



**Kandersteg**  
International  
Scout Centre

# Child Safeguarding Policy

17 March 2018

KISC Association Committee

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# 1. Introduction

Kandersteg International Scout Centre serves as the World Scout Centre of the World Organisation of the Scout Movement. The aim of the Centre is to support the international aspect of the movement by promoting international friendship among Scouts and Guides of all countries; by contributing to the personal development of each individual by using the methods and principles of Scouting; by providing practical opportunities to enjoy an alpine experience.

KISC and Scouting's successful existence is credited to the fact that it has taken on the responsibility to provide a safe environment where children and young people can develop in many ways.

This policy aims to address any child safeguarding risks that may be involved with the operation of the Centre as it regards its guests, staff members and other stakeholders.

## 2. Principles

There are risks involved in hosting 12'000 young people at the Centre every year. KISC realises and acknowledges that some children may be exposed to abuse, particularly in an environment where young people can interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds, age, genders, ethnicities and faiths.

Within its remit, KISC has a responsibility to ensure and take appropriate measures to ensure that our staff and programmes do no unintended or intended harm to children. Furthermore, that our visiting guests are informed about this principle and are encouraged to identify any required steps they should take to prevent and mitigate any child safeguarding risk based on shared beliefs to foster a safe and supportive environment without prejudice, abuse, harassment or bullying of any sort, at any level.

In an organisational context, UNICEF defines child protection as "a broad term to describe philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In the current context, it applies particularly to the duty of organisations – and individuals associated with those organisations – towards children in their care.<sup>1</sup>

WOSM uses this definition as a basis for shaping its own approach to child and youth protection. In Scouting, child and youth protection is a responsibility shared by every individual involved in the Movement. The well-being, development and safety of children should consistently be considered a top priority in all Scouting related activities. It is important that this mentality is adopted and displayed by everyone, including all adults who perform supporting and administrative tasks and may or may not be in direct contacts with children and young people.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> UNICEF Child Protection Policies and Procedures Toolkit

<sup>2</sup> Keeping Scouts Safe from Harm, WOSM's Position Paper on Child and Youth Protection

The International Child Safeguarding Standards of Keeping Children Safe<sup>3</sup>, the ICS standards and auditing organisation, are based on the following sets of principles:

- All children have equal rights to protection from harm;
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the protection of children
- Organisations have a duty of care to children with whom they work, are in contact with, or who are affected by their work or operations;
- If organisations work with partners they have a responsibility to help partners meet the minimum requirements on protection; and
- All actions on child safeguarding are taken in the best interests of the child, which is paramount.

This **KISC Child Safeguarding Policy** describes KISC's commitment to Child Safeguarding at KISC. It is inspired by the principles of UNICEF, WOSM World Safe from Harm Policy and the standards of Keeping Children Safe, who on their turn, are based on the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, 1989 (and its optional protocols); the UN Statement for the Elimination of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation and other child-related UN Conventions. Furthermore the Swiss child protection legislation and international good practice.

The aim of this commitment is to ensure we can provide a safe yet stimulating environment in which young people may develop spiritually, mentally, physically and socially. The activities offered by and the work done at KISC, can by their very nature involve elements of risk. The purpose of this policy is to minimise those risks by providing a system to manage them, educate our people, establish procedures and ensure an ongoing development in this area.

### 3. Risk Management and Safe from Harm at KISC

Over 12000 Scouts and Guides visit Kandersteg International Scout Centre every year. The success of the Centre is based on many factors and a very important one is the ability to keep scouts and staff safe from harm. For this reason, the KISC Association Committee has approved a Risk Management Policy<sup>4</sup> in its meeting of April 29, 2017, to ensure the commitment of the Centre to manage risk. This Risk Management Policy includes 'Safe from Harm' mitigation strategies, which include an Alcohol Policy for Guests and Staff, a Safety Policy, and a 'Living at KISC' Policy aimed at KISC Staff.

This KISC Child Safeguarding Policy is an integral part of the Safe from Harm Policy and is a transversal approach to ensure that the safety of our people is integrated in all aspects of our Centre.

This and the other parts of the KISC Risk Management Policy are developed, maintained and updated individually, with the aim of contributing to the overall safety of guests, staff and the visitors of the Centre.

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<sup>3</sup> Keeping Children Safe: <https://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk/how-we-keep-children-safe/accountability/accountability>

<sup>4</sup> KISC Risk Management Policy

KISC's Risk Management Policy describes in detail its governance structure, responsibilities and directives, regarding risk assessment, mitigation strategies, reporting and reviewing procedures.

## 4. Our responsibility and Duty of Care

KISC shares the responsibility for creating a safe environment, and therefore its Duty of Care, with all guests, visitors, participants, staff and volunteers (including the Association Committee).

KISC does not accept any kind of harassment or discrimination of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender harassment, religion, ethnicity, physical or mental conditions or any other form of unintentional or intentional harm.

Observations of misconduct or intentional harm on the KISC premises or during KISC-led activities are to be reported immediately to the director of KISC.

## 5. Legal reference

### 5.1. Swiss Law

Although the age for sexual consent varies widely on a global basis, the situation in Switzerland is clear. The KISC Association Committee is cognisant of the fact that visiting guests may have varying interpretations of sexual consent. Without exception, the response of the KISC Association Committee, in establishing and maintaining this KISC Child Safeguarding Policy, is exclusively dictated by Swiss law, which says:

The Age of Consent in Switzerland is **16 years old**. The age of consent is the minimum age at which an individual is considered legally old enough to consent to participation in sexual activity. Individuals aged 15 or younger in Switzerland are not legally able to consent to sexual activity, and such activity may result in prosecution for **statutory rape** or the equivalent local law.

Switzerland statutory rape law is violated when an individual has consensual sexual contact with a person under age 16. There is a clause in age exemption, allowing minors to consent to partners 3 or less years older.

### 5.2. Other (legal) requirements:

- To make a booking for accommodation, catering and/or activities at KISC, any individuals must be at least 18 years of age. For groups of two or more, at least one person needs to be 18 years of age and take responsibility over the entire group. In

rare occasions, an exception can be made exclusively by the Director of KISC, for individuals between 16 and 18 years of age.

- For a booking to be accepted, those who are making it must acknowledge that they have read and understood the General Terms and Conditions, which include a Guest Declaration Form.
- The Guest declaration form makes explicit their duty of care over themselves and their groups. By agreeing to it, all group leaders accept full responsibility over the actions of all members of their groups, and ensure they will follow instructions given by the staff, follow all other rules of the Centre and, when applicable, follow the rules and regulations of the Scout / Guide Association of which they are members.

## 6. Staff Information

KISC staff consists of temporary volunteers (up to three months) and long-term volunteers (4 months to 3 years) and seasonal or activity related helpers. In total, around 100 Scouts and Guides volunteer at KISC every year. In addition, there are several professionally employed staff members on an open contract.

The pre-requisites for volunteer staff are to be over 18 years of age; to be able to communicate in English; and to be a verified member of a National Scout Organisation recognized by WOSM or a Member Organisation recognized by WAGGGS.

### 6.1. Training

All staff at KISC go through a general training that lasts at least seven days. This covers all operational aspects of the Centre, and include at least 5 hours to cover the topics of Rules, regulations, Child Protection, Safe from Harm, Safety Management, Emergency procedures.

The summer season is the busiest time of the year, when 75% of all KISC guests visit the Centre. Because of the complexity of the operations in the high season, the basic staff training is extended to 12 days and includes a specific session on child safeguarding. The same training standards apply to the winter season.

In the separate session about Child Protection and Safe from Harm, staff are trained on the policies, prevention and mitigation strategies, the code of behaviour, duty of care and the procedures in case of incidents.

### 6.2. Staff Code of behaviour

Our Staff code of behaviour consists of rules and guidelines on how our staff should behave always, and especially when interacting with children.

Our Code of Behaviour is as follows:

- Do treat everyone with respect
- Do provide an example you wish others to follow
- Do plan activities which involves more than one other person being present, or at least which are within sight or hearing of others
- Do respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- Do provide access for younger people to talk to others about any concerns they may have
- Do encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- Do avoid situations that compromise your relationship with young people and are unacceptable within a relationship of trust
- Do remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned
- Do recognise that caution is required even in sensitive moments of counselling, such as dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse
  
- Do NOT permit abusive youth peer activities (e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying)
- Do NOT have any inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others
- Do NOT jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- Do NOT exaggerate or trivialise child-abuse issues
- Do NOT show favouritism to any individual
- Do NOT make suggestive remarks or gestures, even in fun
- Do NOT believe "it could never happen to me"

### 6.3. Incident procedure – staff instructions

Although the overwhelming majority of young people can enjoy Scouting at KISC without suffering any harm, if for whatever reason, something happens that compromises children safeguarding, our staff are instructed to follow the procedure below:

If you suspect a child is being abused:

1. record facts as you know them and immediately inform the Director

2. ensure that the child has access to an independent adult
3. ensure that no Scouting situation arises which could cause any further concern

If a child discloses to you abuse by someone else:

1. allow the child to speak without interruption, accepting what is said
2. do not judge! Try to take away feelings of isolation and guilt by the child
3. advise that you will try to offer support, but that you must pass the information on
4. same steps as 1-3 as in suspecting a child is being abused

If you receive an allegation about any adult or about yourself:

1. record the facts as you know them and immediately tell the Director (or if the Director is involved to the Chairman of the Steering Committee)
2. try to ensure no one is placed in a position that could cause further compromise

It is the duty of the Director to adequately and accurately record the facts as presented to him in a record book. This book is available to him, the Chairman of the Steering Committee and the Chairman of the Association and, in case of a report made to the authorities, to the Swiss police.

## 7. Guest Information & Procedure

Anyone having booked KISC accommodation, consuming catering or participating in KISC-led activities are guests of the Centre. Most guests are Scouts and Guides. There are also guests who are not members of the Scout or Guide movement, nevertheless, they too must abide by the Centre's terms and conditions, and sign the guest declaration form.

KISC actively communicates its commitment to safeguarding by publishing this policy on its website, and make it accessible to all guests who have made a booking, together with the terms and conditions for bookings.

All guests are informed that observations of misconduct on KISC premises or during KISC-led activities are immediately reported to a senior manager of KISC.

## 8. Implementation & Review

This policy is issued by the KISC Association Committee and first approved on March 17, 2018. The implementation of all mitigation strategies described above are the responsibility



of the Director of the Centre, with oversight responsibility by the Steering Committee and ultimately the KISC Association Committee. The Director reports any incidents to the Steering Committee.

It is understood that this policy may not be complete at the time of first approval. Therefore, this policy is reviewed each year, and revisions can be recommended by the Director or members of the KISC Association Committee. A review may also be initiated at any time in case of changes in legislation; changes of the KISC Statutes or other related policies; in the light of learnings identified by the management team or an auditing body and as a result of any other change or event, deemed appropriate by the KISC Association Committee.

## 9. Related Documents

[Risk Management Policy](#)

[Safe From Harm Policy](#)

[General Terms and Conditions](#)

Footnotes as mentioned.