

Child protection concept in the International Youth Exchange Department of the Volksbund

A child protection concept is essential to ensure that children and young people in the care of the Volksbund are protected and that their rights are respected. This child protection concept serves as the basis for ensuring a safe environment for children and young people in the context of the activities of the Volksbund's International Youth Exchange Department for national and international youth work.

1. preamble:

The International Youth Exchange Department of the Volksbund is committed to protecting and respecting the rights of children and young people (under the age of 18). This includes the obligation to prevent discrimination, exploitation and abuse of any kind

This responsibility of the Volksbund is in line with German legislation and its regulations for the protection of the welfare of children and in accordance with European standards, in particular with the following laws:

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights
- Basic Law (GG): Article 6 protects the family and emphasizes the rights of children. Article 1 guarantees human dignity, which also applies to children.
- Child and Youth Welfare Act (SGB VIII)
- Federal Child Protection Act
- Criminal Code (StGB) - Contains provisions on offenses against sexual self-determination (§§ 174-184j StGB), violation of the duty of care or upbringing (§ 171 StGB) and offenses against physical integrity (§§ 223-226 StGB).
- Youth Protection Act (JuSchG) - regulates the protection of children and young people in public spaces, particularly with regard to media, alcohol, tobacco and events.
- Gesetz zur Stärkung von Kindern und Jugendlichen (KJSG) - Reforms SGB VIII with the aim of improving the protection of children in institutions and foster families.

In addition, the International Youth Exchange Department of the Volksbund is committed to creating a safe environment for children and young people in all its areas of activity. This includes preventative measures, raising the awareness of all employees and volunteers and implementing procedures for the early detection and intervention of potential risks.

The Volksbund's International Youth Encounters department ensures that all participants are informed about their rights and about how to complain and report. In addition, regular training and

further education courses are offered for full-time and voluntary staff on the topic of child protection in order to raise awareness and improve their ability to deal with potentially dangerous situations.

A respectful, appreciative and attentive approach to children and young people forms the basis for all activities of the Volksbund's International Youth Exchange Department. Any suspicion that a child's welfare is at risk is taken seriously and investigated and dealt with in accordance with established procedures.

With this voluntary commitment, the International Youth Exchange Department of the Volksbund ensures that the welfare and rights of children and young people have top priority and are actively protected.

2. values and principles for working with children:

- The safety, health and well-being of children and young people are the focus of all projects with children and young people in the International Youth Exchange Department of the Volksbund;
- All full-time and voluntary employees of the Volksbund's International Youth Exchange Department who work with children and young people have a responsibility to ensure their well-being;
- Children and young people should be protected from all forms of abuse and exploitation;
- The opinions of children and young people must be accepted and respected;
- The interests of children and young people should be protected and promoted;
- Respect for the privacy of children and young people and the confidentiality of information should be guaranteed;
- It is unacceptable to discriminate against, exclude or marginalize a child or young person;
- The partner organizations and external parties we work with must respect and acknowledge the child protection standards in every project;

3. responsibilities:

The head of the International Youth Exchange Department at the Volksbund is responsible for implementing and monitoring the child protection concept in its projects with children and young people. In each camp, one person from the team is named as the person responsible for child protection.

4. selection of employees who work with children and young people on a voluntary or full-time basis:

All full-time and volunteer employees who work with children and young people are carefully selected. The selection process consists of a written application and an aptitude interview with a full-time education officer.

All persons (full-time and voluntary) who work with children and young people must submit an extended police clearance certificate for examination before taking up their work. The certificate of good conduct must not be older than three months at the time of submission.

The International Youth Exchange Department of the Volksbund does not deploy any persons in the international youth projects who have been convicted of a criminal offense (in particular according to § 72a SGB VIII).

Volunteer supervisors must prove that they are qualified to work with children and young people before starting their work. The following qualifications are recognized

- Possession of a valid Juleica (youth leader card)
- Pedagogical training or studies
- Several years of relevant practical experience in a full-time or voluntary position
- a comparable qualification (e.g. foreign qualifications that are comparable with the Juleica)

The International Youth Exchange Department of the Volksbund has a code of conduct that all volunteers who work with children and young people sign. External employees who interact with the group during the youth activity are informed of the code of conduct at the latest before the planned activity.

5. training and awareness-raising

All full-time and voluntary employees regularly take part in training courses or other further training and professional exchange formats on the topic of child protection. At least one training course is held every year where the topic of prevention and child protection is addressed. The full-time team decides on the format of the training.

The full-time employees of the Volksbund's IJB department are regularly sensitized to the topic of child protection during the preparation and follow-up of the camp season. Awareness-raising measures are taken to create an awareness of possible risks and appropriate behavior. To this end, the risks are analyzed together with the team of supervisors before the encounter and an individual protection concept is developed for the corresponding project (see risk and potential analysis). After the meeting, the aspects of child protection are evaluated as part of the feedback meeting with the team.

6. risk analysis

The youth activities must always be checked for risks and dangers with regard to breaches of child protection before the start of the project and discussed with the management team. The "Risk and potential analysis" file serves as a guide (see appendix)

The framework conditions for all offers are individually supplemented and reviewed before each measure as part of a risk analysis.

The results of the risk analysis are incorporated into the internal discussion within the management team. The dangers and risks for the underage participants are identified. In the second step, clear rules and solutions are drawn up for the respective project. The rules are discussed with the participants and jointly agreed.

The risk analysis is supplemented by the emergency plan for full-time and voluntary employees. Participants are informed about the emergency plan. In addition, the team discusses the reporting channels with the entire group in the event of a breach of child protection. The possibility of anonymous reporting is also pointed out.

6. code of conduct:

By signing the employment contract or fee contract, persons working with children and young people on behalf of the Volksbund's International Youth Exchange Department undertake to respect the following code of conduct. (see appendix)

Volunteers and full-time employees of the project partners as well as persons who are involved in the projects for a short time but have no direct connection to one of the organizations organizing the project are informed about the Code of Conduct and take note of it.

7. reporting system:

A confidential reporting system is in place to report concerns about possible abuse or unsafe behavior. All reports are carefully investigated and care is taken to ensure that the protection of the child is paramount

Children and young people are informed about the options for reporting violations and abuse in confidence:

- Confidants in the volunteer team
- full-time employees;
- anonymously using a digital reporting form to the volunteer project team and the responsible full-time staff member;
- 24-hour availability of a child protection specialist from the Kassel Youth Welfare Office to provide advice and support for youth encounters that take place outside Germany and for which there is no local partner who is also responsible for the project.
- 24-hour availability of a child protection specialist from the youth welfare office at the meeting location to provide advice and support for youth encounters taking place within Germany.
- External telephone counseling services (in German) are made available to the young people. Prevention tips are communicated to the young people and their parents and displayed during the youth encounters in the form of an information sheet.

The (accident) information sheet in German and English informs participants on site about reporting options and responsibilities when reporting cases of abuse.

There is a crisis and emergency plan that also applies in the event of abuse. This emergency plan is known to all full-time and voluntary staff (see appendix) and contains the reporting steps for both voluntary and full-time staff.

8. cooperation with partners:

The Volksbund only works with organizations and partners that have also implemented a child protection concept or recognize this child protection concept.

In the case of collaborations that require short-term involvement in the project or constitute a service, the cooperation partners are actively informed about the child protection concept and the code of conduct and must take note of them.

9. transparency and communication

The child protection concept is communicated transparently to all project participants and is available to all interested parties on request. Reference to it is sent to participants and their parents together with the General Terms and Conditions upon registration. The concept can be found on the website together with the General Terms and Conditions.

At the start of every project involving minors, the participants are informed about the child protection concept by explaining the most important points for their protection and discussing them if necessary. Detailed information on participation opportunities can be found in the team handbook.

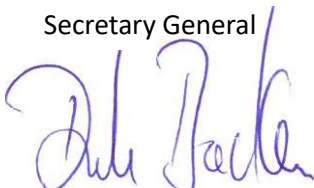
The project partners receive the child protection concept together with the other project information for cooperation and must actively agree to the concept.

10. review and further development

The child protection concept is regularly reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure that it complies with current standards and developments. Components such as risk analysis, emergency plan, team handbook and training for full-time and voluntary staff are regularly updated and adapted to suit the project.

Nestea, April 9, 2025

Secretary General



Dirk Backen