



**Association Community**  
**Child Protection Policy**  
*Updated on 30/11/2022*

**Introduction**

Association Community aims to empower the inhabitants of the Audomarois areas and to promote social diversity. In this sense, Association Community develops and implements activities/actions/projects allowing individuals to meet, exchange, but also to develop skills or to define new opportunities/horizons.

Also, the association's project focuses on children and young people who are the generation of tomorrow. As such, our team guarantees them a caring and safe environment in which they can evolve while respecting their individual and collective rights, as defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and national laws.

In addition, in 2021, the city of Arques has been awarded the title of "child-friendly town" by UNICEF, due to the actions and projects implemented by Association Community for young people.

Whether they are employees, temporary workers, trainees or volunteers, all those who work with children and young people must comply with the rules established within the structure (see below).

The child protection policy also applies to its communication media (posters, videos, newspapers, websites and social networks).

Child protection is therefore an essential element in Association Community's approach and is fully in line with its core activity. It can be broken down into the following 5 aspects :

- **Background and definitions**
- **Policy**
- **People**
- **Procedures**
- **Accountability**

## Background and definitions

Nowadays, children can be victims of violence, of different kind of abuses whatever they are psychological, emotional, physical or sexual. Children can also suffer from neglect and/or exploitation. This can happen within families, schools, institutions and other public or private organisations, associations, community centres... In this sense, the child protection policy aims to prevent these abuses of which children could potentially be victims within the framework of the activities and/or projects implemented by Association Community.

**Child** : is considered to be an individual under the age of 18.

**Violence** : a hard act that is characterised by force, brutality and which can produce damaged effects. It can take different forms: physical, psychological, moral, economic...

**Abuse** : wrong use, overuse or unfair use of something. Exceeding certain rights, whether of an adult or a child, is a wrongful act that jeopardises the safety and/or physical and moral well-being of a child.

- **Physical abuse** : adult or child's intentional act involving the exercise of force and/or restraint resulting in immediate or subsequent injury and/or pain. It also includes exposing a child to an environment that could lead to the development of a pontual or chronic illness.
- **Sexual abuse** : act of inducing or coercing a child to engage in activities of a sexual nature without full understanding or informed consent. This includes, but is not limited to, assaults such as rape, oral sex, penetration, as well as masturbation, kissing and touching. It also includes involving a child in the viewing or production of sexual pictures/videos or inciting a child to engage in sexually inappropriate behaviour.
- **Emotional and/or psychological abuse** : bad treatment that, because of its frequency and/or intensity, has a lasting impact on a child's emotional development. This takes the form of humiliation, mockery, discrimination, intimidation, restriction of movement, threats, harassment (including digital harassment) and other non-physical forms of hostility and/or rejection.

**Exploitation** : using a child for the benefit or interest of a person.

- **Child commercial exploitation** : coercing or forcing a child to work or perform activities for the benefit of others to the detriment of the child's physical and/or mental health, education or proper emotional and/or social development. This includes child labour.
- **Child sexual exploitation** : a form of sexual abuse that forces a child to participate in or undergo sexual acts in exchange for money, gifts, shelter, food, clothing, care, education or affection. Children who are victims of this type of violence are very often manipulated by one or more adults and are not able to make an informed judgement about the situation they are in. The control they endure can take different forms: financial, physical, moral, etc.

**Neglect** : repeated failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs, with serious consequences for the child's well-being and physical and moral/emotional development. This includes failure to provide a child with a safe and secure environment, food, shelter, medical care, clean clothing, and emotional relationships. Neglect can start very early, in the sense that the child can already suffer the consequences in utero if the mother uses addictive substances such as alcohol or drugs.

## Policy

Whatever the action, activity or project implemented by Association Community, the latter undertakes to ensure and guarantee the safety, physical and emotional well-being, as well as the respect of children's rights in general, whether they are members of the structure or whether they participate in an activity from time to time, even outside its premises. In this sense, the association is particularly committed to respecting the rules set out below:

- To develop, implement and enforce this child protection policy with its permanent and temporary staff, as well as with its volunteers, facilitators and any other external person likely to interact with a young audience.
- Involve partners, funders and local authorities in a collective effort to ensure the safety and well-being of children.
- Systematically take into account the safety and respect of children's rights at all stages of the life cycle of a project, action or activity.
- Integrate and systematise the child protection policy into existing internal procedures: strategic and budgetary planning, management, recruitment, partnerships, communication strategy, GDPR protocol...

As stated above, this policy also applies to any activity or communication content, whether in print or digital form, to avoid inappropriate use of pictures/photos or information about a child. Therefore, Association Community is committed to the following:

- To respect the GDPR procedure and, in this sense, not to disseminate photos/pictures or information without the explicit consent of a child and his/her legal representative.
- Do not expose children through photos/pictures where they are undressed.
- Ensure that external parties (journalists, photographers, film-makers, etc.) use the data collected on children correctly.

## People

By the nature of its associative project and its actions, Association Community welcomes and accompanies children during their extracurricular time and also intervenes during predefined school times with establishments in the Audomarois areas.

The structure is also declared to the DRAJES (Délégation Régionale Académique à la Jeunesse, à l'Engagement et aux Sports), which carries out regular checks in the context of group childcare facilities. This guarantees in particular a rate of supervision which ensures the physical and emotional safety of the children.

In this context, the association undertakes to respect the points listed below:

- To provide a safe, caring and respectful environment in which children can develop in a pleasant and stimulating place where they feel comfortable and confident.
- To communicate this child protection policy as soon as possible to the legal representative(s) of the children being cared for, as well as to members, workers, partners, school/college/university directors, local associations and any other organisation likely to interact closely or remotely with the young people attending the association.
- To warn and train permanent, temporary and volunteer staff about the risks to children in the event of non-compliance with or application of this policy.

- To ensure that children can always find a trusted adult to talk to and be actively listened to.
- To protect and advocate for children who are victims of abuse, violence, exploitation or neglect.
- To regularly update this policy in line with laws, decrees and other regulatory requirements that arise from time to time in relation to the protection of children's rights.
- To involve legal representatives and all other stakeholders involved in the lives of children in taking ownership of this policy.

## **Procedures**

In order to ensure the implementation and the compliance with the defined child protection policy, Association Community implements the following procedures:

- All employees, whether permanent or temporary, as well as interns, volunteers and facilitators, are systematically informed and trained if necessary on the commitments made by the organisation in terms of child protection. By signing their work/internship/engagement contract, they commit themselves de facto to respect and apply them. Also, all categories of staff of Association Community must provide a clean police record.
- The Board of Directors is aware of the defined policy and has the authority to validate/revise it.
- The tools (charter, reports, etc.) used to apply this policy are available to the association's children/youth referents, who are in direct contact with the young public. Similarly, monitoring tools are shared between the steering team and the management.
- As soon as a member of staff reports a situation where a child is in danger, a decision-making committee (including a member of the Board of Directors, the Director General, a member of the steering team and a child/youth referent) must meet within five days to discuss the facts reported and to decide, depending on their nature and seriousness, to alert/inform the competent partner organisations, while respecting the child's privacy. However, it is important to inform the child that complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed to act.
- If a member of Association Community's staff, a worker or a partner were to break the rules set out in the policy of the structure or commit an act of abuse, exploitation, violence or neglect of a child, he or she would be summoned by his or her superior in order to take the appropriate decision, in accordance with the seriousness of his or her act.
- The association is committed to regular information and training on the subject in order to adapt its child protection policy to the needs of children and the local context.

## **Accountability**

As mentioned above, the Board of Directors, the management and the members of the steering team are responsible for defining, applying and monitoring compliance with the established policy. The children and youth coordinators are required to apply the policy directly to themselves and to those they may supervise (temporary workers, interns, volunteers).

The latter are also required to create a collaborative working environment that enables them to ensure the well-being and physical and emotional safety of the children who attend the facility.

Good practices, based on field experience, are reported internally and appended to the child protection policy.

Any violation of the policy should be systematically reported to a line manager, directly or indirectly.