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Child Protection Policy

Version	**2.0**
Approved by	**the Head of Association of PeriFeri**
Date of approval	**29.10.2026**
Next review due by	**01.10.2028**
Published at	https://www.periferi.at/downloads

1. Preamble

PeriFeri is committed to protecting children and young people from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation, violence, and harm. This policy is based on the international child protection standards developed by Keeping Children Safe and the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. All actions shall be guided by the best interests of the child.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Board members
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Interns
- Consultants and contractors
- Partner organisations
- Any individual acting on behalf of PeriFeri

3. Definitions and Legal Framework

In this policy, a child is any person under the age of 18. Harm includes physical, psychological and sexual violence, neglect, exploitation, and violence in the family or in relationships, including through digital means.

The policy follows the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Austrian law on child and youth welfare (Bundes-Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz 2013) including any duty to report.

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4. **Principles**

PeriFeri recognises the following principles:

- Every child has an equal right to protection from harm.
- Everyone has a responsibility to support child protection.
- PeriFeri has a duty of care towards children affected by its work.
- All safeguarding actions must prioritise the best interests of the child.
- No child shall be discriminated against on any grounds.

5. **Code of Conduct**

All representatives of PeriFeri shall:

- Treat children with dignity and respect.
- Respect children's privacy and confidentiality.
- Refrain from any discriminatory, intimidating, humiliating, or abusive behaviour.
- Never engage in physical, emotional, or sexual abuse.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with minors.
- Report protection concerns immediately.

6. **Participation, Consent and Do No Harm**

Children and young people take part in PeriFeri's activities voluntarily, after receiving information in a form they understand about the purpose, the content and the possible risks. They can withdraw at any time without consequences. Every activity is planned to avoid physical and psychological harm, including distress, unwanted exposure and risks online.

7. **Safe Recruitment**

Before commencing any work with PeriFeri, the suitability of the individual and their understanding of children's rights and child protection are assessed as part of the recruitment and selection process. The organisation obtains at least one reference and a criminal record certificate for work with children and young people (Strafregisterbescheinigung Kinder- und Jugendfürsorge), and ensures that all employees, interns, volunteers, consultants and contractors who may have contact with children are familiar with the Child Protection Policy and formally acknowledge in writing their commitment to comply with it.

All employees, interns, volunteers, consultants and contractors are required to sign the Child Protection Policy and the Code of Conduct before starting their work. Individuals who do not sign these documents will not be assigned to tasks involving contact with children.

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8. Training

Every employee, volunteer, intern and consultant receives an induction on this policy during the first week and before any unsupervised contact with children. All staff and volunteers take part in protection training at least once a year, covering recognising and responding to disclosures, reporting duties, online risks and the code of conduct. Attendance is recorded by the Safeguarding Focal Point.

9. Risk Assessment and Prevention

PeriFeri conducts regular safeguarding risk assessments regarding:

- Direct contact with children
- Online communication
- Events and activities
- Awareness campaigns
- Use of images and personal data

Identified risks shall be documented and mitigated through appropriate protection measures.

10. Data Protection and Records

Personal data relating to children and young people is processed in accordance with the GDPR and applicable Austrian data protection laws. Such data is collected only where necessary for the provision of services or the fulfilment of legal obligations, stored securely, and accessed only by authorised personnel on a need-to-know basis. Records related to child protection concerns, incidents, training, and policy acknowledgements will be retained for as long as necessary to fulfil legal, protection, and organisational requirements, and will be securely deleted when no longer needed.

Photographs, recordings, and personal stories are used only with the informed consent of the child and, where appropriate, their parent or legal guardian. Such materials will never be used in a manner that could identify, endanger, or compromise the safety, privacy, or wellbeing of a child.

Any actual or suspected loss, breach, or unauthorised disclosure of personal data must be reported immediately to the Head of Association. Where required by law, data breaches will be reported to the competent data protection authority within 72 hours.

All personnel are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding information about children and young people and may share such information only where necessary to protect a child from harm or where required by law.

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11. Reporting Concerns and Referral

Any concern, allegation, suspicion, or incident involving child abuse, neglect, exploitation, or misconduct must be reported immediately. Anyone who has a concern about a child reports it on the same day to the Safeguarding Focal Point or, if the concern is about her, to the Head of Association.

Safeguarding Focal Point

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If a child is in immediate danger, the emergency services are contacted at once (police 133, ambulance 144). Otherwise the Safeguarding Focal Point assesses the concern within 24 hours, and at the latest on the next working day. Where there is a risk to a child, the Safeguarding Focal Point informs the competent child and youth welfare authority (Kinder- und Jugendhilfe, MA 11 in Vienna) and, where a criminal offence is suspected, the police. All steps are recorded and kept confidentially.

Outside working hours, concerns can be sent by e-mail to the Safeguarding Focal Point. If a child is in immediate danger, anyone who has a concern should contact the emergency services directly.

Concerns about a member of staff, volunteer, intern or contractor are reported to the Head of Association, or to the Board if they concern the Head of Association. The person is removed from contact with children while the concern is assessed, and the competent authorities are informed where required.

All reports are treated confidentially and investigated appropriately. No person shall suffer retaliation, discrimination, or any adverse consequences for reporting a safeguarding concern in good faith. Information is shared only on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with legal requirements.

12. Complaints Mechanism

Anyone can raise a concern or complaint about PeriFeri or a person working for it. This includes children and young people, parents and guardians, partner organisations, employees and volunteers.

How to complain: in person, by telephone (+43 1 99 77 081), in writing, through the contact form on our website (https://www.periferi.at/kontakt).

What happens next: We confirm receipt within 3 working days and respond within 7 working days.

Protection: Nobody suffers a disadvantage for making a complaint.

External support: People can also contact the Children and Youth Ombudsman Offices of Austria (Kinder- und Jugendanwaltschaften Österreichs) https://www.kija.at at any time.

Records: All complaints and their outcomes are recorded and reviewed at each review of this policy.

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13. Responding to Concerns

PeriFeri commits to:

- Taking all concerns seriously.
- Prioritising the safety and well-being of the child.
- Taking immediate protective action where necessary.
- Maintaining accurate records.
- Cooperating with relevant authorities when required.

14. Roles and Accountability

The Safeguarding Focal Point receives all concerns, keeps a confidential record of each concern and what was done, supports staff and volunteers, and reports once a year, without identifying details, to the Board. The Head of Association is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

15. Partner Organisations

PeriFeri expects all partner organisations to maintain equivalent child protection standards and may request evidence of compliance.

16. Monitoring, Review, Approval and Publication

This policy shall be reviewed at least every two years, and earlier whenever legislation, services or protection risks change, to ensure continuous improvement of protection practices. The next review is due by 01.10.2028.

This policy was approved by the Head of Association of PeriFeri on 29.10.2026 (version 2.0) and is published on https://www.periferi.at/downloads.

Meltem Weiland

Head of Association

PeriFeri – Association for counselling, education and empowerment

Date: 29.10.2026

Signature:

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