

Code of conduct for safeguarding Children

During its activities, POUR LA SOLIDARITÉ- may have to work with children. That is why it is important to know and respect the principles of child protection set out in this Code of Conduct.

I. Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, the following terms shall be understood as defined below:

- **Children:** Anyone under the age of 18 years old.
- **Safeguarding children:** this concept covers all actions taken by the association to ensure the safety of all children with whom it interacts. Safeguarding children includes the prevention of neglect, abuse and physical, sexual and psychological violence against children that may be committed by employees and other persons under the responsibility of PLS¹.
- **Improper treatment / Child abuse:** any non-accidental act, omission or neglect which deprives a child of his or her rights and well-being, and which causes or is likely to cause physical, psychological or social harm²

Types of child abuse:

- **Physical violence:** situation in which a person intentionally injures or threatens to injure a child. It can take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, pushing or grabbing, resulting in injuries such as bruises, cuts, burns or broken bones.
- **Psychological violence:** chronic attack on a child's or young person's self-esteem, through insults, threats, mockery, intimidation or ostracism.
- **Neglect:** lack of appropriate attention, supervision or guidance; failure to provide for the child's basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter and supervision, to such an extent that the child's health and development are jeopardised.
- **Sexual abuse of a child:** situation in which an older or older child, an adolescent, or an adult uses a child for his or her own or a third party's sexual stimulation, pleasure or economic gain.

¹ Definition inspired by that given by UNICEF in its Practical Guide to Safeguarding Children for Business, 2018, available in line : [UNICEF_ChildSafeguardingToolkit](#)

² https://www.educo.org/Educo/media/Documentos/InformacionFinanciera/Politique-et-code-de-conduite-pour-la-bienveillance_FR.pdf , p. 3

II. Persons committed to respecting this code of conduct & contact person

Everyone involved in the work of POUR LA SOLIDARITÉ-PLS has a responsibility to protect children. As part of their duties within the association, PLS staff members may find themselves in a situation where they will be working with children. This code of conduct therefore applies to:

- All members of staff.
- All the volunteers and trainees.
- All persons under contract, such as consultants.
- All external partners involved in PLS activities involving children.

Each person must therefore be aware of this Code of Conduct and the principles it contains and undertake to comply with them.

Violence against children is intolerable. PLS is committed to protecting the children and young people with whom it comes into contact. Therefore, any person who poses a risk to the safety and well-being of children will not be allowed to work with them. All members of staff have a responsibility to promote the fundamental rights of children and to act to protect them. PLS management is responsible for implementing this Code of Conduct and ensuring that all parties comply with it.

PLS appoints Françoise KEMAJOU, Managing Director, as its Child Protection Officer. This person is the contact person for any activities planned with children. She will ensure that this Code of Conduct is disseminated and adhered to whenever the association plans to work with children and during activities carried out with them. This person will ensure that the people involved in these activities do not represent any risk to the safety and well-being of the children. He or she will ensure that these activities run smoothly and will be immediately notified of any element that could represent a risk to the safety or well-being of the children, as well as any event suspected of having caused harm to a child.

If this is the case, the following procedure must be followed:

1. Gather relevant information and documentation.
2. Conduct an internal investigation (including interviews with witnesses).
3. Suspend the person involved from their activities if they work with children for the duration of the investigation.
4. Inform the data subject of the information concerning him or her that has been notified.
5. Give them the opportunity to present their side of the story before any decision is taken on their liability.
6. Ensure that the victim receives the necessary protection and psychological and socio-economic support.
7. Ensure that the person who reported the suspicious items remains informed of the progress of the procedure thus activated.

III. Principles

a. Respect for children's fundamental rights

As part of its activities, POUR LA SOLIDARITÉ-PLS is committed to respecting and promoting the fundamental rights of children as recognised in the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child³. It recognises and undertakes to promote the exercise of the following rights by the children involved in its activities:

- Freedom of expression, thought, belief and religion.
- Children's capacity to discern.
- The right to privacy.
- ...

b. Promoting the protection and well-being of children

PLS is committed to promoting the well-being of children and protecting them from harm. As such, it has a responsibility to ensure that its staff, operations, programs and activities do not cause harm to children. It will immediately report any concerns in this regard to the relevant authorities.

Safeguarding children involves taking preventive action to minimise the risks to children's fundamental rights, safety and well-being. It also involves reacting appropriately when such risks arise and materialise.

c. Best interests of the child

PLS takes the best interests of the child into account in its activities. Any action taken when the association works with children must serve the best interests of the child. Under no circumstances may these actions be contrary to the best interests of the child.

d. Special precautions

As part of its activities, PLS will adopt special measures to prevent risks to the children with whom it works. It will:

- Ensure that you obtain the children's consent to participate in the activities in which they are involved.
- Obtain the written consent of at least one parent or legal guardian in the form of parental authorisation to take part in these activities.
- Duly inform the persons concerned of the purpose of the activities carried out, the involvement of the child and the consequences of participation in the said activities, particularly as regards the dissemination of images.
- Ensure that children's image rights are respected. In the event of photos being circulated, PLS will ensure that the parents have given their consent. PLS undertakes not to publish on its networks any photo likely to harm children, in particular their right to dignity and privacy.

³ Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989; available online: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>