

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY OF Metàlogos Ricerca Consulenza Formazione MISSION AND VALUES OF THE COOPERATIVE

The Metàlogos Ricerca Consulenza Formazione was founded with the desire **to build social wellness** and provide **educational services** aimed at answering the needs of the territory in which it operates, working alongside children and families.

The Metàlogos Ricerca Consulenza Formazione pursues the general interest of the community, and it promotes the fundamental rights of the citizen, paying **special attention to the needs of families and minors**.

It works in a network with other local, regional, national and European organizations, to valorize the abilities and the talents of individuals, institutions and of the collectivity. It believes in **relationship as a source of change and social wellbeing**.

The Cooperative safeguards the right of children to grow inside their own family of origin: it builds educational paths able to promote the wellbeing of children, restore positive relationships in their family and living environment.

Families and children are welcomed with their own stories and the Cooperative accompanies them in their path to recognise their skills and talents.

The values of the Metàlogos Ricerca Consulenza Formazione are:

- **The central role of the person:** the person is considered at the centre of every intervention; it recognizes their unique characteristics; it respects their personal dignity and safeguard it as right-possessing individuals.
- **Promotion of the community:** it promotes the construction of meaningful connections with every single element of the territory.
- **The network:** every project is thought up in a subsidiarity optic, with special care directed to collaboration and co-responsibility with families, institutions, third sector, and other involved realities.
- **Professionals educators:** it promotes both professional and personal growth of the educators through a well-defined system of shared theories and praxis, training paths, and internal oversight; its choices and its actions are oriented to trustworthiness and passion.
- **Transparency:** clear and honest communication between members and with partners is promoted;
- **Economic sustainability:** all services and projects are thought up and realised in a perspective of efficacy and efficiency so to achieve specialized and well-defined objectives using both public and private resources, as well as the personal investment of members.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Metàlogos Ricerca Consulenza Formazione is committed to protecting children, promoting effective actions to guarantee their well-being and protection, focusing on the prevention of physical and mental abuse and all forms of violence against children. All operators who come into contact with children have a duty to protect them.

Underlying this Child Protection Policy is the will to defend the rights of children enshrined in the International Charters such as:

- **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** (1989);
- **European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights** (1996);
- **Hague Conference** (1993);
- **Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse** (Lanzarote Convention, 2007);
- **General Comments n.13** (2011) of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The Metàlogos Ricerca Consulenza Formazione aims to guarantee the protection of the rights listed above to every child with whom any staff member comes into contact.

## DEFINITIONS

- **Minor:** anyone under the age of 18 (*UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 1*).
- **Child abuse:** any act that could harm a child physically or psychologically, directly or indirectly, or preclude the prospects of a healthy and safe development towards adulthood.

There are different types of abuse:

- **Physical abuse:** is defined as “the intentional use of physical force against a child that results in – or has a high likelihood of resulting in – harm for the child’s health, survival, development or dignity. Much physical violence against children in the home is inflicted with the object of punishing” (*WHO - Preventing child maltreatment: a guide to taking action and generating evidence, 2006*).

**Sexual abuse:** is defined as “the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared, or else that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Children can be sexually abused by both adults and other children who are – by virtue of their age or stage of development – in a position of responsibility, trust or power over the victim (*WHO - Preventing child maltreatment: a guide to taking action and generating evidence, 2006*).

**Emotional and psychological abuse:** “involves both isolated incidents, as well as a pattern of failure over time on the part of a parent or caregiver to provide a developmentally appropriate and supportive environment. Acts in this category may have a high probability of damaging the child’s physical or mental health, or its physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. Abuse of this type includes: the restriction of movement; patterns of belittling, blaming, threatening, frightening, discriminating against or ridiculing; and other non-physical forms of rejection or hostile treatment” (*WHO - Preventing child maltreatment: a guide to taking action and generating evidence, 2006*).

- **Violence:** “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation”. (*“World report on violence and health”, 2002*).

## **COMMITMENT TO CHILD PROTECTION PRINCIPLE AND VALUES**

In pursuing its objectives, the Metàlogos Ricerca Consulenza Formazione, recognising the central role of the person and the importance of the networks, undertakes to pursue, respect and promote the fundamental rights of children. In particular, the Metàlogos Ricerca Consulenza Formazione is committed to:

1. Recognise the well-being of the child as a fundamental element.
2. Recognise the right of every child to protection from all kinds of violence or abuse and protect them without any form of discrimination based on age, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, sex, genetic characteristics, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, gender identity or sexual orientation, property, birth or disability.
3. Improve the situation of all children through the promotion of their rights as stipulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This includes the right to freedom from abuse and exploitation.
4. Protect children and young people who come into contact with the cooperative, by adopting a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
5. Promote and activate support and protection networks for children in situations where this is deemed necessary.
6. Working with children and young people, their parents, with their siblings or guardians to promote the well-being of minors.
7. Ensure that the educators, employees, and collaborators of the Metàlogos Ricerca Consulenza Formazione do not harm the children.
8. Listen to the children and take their views into account in all aspects of the work and activities of the Cooperative involving them.
9. Report situations of real or potential danger to a child to the working teams and, if necessary, to the competent institutions.

10. Ensure that child protection issues are addressed by pursuing transparency and confidentiality. These are guaranteed by standardised case management procedures and by protecting the privacy and the personal data of the people involved.

#### **COMMITMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION CRITERIA**

The Metàlogos Ricerca Consulenza Formazione is committed to respect its tasks through:

**Awareness:** all staff, children and families are aware of the children's rights and the problem of child abuse.

**Prevention:** ensure to minimize the risk for children through safe recruitment, education and training of staff and of associates;

**Reporting:** ensure that all educators and professionals working with children are aware of situations requiring early reporting and are aware of the actions to be taken.

**Responding:** ensure that all the necessary action to support and protect children in case of presume, proved or attempted abuse are taken.

The Metàlogos Ricerca Consulenza Formazione also:

- will not allow a person to work within the cooperative if this person has been identified as a risk to the safety or well-being of children;
- will take seriously all concerns about child safety raised;
- take specific measures to protect children of concern;
- will always be guided by the principle that the best interests of the child are paramount;
- work with families to ensure the protection of children.

#### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

##### **DON'Ts**

All staff who, in any capacity, collaborate with the Metàlogos Ricerca Consulenza Formazione must never:

1. use physical or psychological violence against a child;
2. have attitudes towards children which may adversely affect their harmonious and socio-relational development;
3. have relations with children who could in some way be considered exploitative, ill-treated or abused;
4. act in ways which may be abusive or which may put children at risk of exploitation, ill-treatment or abuse;
5. use inappropriate, offensive or abusive language, suggestions or advice;
6. giving money or property to a minor outside the parameters and purposes established by the project activities;
7. engage in any form of behaviour which is detrimental to the dignity of the child;
8. discriminate, treat differently or favour some children to the exclusion of others;
9. discriminate against minors in relation to specific physical, cognitive or gender-related characteristics, ethnic origin, religious belief

## **Dos**

It is important that Metàlogos Ricerca Consulenza Formazione staff:

1. be attentive in recognizing situations that may pose risks to minors and know how to handle them;
2. reports, through teamwork, to the appropriate institutions any concern, suspicion or certainty about possible abuse or mistreatment toward a child, as it is set forth in this Policy;
3. ensures an environment where children and their families can easily raise and discuss all kinds of issues and concerns;
4. develops a sense of responsibility such that inappropriate actions and behaviours do not go unnoticed or even tolerated;
5. enhance the abilities and skills of minors.
6. convey knowledge to minors of their rights, and how to act to ensure their enjoyment;
7. respect children's rights and treat them fairly, honestly, and with dignity and respect;
8. cooperates to adequately meet the needs of the child and their families.

This Child protection policy has been discussed, approved and subscribed unanimously by the Metàlogos Ricerca Consulenza Formazione shareholders meeting on January 9, 2024