

Child Protection Policy at the ITAKA Foundation - Center for Missing Persons

The ITAKA Foundation has established and implemented a Child Protection Policy and for ensuring their safety.

1. The ITAKA Foundation has a document constituting the Child Protection Policy. The document is effective as of the date of its signature.
2. The entire team handling the hotline 116 000, including volunteers and interns, are familiar with the contents of the Child Protection Policy.
3. The provisions of the Child Protection Policy document apply to all employees, volunteers and interns.
4. The Foundation's Board of Directors has appointed persons responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Child Protection Policy, and its role and tasks are clearly defined.

I. General principles of the Child Protection Policy

Adopted in 1989, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, known as the world constitution of children's rights, contains a broad catalog of state obligations to every child under the age of 18. Poland ratified the Convention in 1991.

The status of the child is based in the Convention on the following assumptions:

- 1) the child is an independent subject, but due to immaturity requires special legal protection;
- 2) the child as a human being requires respect for identity, dignity and privacy;
- 3) the family is the best educational environment;
- 4) the state is supposed to support the family, but not to replace the family in its functions.

The creation of the child protection system was guided by 4 principles: the welfare of the child, equality, respect for the rights and responsibilities of both parents, and state assistance.

The Child Protection Policy of the ITAKA Foundation is based on the above assumptions and follows these principles.

II. Standards

A minor who becomes a beneficiary of the Foundation should receive special treatment. The basic principle for an ITAKA Foundation employee in dealing with a minor is the minor's welfare.

The following standards related to child protection are observed at the ITAKA Foundation:

Standard 1. The Foundation has established and implemented a Child Protection Policy and for ensuring children's safety.

The Foundation has a document constituting its Child Protection Policy.

1. The Child Protection Policy document records:

- procedures for reporting suspicions and intervening, which specify step-by-step what action to take when a child is being abused or the child's safety is threatened by strangers, family members, facility staff and peers,
- principles for the protection of the child's personal data, which determine how information about the child is stored and shared, and principles for the protection of the child's image, which determine how it is recorded and shared,
- rules for children's access to the Internet and protection of children from harmful content
- rules for safe relations between the staff of the institution and the child, defining what behaviors are not allowed in contact with the child.

2. All Foundation staff, including volunteers and trainees and interns, are familiar with the contents of the Child Protection Policy document.

3. The provisions of the Child Protection Policy document apply to all members of the facility's staff, including volunteers and interns and trainees.

4. The Foundation's Board of Directors has appointed persons responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Child Protection Policy, and the person's role and tasks are clearly defined.

Standard 2. The Foundation conducts an ongoing assessment of compliance by the Foundation's employees, volunteers and interns with the Child Protection Policy document.

1. Recruitment of employees at the facility is carried out according to rules that include assessing the preparation of candidates to work with children and verifying the references provided by recruits and hires.
2. All employees, including volunteers and interns, are required to submit declarations regarding their lack of criminal or disciplinary record or pending criminal or disciplinary proceedings against them for offenses against sexual freedom and morality and violent crimes against a person.

Standard 3. The Foundation provides its employees with education on child protection and helping children in emergency situations.

1. When starting work at the Foundation, all staff members, including volunteers, interns receive child protection training that includes familiarization with the Child Protection Policy.
2. All staff members, including volunteers and interns at the Foundation, have been trained to recognize the symptoms of child abuse.
3. All staff members, including volunteers and interns at the Foundation, have been trained in the area of the legal responsibility of employees required to intervene.
4. All staff members, including volunteers and interns at the Foundation have been trained in the Blue Card procedure.
5. The Foundation's employees have easy access to the contact information of local facilities that deal with child protection and provide emergency assistance (police, family court, crisis intervention center,

social welfare center, health care facilities).

6. At least one Foundation staff member has been trained in methods and tools for educating children about protection from violence and abuse and online safety, and has lesson plans and educational materials for children. The Foundation has assigned Anna Nita, the Foundation's psychologist, to this task.

Standard 4. The Foundation offers parents education on how to raise children without violence and protect them from violence and abuse.

1. The Foundation has information available, useful for parents, on:

- raising children without violence,
- protecting children from violence and abuse,
- child safety risks on the Internet,
- opportunities to improve parenting skills,
- contact information for facilities providing assistance and care in difficult life situations.

2. All parents participating in the Foundation's activities are acquainted with the institution's Child Protection Policy.

Standard 5. The Foundation offers children education on children's rights and protection from violence and abuse.

1. During meetings, workshops and trainings conducted by the Foundation's staff, children are informed about their rights. Each time, part of the class is devoted to protecting children from violence and informing them who they can go to for help in case of abuse or exploitation.

2. The Foundation provides educational materials for children about children's rights and protection from the dangers of violence and sexual abuse, as well as Internet safety rules (brochures, leaflets, books).

3. The Foundation displays information for children on how to get help in difficult situations, including the numbers of toll-free helplines for children and young people.

Standard 6. The Foundation monitors and periodically verifies the compliance of its activities with the adopted child protection rules.

1. The adopted policies and implemented child protection practices are reviewed at least once a year.

2. The Foundation conducts public consultations with parents/guardians and children to review the principles and practices of children's rights protection within the framework of the ITAKA Foundation's Child Protection Policy.

III. Detailed rules of the Child Protection Policy at the ITAKA Foundation

The main elements of the ITAKA Foundation's Child Protection Policy consist of:

1) Intervention procedures that specify step-by-step what action to take in a situation where the life or

safety of a child is at risk

- 2) Intervention procedures in case of signals of suicidal intent of a child/teenager and of a child/teenager experiencing violence
- 3) Principles for the protection of the child's personal data, which determine how information about the child is stored and shared, and principles for the protection of the child's image, which determine how it is recorded and shared,
- 4) Rules for recruiting employees, volunteers, interns and trainees and monitoring their work in order to minimize the risk of child abuse
- 5) Guidelines for monitoring compliance with the Foundation's rules.

Intervention procedures

A. Procedure in a situation of violence against a child/teenager

The Foundation receives information about various types of violence by children and adolescents - the most common is family violence, but also peer violence.

Domestic violence is a single or repeated intentional act or omission that violates the rights or personal property of family members, as well as other persons cohabiting or keeping one household, in particular exposing these persons to danger of loss of life, health, violation of their dignity, bodily integrity, freedom, including sexual freedom, causing damage to their physical or mental health, as well as causing suffering and harm to those affected.

- a) The 116 000 hotline's staff and volunteers diagnose whether the information provided by the minor is potentially true by asking clarifying questions about the circumstances, course, time and place of the incident. The conversation is used to get as much information about the child as possible. A record is prepared from each conversation.
- b) Once the personality and exact details of the minor are established, an intervention is made. When we receive, while working on the helpline, a signal indicating that the caller is a victim of crime, we are obliged to intervene, by force of law:

Article 304 of the Code of Criminal Procedure

§1. Anyone learning of a crime prosecuted ex officio being committed has a social duty to notify the prosecutor or the police. The provision of Article 191 §3 shall apply accordingly.

§2. State and local government institutions that, in connection with their activities, have learned of a crime prosecuted ex officio being committed are obliged to immediately notify the public prosecutor or the police, and take the necessary measures until the arrival of the body established for the prosecution of crimes or until the body issues an appropriate order to prevent the obliteration of traces and evidence of the crime

Article 12 of the act on counteracting domestic violence Persons who, in connection with the performance of their official or professional duties, become aware of the suspicion that a crime of

domestic violence prosecuted ex officio has been committed, shall immediately notify the police or prosecutor. Persons who witness domestic violence should notify the police, the prosecutor or any other entity working to prevent domestic violence.

- c) After determining the personal data of the minor and his/her address, the Foundation employee ascertains from the adequate Social Welfare Unit or the local Court (from the Probation Service) whether the family and the child's situation is known to these institutions. During this contact, information obtained from the child is passed on from the Foundation with a request for insight into the family's situation.
- d) The minor receives feedback from the person on duty at the Line that this person appreciates the trust he/she has placed in the ITAKA Foundation and confirmation of the rightness of notifying our Foundation of the problem. At the same time, the person on duty on the Line clearly informs the minor that the situation presented by him/her requires the intervention of third parties and does not get involved in "a shared secret". The person on duty on the Line points out that the signals given by the child/teenager are serious and require him/ her, as the adult who became familiar with them, to respond appropriately to protect the child.
- e) The next step is to find out from the minor whether the situation that has affected him/her has been reported previously to another adult or another organization.
- f) The person on duty on the Line makes an appointment for the next contact with the minor. At the same time, the person encourages the child to contact the Foundation as soon as possible should he/she wish to provide additional information about the harm.
- g) During the conversation, information is given to the minor where else he/she can turn to for help
 - 800 12 12 12 Child Ombudsman Helpline (toll-free number),
 - 800 100 100 Helpline.org.pl (toll-free number),
 - 116 111 Child and Youth Helpline (toll-free number).

Contact information for other places involved in helping children is also provided to the person harmed. Organizations working on violence issues include:

- Mederi Foundation - Mon-Fri 8am-3pm, tel. 22 815-76-03 (Non-Governmental Organization for the Prevention of Violence Against Children);
- Blue Line - Mon-Fri 2pm-2pm tel. 22 668-70-00 (National Emergency Service for Victims of Family Violence "Blue Line");
- Nobody's Children Foundation
- Committee for the Protection of Children's Rights

Cases of violence reported by minors are discussed in the Search and Identification team (expanded to include lawyers) and by joint decision an intervention method is chosen. When interventions are made, the Intervention Card, which is attached as Attachment 2, is filled out.

B. Procedure in the situation of intent to commit suicide

Situations of special concern are related to signals of a minor's suicidal intent and the minor experiencing violence. In the case of such calls, the Foundation requests the intervention of relevant services or institutions.

Observations by the ITAKA Foundation show that the number of suicides among young people is increasing. When a minor who contacts the ITAKA Foundation Support Line declares an intention to commit suicide, the intervention procedure developed between the Police and the ITAKA Foundation is launched immediately.

If a minor speaks of intent to commit suicide, and the person on duty at the Support Line does not have any detailed information about the minor's whereabouts, he/she requests assistance from the Warsaw Police Department.

Response Algorithm:

1. call the emergency number 112 (24-hour)
2. after the 112 operator is notified, immediately ask to be connected to the Duty Station of the Warsaw Police Department (refer to the arrangements between the ITAKA Foundation and the Warsaw Police Department).
3. in a conversation with the Duty Officer of the WPD, provide all the information we have about the calls from the person signaling the intention to commit suicide (what we know about the person, what suicide risk factors we have discovered, the number of the caller that is displayed on the phone, their personal information)
4. we also provide information directly to the Duty Station of the Warsaw Police Department at 22 603 65 55 (it is 24/7 line, but the duty officer first answers the 112 calls)

If the information came by email, we send all email correspondence in the Foundation's possession (including the metadata) to the 24/7 supported mailbox: dyzurny.ssk@ksp.policja.gov.pl.

If such a situation happens on a single-person duty, we inform the Support Line coordinators of the incident by writing to email: koordynatorzy@zaginieni.pl. The above instructions apply to the situation where we DO NOT KNOW the whereabouts of the person at risk of suicide.

In a situation where the Foundation is in possession of the contact person's address information - we notify the nearest police station with a request for urgent intervention at the indicated address.

In such a situation, it is important to provide at least two people on duty on the 116 000 Line. Then the first person remains in telephone contact with the minor on the one hand trying to calm the crisis situation, enter into a contract, and on the other hand get as much data as possible about the child and the place where he/she is staying. The second person simultaneously prepares and carries out the intervention with the police.

Cases of such interventions are described in detail and specially marked in the ITAKA Foundation Database. A record of the incident is also prepared, constituting Attachment No. 1. The record is presented immediately to the Foundation's Board of Directors.

C. Protection of personal data of a minor

The child's personal data shall be protected under the terms of the act of 29 August 1997 on the protection of personal data.

The person on the 116 000 Line is obliged to maintain the secrecy of the personal data it processes and to secure the personal data from unauthorized access. Each employee receives and signs an authorization for the processing of personal data, valid for the duration of employment with the ITAKA Foundation.

A child's personal information is shared only with persons and entities authorized under separate regulations.

A child's personal data is provided by the Foundation's Board of Directors to courts, prosecutors and the police on their written request.

Publication of the image of a missing child in the media is done on the basis of:

- notification of a missing child of a police unit
- written consent of the child's parents/guardians submitted to the ITAKA Foundation (signed missing person report form)

The decision to publish in the media the image of a missing child as a consequence of parental abduction is made in each case on the basis of a joint opinion of the psychologist and lawyer of the ITAKA Foundation, and, if necessary, the Foundation's Board of Directors.

Attachments:

No. 1 - Record of reception of information on the disclosure of violence against a child

No. 2 - Intervention Card

No. 3 - Monitoring of labor standards

The document was signed and has been in effect since 2015. The additions were made in February 2016.

Attachment No. 1 - Record of receipt of information on the disclosure of violence against a child

Name and surname of the child

Description of situation, events:

Place, date

Signature of ITAKA Foundation employee

Attachment No. 2 - Intervention Card

INTERVENTION CARD

- 1. Name and surname of the child
- 2. Cause of intervention (form of abuse)
- 3. Person notifying of suspected abuse
- 4. Description of actions taken by psychologist, pedagogue, educator

Date

Action

- 5. Meetings with the child's caregivers.

Date

Action

- 6. Form of intervention taken.
 - o Notice of suspected crime.
 - o Request for insight into the child's situation.Another type of intervention. What kind?

.....
.....

- 7. Intervention data (name of the authority to which interventions were reported) and date of intervention.

- 8. Intervention results: - actions of judicial authorities if the school has obtained them, - actions of the institution, - actions of parents.

Date

Action

Signature of ITAKA Foundation employee

Attachment No. 3 - Monitoring of labor standards

MONITORING OF STANDARDS - QUESTIONNAIRE

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Are you familiar with the Child Protection Policy? | Yes | No |
| 2. Have you reviewed the contents of this document? | Yes | No |
| 3. Do you apply the principles of the Child Protection Policy in your work? | Yes | No |
| 4. In your assessment, is the Child Protection Policy followed at the ITAKA Foundation? | Yes | No |
| 5. Have you observed any breeches of the Child Protection Policy at the ITAKA Foundation? | Yes | No |

6. Do you have any comments to the Child Protection Policy? What are they?
.....
.....
.....

7. What theme/issue should be included in it? Why? What regulations do you propose?
.....
.....
.....

8. Should any item/issue be removed? Which one? Why?
.....
.....
.....

9. Should any item/issue be removed? Which one? Why? How?
.....
.....