

# EASD safeguarding or Child<sup>1</sup> Protection Policy (CPP)

## Purpose and scope

EASD (Environmental Ambassadors for Sustainable Development) values its commitment to care and protect the children affected by our work (directly or indirectly) and act in their best interests. This guideline is an integral part of the EASD's culture and activities performance - child safeguarding is the responsibility that EASD to ensure that the staff, activities, programs and projects do not harm children. It is publicly available (at the organization's website).

This policy applies to all people working for EASD in any capacity, including employees, volunteers, contractors, external consultants, suppliers and business partners. Policy is based on relevant legislation and rules at international (UN), EU (Serbia is a candidate country for EU membership) and national level, as well as on EASD experience in, until now, implementing different projects (among them, supported by UN agencies, EU – including Horizon and Erasmus).

EASD has in place the following internal acts:

**Ethics codex**, approved by the Council on September 24, 2019

**General Data Protection Regulation Policy**, approved by the Council on September 24, 2019 ( Informed Consent augMENTOR )

**Environmental and Sustainability Policy**, approved by the Council on April 22, 2022

**Policy to Prevent and Address Sexual Harassment and Abuse**, approved by the Council on April 22, 2022

**Child Protection Policy** approved by the Council on April 22, 2022

Statute (<https://ambassadors-env.com/en/files/Statute-2016.pdf>) and these documents, together with this CPP document, are considered as guiding mandatory management documents in EASD functioning.

In addition, as National Operator of FEE programs in Serbia, including Eco-schools, all persons involved in organization activities on behalf of EASD must know what the safeguards for children are and what appropriate response is taken, if the harm takes place. Having in mind the functioning of this program in Serbia, each Eco-school's coordinator is considered a collaborator<sup>2</sup> of the EASD performing voluntary and/or project-based work for the EASD.

## Interactions with children and principles of protection and support

EASD activities have a history of direct and indirect contact with the children.

**Only direct contact** with children EASD has through activities involving a network of Eco-schools in Serbia,<sup>3</sup> in different projects and activities. These include primarily education and project-based activities, i.e., being in the physical presence of a child/children (occasionally or regularly, for a short or long term). Such activities may involve questionnaires with children,

---

<sup>1</sup> A child is anyone under the age of 18, and all children have an equal right to protection regardless of any personal characteristic, including their age, gender, ability, culture, racial origin, religious belief and sexual identity

<sup>2</sup> Definitions are included in the text

<sup>3</sup> EASD is the National Operator for the international (Foundation for Environmental Education) Eco-Schools Program in Serbia

focus groups, consultation on training and documents, pilot testing of a training or other activity, workshops, visits to schools, participation in meetings/conferences, etc.

**Indirect contact** with a child is understood as contacting children by means of electronic communication (through collaborators) or posts (EASD website and social media). Employees and collaborators of the EASD do not contact children using private communication channels.

### **Safeguarding measures are in place**

Direct contact of EASD employees/collaborators with children is adapted to the child's needs and happens only if the child consents to it in line with the Personal Data Protection Act and Prescribed Ethical Norms (EU and national). EASD employees and collaborators explain to children what to expect during the interaction, children are always addressed with respect and the language used in conversation is adapted to their capacity, treat all children equally, show respect for the child's experiences and child-like perspective, listen to children and treat their version of events with due respect, use non-judgmental language, continuously improve within the EASD a culture of openness and mutual responsibility, facilitating discussion of activity related topics and issues regarding child protection.

When having access to information on children, such as children's names, addresses, photographs, case studies, etc., EASD strictly follows the Personal Data Protection Act and Prescribed Ethical Norms (EU and national), as well as EASD's internal acts already in place.

**Rules** for a safe relationship between an employee/collaborator and a child in their contact with children include child risk prevention and mitigation measures, including:

- It is unacceptable to display any behavior bearing signs of emotional, physical, or sexual abuse
- It is unacceptable to maintain private relationships with the child outside the framework of work activities.
- Any suspicions regarding the proper conduct of EASD employees and collaborators are investigated and clarified without delay.

**Support children and families** - To prevent children in risk, EASD runs educational initiatives addressed to collaborators directly, and parents/caregivers, professionals working with children and children themselves, indirectly, through the process of Eco-schools' application and maintenance status (minimum once per year during Eco-schools Coordinators meeting). Educational activities are founded on validated models based on experience and proper evaluation. EASD also endeavors to promote ongoing professional advancement of its employees and collaborators; when conducting research with children and adolescents, EASD makes sure their interests are not at risk.

### **Roles and Responsibilities - structure and reporting mechanisms**

Any suspicions regarding the proper conduct of this EASD policy must be reported in writing by official channels immediately<sup>4</sup> by child/caregiver/professional/collaborator/staff to the National Coordinator of the Eco-Schools Program in Serbia and the EASD person in charge of personal data protection. Responding to the situation must be in an appropriate manner (case by case), leading to a solution/further step following the law, i.e., legal interventions.

Every reported case of a child at risk is treated seriously and investigated, whether reported by a child, caregiver, or professional and no matter if suspected abuse was perpetrated by another child, caregiver, professional or employee/collaborator of the EASD. The decision to intervene is made by a team made up of the National Eco-school coordinator and the EASD

---

<sup>4</sup> within the 7 days from concrete abuse/risk detected

person in charge of personal data protection, and if needed, an expert in protecting children against abuse will be contacted. The decision to intervene will be communicated to the EASD Council.

### **Coming in force and the improvement process**

The Child Protection Policy of the EASD comes into force at the moment of its full version being published and made available to the EASD Council, to all EASD employees/ collaborators and at the moment of being posted on the EASD website at [www.ambassadors-env.com](http://www.ambassadors-env.com).

The coordinator responsible for the implementation and execution of this act is the National Coordinator for the Eco-Schools Program in Serbia. His/her duties include, among others: coordinating introductory training sessions and refresher courses for employees and collaborators once per year, performing a survey to investigate the efficacy and appropriateness Policy, and to evaluate how familiar EASD employees and collaborators are with the Policy. Based on the outcomes of consultations and surveys, every two years (more frequently if needed), the Policy coordinator will initiate a revision of the Policy to make sure it remains effective and appropriate. In case that EASD activities and projects go beyond direct contacts explained above, this Policy must be amended. Proposed changes will be presented to the Council to act following the EASD Statute.

All newly appointed EASD employees and collaborators are expected to familiarize themselves with the rules for upholding children's rights and principles of safeguarding and processing personal data in EASD. This is confirmed by the employee's signature on a relevant statement appended to the employment contract.

This EASD child safeguarding policy (CPP) is endorsed by Eco-Schools Coordinators, an annual meeting held on October 10, 2021, after transparent discussion among children/children's parents. EASD Council members are informed and endorse and approve this act at the online session held on April 22, 2022.

Signed following Article 12 of the Statute, by the President of EASD



EASD President

Aleksandra Mladenović

Belgrade, April 22, 2022