



# **AMBER ALERT EUROPE FOUNDATION**

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

# AMBER Alert Europe Foundation

## Child Safeguarding Policy

Child Safeguarding Policy outlines safe, acceptable, and professional behavior in relation to children and reflects the rights of children to be protected from harm, abuse, and exploitation as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

AMBER Alert Europe Foundation develops children-related activities to empower them to notice dangerous situations against their or other children. The AMBER Alert Europe Foundation expects its staff and all parties in its network to work in accordance with its child safeguarding policy.

In the case that AMBER Alert Europe Foundation will work in direct contact with children, it will appoint a child safeguard policy officer, who will be the first point of contact regarding matters related to this policy.

**Bearing in mind standards laid down by UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, The European Convention on Human Rights, The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention), Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Union on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children, definitions of Harm used by AMBER Alert Foundation are:**

**Physical abuse:** actual or potential physical harm perpetrated by another person, adult or child. It may involve hitting, shaking, poisoning, drowning and burning. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or caretaker fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

**Sexual abuse:** forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities that he or she does not fully understand and has little choice in consenting to. This may include, but is not limited to, rape, oral sex, penetration, or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching. It may also include involving children in looking at, or

producing sexual images, watching sexual activities and encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Image-based sexual abuse:** any type of sexual abuse which is based on images or videos instead of physical contact. This can include photographs, videos, streaming, deep fakes, text, and voice messages. This type of abuse may be committed via images generated with or without the child's consent, either for distribution to others, blackmail, personal use, or coercion.

**Child sexual exploitation:** a form of sexual abuse that involves children being engaged in any sexual activity in exchange for money, gifts, food, accommodation, affection, status, or anything else that they or their family needs. It usually involves a child being manipulated or coerced, which may involve befriending children, gaining their trust, and subjecting them to drugs and alcohol. The abusive relationship between victim and perpetrator involves an imbalance of power where the victim's options are limited. It is a form of abuse that can be misunderstood by children and adults as consensual.

Child sexual exploitation manifests in different ways. It can involve an older perpetrator exercising financial, emotional or physical control over a young person. It can involve peers manipulating or forcing victims into sexual activity, sometimes within gangs and in gang-affected neighbourhoods. It may also involve opportunistic or organized networks of perpetrators who profit financially from trafficking young victims between different locations to engage in sexual activity with multiple men. It can also include forcing a child to produce sexually explicit content by filming, taking pictures, or exposing themselves in any explicit way.

**Child Grooming:** grooming includes practices to gain a child or children's trust to induce them to later exploit this relationship to commit abuses against them. Grooming exploits children's trusting instincts to turn them in potential victims to predators. Grooming is intrinsically connected to all forms of abuse and exploitation against children, being a

previous step from many abuse cases. Combating grooming is an essential step to prevent harm from taking place.

**Neglect and negligent treatment:** allowing for context, resources and circumstances, neglect and negligent treatment refers to a persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in serious impairment of a child's healthy physical, spiritual, moral and mental development. It includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm and provide for nutrition, shelter and safe living/working conditions. It may also involve maternal neglect during pregnancy as a result of drug or alcohol misuse and the neglect and ill-treatment of a disabled child. Emotional abuse: persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts on a child's emotional development.

**Emotionally abusive acts:** include restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, bullying (including cyberbullying), and threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing, or other non-physical

forms of hostile or rejecting treatment. Commercial exploitation: exploiting a child in work or other activities for the benefit of others and to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. It includes, but is not limited to, child labour.

**Child safeguard policy officer:** an expert/specialist who develops and implements Child Safeguard Policies and Strategies appointed by an organization or government to prevent all forms of abuse and violence against children within their scope – be it geographic scope, legislative scope, or organizational. He/she responds to concerns, investigates possible issues, and creates effective forms of child protection in his/her network. and works on a proactive way to avoid any abuse to be committed, and/or work in a reactive way, to properly address and report any abuse cases.

# AMBER Alert Europe Foundations

## Commitment

**1.**

All children have equal rights to protection and to have their well-being and participation promoted, irrespective of ability, ethnicity, faith, gender, sexuality and culture.

**2.**

AMBER Alert Europe Foundation staff must demonstrate high standards of behaviour towards children both in their private and professional lives. They must do everything possible to prevent, report and respond to any concerns of the policy and in the conduction of any work activity.

**3.**

Child safeguarding is an obligation for all AMBER Alert Europe Foundation employees and partners. All actions regarding child safeguarding will be taken in the best interest of children. This includes an understanding that in all activities, AMBER Alert Europe Foundation must ensure that AMBER Alert Europe Foundation upholds children's rights.

**4.**

Everybody has a responsibility for child safeguarding. The latter is mandatory for all of those who work for and/or on behalf of AMBER Alert Europe Foundation projects, including staff, volunteers, partners, board representatives, and specialists/experts.

**5.**

AMBER Alert Europe Foundation's activities shall empower children to better comprehend their rights and what to do in case of a problem or a concern for their safety. All reports of concern regarding the safety and protection of a child during an activity and/or project's implementation will be taken seriously. Appropriate steps will be taken to protect the child and conduct an inquiry. The latter might include referral to law enforcement and child protection agencies in line with the respective internal safeguarding policy of the consortium member and in line with international and national standards.

**6.**

Given the potential risk for increased or repeated abuse, providing timely response to concerns is essential. AMBER Alert Europe staff, volunteers, board members, and specialists/experts must cooperate and respond in a timely manner in regard to abuse and/or to avoid children's revictimization.

**7.**

AMBER Alert Europe Foundation aims to raise awareness and influence others on the importance of safeguarding children, using AMBER Alert Europe Foundation policy and procedures to highlight its commitment.

**8.**

AMBER Alert Europe Foundation works within the framework of international and national laws, and policies in the field of safeguarding.

# AMBER Alert Europe Foundations

## approach to child safeguarding

AMBER Alert Europe Foundation is committed to preventing child abuse and exploitation, including through the following means:

**Awareness:** Ensuring that its staff, representatives and third parties connected to AMBER Alert Europe Foundation are aware of the high standards of behavior and conduct expected of them to protect children from any form of abuse and exploitation.

**Prevention:** Ensuring, through awareness and good practice, that staff and those who work with AMBER Alert Europe Foundation minimize the risks of any form of child abuse and exploitation, including but by no means limited to conducting relevant vetting and background checks of staff as part of their recruitment process.

**Reporting:** Ensuring that its staff and those who work with AMBER Alert Europe Foundation are clear on what steps to take where suspicions or concerns arise regarding allegations of child abuse or exploitation.

**Responding:** Ensuring that immediate action is taken to identify and address reports of child abuse and exploitation, while safeguarding the safety and well-being of the child/ren involved.

# Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct

Staff, partners and other representatives must never, in their work, in any activity related to AMBER Alert Europe, or in their personal lives:

**1.**

Hit, physically assault, or physically abuse children.

**2.**

Engage in sexual activity, an amorous relationship, or have a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 years regardless of the age of majority/consent or custom locally.

**3.**

Develop relationships with children which could be deemed exploitative or abusive, being economic, psychological, or sexually abusive.

**4.**

Act in ways that may be abusive or place a child at risk of being abused.

**5.**

Use language, make suggestions or offer advice to children which might be deemed as inappropriate or abusive.

**6.**

Behave physically in a manner that is inappropriate or sexually provocative towards children

**7.**

Condone, or participate in, behaviour towards children which is illegal, unsafe, or abusive.

**8.**

Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.

**9.**

Discriminate against, show unfair differential treatment or favour to particular children to the exclusion of others, relating to their race, ethnicity, gender, social status, or any other type of discrimination

**10.**

Spend excessive time alone with children away from others in a manner that could be interpreted as inappropriate.

**11.**

Expose a child to inappropriate images, films and websites that might be disturbing, including pornography and extreme violence.

**12.**

Place themselves in a position where they are made vulnerable to allegations of misconduct

**13.**

Take photos, audio or audio-visually record or otherwise depict children without their and their caregivers' explicit consent.

**14.**

Collect, store or disseminate data about individual children, except for explicitly work-related matters.

**15.**

Record, take pictures or be in possession of any explicit material of children, with or without the child and their caregivers' consent.

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. Staff, partners and other representatives should avoid actions and behaviours that may be misleading, constitute poor practice, and potentially abusive behaviour. Cases not accounted for in this policy that still potentially or practically expose children to harm are explicitly violations of this code of conduct.

