being.

- Reports will be investigated promptly and appropriately, involving child protection services where necessary.

## 10. Response and Follow-up

- Incidents will be documented, reviewed without delay, and appropriate corrective action will be taken.

- Support services, such as psychological or legal assistance, will be provided to affected children.

- Staff or volunteers involved in violations will be subject to disciplinary action, including reassignment or suspension.

## 11. Monitoring and Review

- Implementation of the Child Protection Policy will be monitored continuously.

- The policy will be reviewed annually and after any serious incident.

- Feedback from children and other stakeholders will be collected to inform improvements to the policy.

## 12. Public Accessibility

- This Child Protection Policy is publicly available on the SA Omanäolise Kooli Arenduskeskus website and accessible to anyone who comes in contact with the organization.

## 13. Accountability

- The leadership team is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.

- Managers must ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are clearly communicated and enforced within their teams.

- A designated Child Safeguarding Officer oversees the application of the policy and acts as a point of contact for concerns.

This Child Protection Policy is compliant with the International Child Safeguarding Standards of Keeping Children Safe (2024 version).