



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Preamble:

El Sistema Greece is a community music project inspired in the philosophy and methodology of *El Sistema* in Venezuela, created in September 2016. It promotes the social inclusion of refugee children in the Greek and European society by means of group music practice; it also addresses disadvantaged Greek children and youth who wouldn't otherwise have access to studying music.

The current document is issued in Athens and is approved by its founders and administrators in order to be implemented in all its activities and locations.

PART I:

1. INTRODUCTION

El Sistema Greece's mission

Musical education has been proven to be an incredibly effective medium for achieving long term social change, for both the children involved and their families.

The Funders of El Sistema Greece have experienced the changes inspired by the practice of *ensemble* music and wish to provide a new platform for dialogue and togetherness across the diverse communities inside the refugee camps and towards the local Greek society. Within the choir or orchestra, the students learn to consistently work to achieve their goals, in a bid to pursue excellence. By spending time with their peers in an environment of tolerance and solidarity, they grow and learn to accept, amidst a culture of peace. By teaching them music, we wish to inspire them to build an inclusive society for all and to strive for a better future.

Our mission is to provide free music education to all children who have lived the experience of leaving their homes in search of a future. We aim to give them a social and educational experience which will improve their lives in the camps and pursue their inclusion within Greece and the European society as a whole, regardless of nationality or religion.

El Sistema Greece is a concrete possibility to improve children's life in the camps and to prepare them for a world they need to be included in.

We operate with local teachers and collaborate with international artists and pedagogues, in the belief that these children deserve the best educators we are able to offer.

Our partners are local and international, private and public, since we believe that all the parts of society have to be included in the welcoming process and in the mission of dealing with the migrations issue and supporting those who flee from war, persecution and poverty.

PART II:

2. SCOPE, PRINCIPLES AND DEFINITIONS

A. The Scope of this Policy

The overall purpose of this document is to ensure the prevention and avoid the risk of occurrence of situations in which children's rights are infringed during the activities organized, hosted or participated by El Sistema Greece and to set out the corresponding procedures.

This document's goals are to:

- frame the principles and procedures for the support of the staff, partners and volunteers in their practices
- make sure that procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities shall be followed.

These procedures cover actions of anybody who represents El Sistema Greece and not only internal staff, but also associates.

Staff includes:

- all staff, national and international
- all volunteers and interns

Associates includes:

- all contractors, e.g., consultants
- all board members
- all partners including local community based partners
- guests and visitors

B. Principles of The Policy

This policy is written in accordance with the Greek national and international legislation and norms concerning children and youth rights, including but not limited to:

- The UN Convention on the Rights of a Child (ratified by Greek Law Nr. 2101/1992), including the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (ratified by Greek Law Nr. 3080/2002) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (ratified by Greek Law Nr. 3625/2007).
- The European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights (ratified by Greek Law Nr. 2502/1997).
- The Directive 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA (transposed into the Greek legislation by means of Law Nr. 4267/2014).
- The International Labour Organization Convention (n° 182) on the prohibition of the worst forms of child labor and the immediate action to eliminate them, 1999 (ratified by Greek Law Nr. 2918/2001).
- The Greek Presidential Decree Nr. 36/1994 on measures for the protection of children.
- The Greek Law Nr. 1837/1989 for the protection of child labor.

Furthermore, we are committed to the following fundamental principles:

- the welfare of a child or young person will always be paramount
- the welfare of families and refugee communities will be promoted
- the rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people, their families and communities will be respected and listened to
- those people in positions of responsibility within our organization will work in accordance with the interests of children and young people and will follow the policy outlined below
- those people in positions of responsibility within our organization will ensure that the same opportunities are available to everyone and that all differences between individuals will be treated with respect.

Definitions

- A child is under the age of 18 (as defined in the United Nations convention on the Rights of a Child)
- Youth are those belonging to the age group 15 to 25 years (in line with main provisions of Greek legislation)
- Abuse is perceived according to the meaning of the term “abuse” as it is outlined in the Greek legal framework and jurisprudence as well as in the relevant international norms. It may take various forms, including the following: Physical abuse, Emotional abuse, Sexual abuse, Bullying, Neglect.

Abuse or neglect of a child or young person is caused by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent them. Children may be abused in family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or by a stranger.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. This may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Bullying

Bullying is aggressive behaviour that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power or strength. It occurs when a child or person is subjected to negative behaviour, repeated over a period of time.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

PART III:

3. POLICY PROCEDURES AND IMPLEMENTATION.

It is the policy of ESG to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from all forms of abuse, including physical, emotional and sexual harm.

This organization is committed to creating a safe environment in which young people can feel comfortable and secure whilst engaged in any of ESG's activities, residential courses or workshops. Staff and volunteers should, at all times, show respect and understanding for individuals' rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the ethos and principles of ESG.

The procedure is approved by the founding members and the management staff of the organization and revised on a yearly basis by a specific internal committee, in charge of supervising on the protection of the child's rights in the organization's activities.

El Sistema Greece will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- Adopting child protection guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- Following carefully the procedures for the recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers

El Sistema Greece will act in order to prevent and combat risks of Child Rights' Infringement as follows:

Conducting Risk assessment on all operations of ESG;

- 3.1 Establishing a safe recruitment policy, including guidelines for ESG Staff and Volunteers
- 3.2 Establishing service delivery contracting and sub-contracting policies;
- 3.3 Communicating its policy clearly and effectively towards the staff and organizing specific trainings for them;
- 3.4 Establishing professional boundaries that safeguard professional integrity for the staff and that assure correctness of the relationship between staff members and the beneficiaries, by means of a mandatory CODE OF CONDUCT;
- 3.5 Establishing a clear process for the reporting of safeguarding issues and concerns;
- 3.6 Requesting commitment to this policy by visitors and confirmation of awareness;
- 3.7 Regulating the use of images and videos by visitors and external persons;

3.1 Risk Assessment

A risk assessment of all El Sistema Greece's operations, programmes and project activities will be conducted. Risk mitigation strategies, which minimise the risk to children, will be developed and incorporated into the design, delivery and evaluation of programmes, operations and activities involving or impacting children.

3.2 Recruitment policy and guidelines for ESG Staff and Volunteers

A) Recruitment process

El Sistema Greece ensures safe recruitment through the following processes:

- recruitment adverts or application details shall state that the recruitment is done in line with safe recruitment practices
- definition of jobs and roles descriptions with clear reference to safeguarding responsibilities
- interviews are conducted according to equal opportunity principles and interview questions are based on the relevant job description and person specification
- a written declaration shall be provided by the candidates, declaring that they have no criminal records regarding an offence towards a child and do not know of any reason why anyone would deem them unsuitable to work with children
- formal job offers are made after checks for suitability in line with this policy and in conjunction with job's specifications. Therefore, any document concerning health, education and generally any necessary information may be requested, provided that it is absolutely necessary for the certain purpose, its use will be strictly limited within this purpose and it is in line with the privacy and data protection legislative principles.

B) Guidelines for ESG Staff and Volunteers

Attitudes: ESG staff and volunteers should be committed to:

- treating children and young people with respect and dignity
- always listening to what a child or young person is saying
- valuing each child and young person
- recognising the unique contribution each individual can make
- encouraging and praising each child or young person

Leading by example: ESG staff and volunteers should endeavour to:

- provide an example, which we would wish others to follow
- use appropriate language with children and young people and challenge any inappropriate language used by a child or young person or an adult working with young people
- respect a child and young person's right to privacy

One to one contact: ESG staff and volunteers should:

- not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- in the unlikely event of having to meet with an individual child or young person, make every effort to keep this meeting as open as possible
- if privacy is needed, ensure that other staff are informed of the meeting and its whereabouts

Physical contact: ESG staff and volunteers should never:

- engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games
- allow, or engage in, inappropriate touching of any kind

General: ESG staff and volunteers should:

- be aware that someone might misinterpret our actions no matter how well intentioned
- never draw any conclusions about others without checking the facts
- never allow themselves to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking situations such as tantrums or crushes
- never exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues or make suggestive remarks or gestures about or to a child or young person.

3.3 Employment Agreements - Service delivery contracting and sub-contracting policy issues

El Sistema guarantees that all persons employed and providing services to it shall be contractually bound by any and all policies and codes of conduct of El Sistema, including the present one, by means of a specific written reference in their contract. Failure to comply with these policies shall give grounds for immediate termination of the contractual relationship.

Furthermore, El Sistema Greece ensures that partnerships with individuals or other institutions (contracting and sub-contracting) shall not be in contrast with the scope and principles of this policy and that there will be a systematic checking towards this. Contracts and memorandums of agreement for partnership delivery work will include reference to this policy and a sentence of commitment to respect its basic principles and standards, for the whole duration of the partnership.

3.4 Awareness of staff members, volunteers and partners

Special focus on communication, training and support for permanent staff, partners, volunteers shall be given by El Sistema Greece. This will include:

- discussion about the safeguarding policy and confirmation of reading and understanding it
- clear information and guidance of all staff (including partners and volunteers), so as to ensure familiarity with reporting processes
- initial training on safe working practices, on child and youth protection with a special focus on those belonging in vulnerable groups

3.5 Professional boundaries and Code of Conduct

Professional boundaries are established to safeguard the professional integrity, the correct detachment and the proper relationship between a staff or volunteer member of El Sistema Greece and a beneficiary, and they are based on a mandatory code of conduct – see Annex n. 1 to this policy.

3.6 Process for the reporting of safeguarding issues and concerns

Please, see Annex 2 for an example of the reporting process in case of issues.

El Sistema Greece has nominated specific officers for safeguarding issues. If staff members or volunteers are concerned about a child, they must share their concerns to these persons. The purpose of this consultation is to discuss concerns and decide what action is necessary. (It is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused, or respond to a child wanting to talk. This practice can help clarify vague concerns and result in appropriate action).

Also, children themselves should be aware that they can count on somebody if they feel they are somehow being threatened or if they feel uncomfortable in any relationship with adults.

Awareness and response

ESG staff and volunteers need to be alert to the potential abuse of children, both within their families and also in other surroundings, including abuse by other ESG staff members and volunteers.

The organization members should know how to recognize and act upon indicators of abuse, or potential abuse, involving children. All members of the organization should be alert and ready to respond to any suspected or actual abuse of a child, in accordance with these procedures.

It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parents/carers about any concerns.

However, staff members and volunteers must not discuss their concerns with parents/carers in the following circumstances:

- where sexual abuse is suspected
- where organized or multiple abuse is suspected
- where fictitious illness by proxy (also known as Munchausen Syndrome by proxy) is suspected
- where contacting parents/carers would place a child, staff members or volunteers, or any others at immediate risk.

A. Case Management: what to do if children talk to ESG staff and volunteers about abuse or neglect

It is recognized that a child may seek staff members and volunteers out to share information about abuse or neglect, or talk spontaneously individually or in groups when they are present. In these situations, staff and volunteers must:

- listen carefully to the child. DO NOT directly question the child
- give the child time and attention
- allow the child to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events
- make an accurate record of the information: timing, setting and people present; the child's presentation as well as what was said. Do not throw this away as it may later be needed as evidence (see Annex n. 2, a template form for internal reporting)
- use the child's own words where possible
- reassure the child:
 - that you are glad he or she has told you
 - that he or she has not done anything wrong
 - by telling him/her what you are going to do next
- explain that you will need to help keep the child safe
- do NOT ask the child to repeat his or her account of events to anyone.

Immediate action may be necessary at any stage in involvement with children, families and communities.

In all cases, it is vital to take whatever action is needed to safeguard the child or young person.

- if emergency medical attention is required, this can be secured by calling an ambulance (dial 166) or taking a child to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department
- if a child is in immediate danger, the police should be contacted (dial 100) as they alone have the power to remove a child immediately if protection is necessary, via the Policy Protection Order.

If the responsible persons (inside ESG) are implicated in the concerns, then these concerns should be discussed directly with Social Services.

ESG staff members and volunteers should consult externally with the local Social Services Department in the following circumstances:

- when there is an inability to consult promptly or at all with a Designated Child Protection Person
- when there is uncertainty after internal consultation as to whether child protection concerns exist
- when there is disagreement as to whether child protection concerns exist
- when the concerns relate to any member of the organising committee; consultation is not the same as making a referral, but should enable a decision to be made as to whether a referral to Social Services or the Police should progress.

In Greece, the public service offers the following helplines:

- **1107**: SOS national line for the protection of the minors. National Centre for Social Solidarity (Greek acronym EKKA), public agency
- **197**: SOS national line for the adults. National Centre for Social Solidarity, public agency.
- Public prosecutor for the protection of minors, public authority
- **100**: SOS police line for the protection of the citizens. Hellenic Police, public authority

Finally, a private agency:

- **1109**: SOS national line for the protection of the trafficked victims. A21 Campaign, NGO, private agency

B. Making a referral (see Annex 3 for a template)

A referral involves giving Social Services or the Police information about concerns relating to an individual or family in order that enquiries can be undertaken by the appropriate agency, followed by any necessary action.

Any referral procedure of El Sistema Greece should be put in practice by one of the two Designated Child Protection Persons.

Parents/carers should be informed if a referral is being made, except in the circumstances outlined in the paragraph "Awareness and response". The inability to inform parents, however, should not prevent a referral being made. It would then become a joint decision with the social services about how and when the parents should be approached and by whom.

Information required for a referral: as much of the following information as possible should be given.

- the name, telephone number, and position of the staff member or volunteer making the referral
- full name and address of the child or young person, and their age and date of birth
- names and address of parents/carers, and their telephone numbers

- details of the child's gender, ethnicity, first language, and any special needs
- the names of professionals known to be involved with the child and/or family e.g.: Music teachers, ESG Staff, NGOs volunteers, camps' staff etc.
- the nature of the concerns and foundation for them (including dates and times of any specific incidents)
- whether the child or young person has been spoken to? And if so, what was said
- an opinion on whether the child may need urgent action to make them safe
- a view on what appears to be the needs of the child or the family
- whether the consent of a parent/carer has been given to the referral being made
- whether this information has been passed on to anyone, and if anyone else has been consulted.

The unavailability of some information should NOT prevent a referral being made.

Following a referral, ESG staff members and volunteers must ensure that an accurate record of the concern(s) made at the time is kept within El Sistema Greece. The organisation should ensure that any records made in relation to a referral should be kept confidential and in a secure place.

C. Confidentiality

Information in relation to child protection concerns should be shared on a "need to know" basis. However, the sharing of information is vital to child protection and therefore the issue of confidentiality is secondary to a child's need for protection.

Children and young people have a right to information, especially any information that could increase their safety.

When sharing information, ESG staff members and volunteers should be sensitive to the level of understanding and maturity, as well as to the level of responsibility, of the child or young person with whom they are sharing.

A copy of ESG's Child Protection Policy will be made available to all staff, volunteers, partners and visitors.

D. Internal Procedures – Legal measures

In case ESG becomes aware of a potential incident of misconduct, as per the above, it will immediately take measures such as temporarily suspending any person(s) involved in the case, investigate and if it deems it necessary, proceed with the termination of such person(s) contracts pursuant to the applicable legal provisions of the Greek legislation. In close and constant cooperation with ESG's legal department, all necessary legal requirements shall be followed, based on the individual characteristics of every case.

3.7 Commitment to the policy by visitors and confirmation of awareness

Any person such as sponsors, volunteers, contractors, suppliers, donors, journalists, consultants, occasional visitors who visit El Sistema Greece's infrastructures or offices and may come into contact and/or interact with children and young adults who benefit from ESG activities:

- are given a copy of this policy and are made aware that they must act in accordance and comply with it whilst visiting ESG infrastructures or offices
- declare their written commitment to respect and comply with the safeguarding policy principles, as well as with the principles and rules provided in the code of conduct.

3.8 Regulation of use of images and videos by visitors and external persons

Photographs, videos and other images are forbidden to be taken and/or published or publicly displayed except in cases where an appropriate consent is given, provided that:

- these pictures are respectful
- they do not expose beneficiaries to any danger or risk
- they do not infringe personal data protection provisions
- they could not be interpreted as sexually suggestive.

The pictures of children cannot be used in order to gain money in any way, nor for journalistic purposes, without written permission from El Sistema Greece.

4. Monitoring & Evaluation

In order to ensure the protection of children's rights and to prevent situations that might affect the rights thereof, El Sistema Greece will follow a standard procedure that is subject to annual review or whenever deemed necessary (e.g. through the emergence of unforeseen situations that could jeopardise the rights of the child, and due to the need to streamline the process of preventing and protecting children's rights, amending or supplementing related legislation, or in order to tailor to donors' requirements, etc.).

5. List of documents annexed

5.1. Code of Conduct 5.2 Flow chart report 5.3 Incidence reporting form