

Mreža MaMa

Policy for Safeguarding and Child Protection



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1. Introduction

Mreža MaMa, as a network of 56 youth centers across Slovenia, is committed to safeguarding and ensuring the well-being of children, young people, and vulnerable adults involved in all its activities. It is the responsibility of everyone within the organisation—staff, volunteers, and board members and members – youth centers—to create and maintain a space that is safe, inclusive, and welcoming for all.

This policy applies to all events, activities, interactions that Mreža MaMa organises as well as within the Mreža MaMa network (both physical and online), as well as the working environment and relationships among staff, volunteers, and participants.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure the safety and protection of children, young people, and vulnerable adults from harm and abuse in all forms.
- Establish clear guidelines and expected behaviors for all members and stakeholders of Mreža MaMa.
- Promote a culture of respect, inclusion, and accountability in all aspects of our work.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals involved in Mreža MaMa, including:

- Staff
- Volunteers
- Board members
- Youth centers - members
- Youth center participants
- Any external individuals or organizations involved in Mreža MaMa's activities

4. Expected Behaviors

All members, staff organisations and individuals connected to Mreža MaMa are expected to act with integrity, respect, and care for others, particularly when interacting with children, young people, and vulnerable adults. The following behaviors are expected at all times:

- **Respectful Communication:** Use respectful language in all interactions.
- **Empowerment:** Encourage and empower young people and vulnerable individuals to express their views and opinions without fear of judgment or retaliation.
- **Awareness of Power and Privilege:** Be conscious of your position of power or privilege and how it might impact others.

- **Constructive Dialogue:** Focus on critiquing ideas, not individuals, when engaging in discussions.
- **Equality in Participation:** Create physical and social conditions where all participants can contribute as equals.
- **Respect for Boundaries:** Respect individuals' personal space and boundaries at all times.
- **Sensitivity to Vulnerability:** Be mindful of the specific needs and vulnerabilities of minors and vulnerable adults, and ensure behavior is appropriate and considerate in their presence.
- **Active Bystander:** Take an active role in identifying and addressing inappropriate or unacceptable behavior. Speak up or report when witnessing any form of harm or harassment.

5. Unacceptable Behaviors

The following behaviors are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated in any form:

- **Sexual Harassment or Unwanted Physical Contact:** Any form of unwanted sexual attention, harassment, or physical contact.
- **Physical Violence, Aggression, or Intimidation:** Any form of physical harm or threats of violence towards others.
- **Verbal Aggression or Intimidation:** Shouting, verbal abuse, or intimidating speech.
- **Bullying, Humiliation, or Degradation:** Any form of bullying, mocking, or degrading behavior towards others.
- **Segregation:** Excluding or isolating individuals based on their identity or background.
- **Discrimination:** Discriminatory behavior or slurs based on age, gender identity or expression, race, ethnicity, citizenship, religion, belief, sexual orientation, political convictions, disability, civil status, socio-economic background, linguistic identity, or physical appearance.
- **Abuse of Power:** The abuse of one's position of authority or power, especially in relationships that may have an imbalance of power (e.g., staff and young participants).

6. Safeguarding Procedures

Mreža MaMa has established safeguarding procedures to prevent harm and ensure the safety of minors and vulnerable individuals. All incidents, concerns, or allegations must be reported promptly and handled in accordance with these procedures.

Reporting Mechanism:

All concerns related to safeguarding or child protection must be reported to the designated person or relevant authority within the youth center and to Mreža MaMa. Concerns can also be raised anonymously if needed.

Handling Reports:

All reports will be taken seriously and handled with confidentiality, ensuring the protection of the individual(s) reporting the concern. Immediate steps will be taken to investigate and address any incidents of harm, harassment, or abuse.

Responding to Incidents:

In cases of serious harm or danger, appropriate authorities (such as law enforcement or child



protection services) will be contacted immediately. Mreža MaMa will provide support to the affected individual(s) throughout the process.

7. Responsibility and Accountability

All staff, volunteers, board members and members – youth centers are responsible for upholding this safeguarding and child protection policy. Each individual is expected to take responsibility for their own actions and to act in the best interests of the young people and vulnerable adults involved in Mreža MaMa activities.

Leadership at Mreža MaMa will ensure:

- Regular training on safeguarding and child protection for all staff and volunteers.
- Clear communication of safeguarding policies to all members and participants.
- Immediate action when any breaches of the policy occur.

8. Conclusion

Mreža MaMa is committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and positive environment for children, young people, and vulnerable adults. By adhering to this safeguarding and child protection policy, we ensure that every individual in our network is treated with dignity and respect, and that their safety and well-being are prioritized.

All members are expected to familiarize themselves with this policy and integrate its principles into their daily activities and interactions.