Child Protection Policy

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Malta Foundation

August 2024

Version Control

Version	*Date*	*Author*	*Notes*
1.0	15-Apr-2024	Adrian Farrugia	Final Version

Document Control

Approved on	*Approved by*	*Next Revision*
20-May-2024	The Board of Trustees	2027

Relevant Policies and documentation

1. Safeguarding Policy
2. Code of Conduct
3. Serious Incident Reporting Policy
4. Whistleblowing policy
5. Adults in the Award Policy (HR)
6. Risk Management Policy
7. Licence Agreement

1. Introduction

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Malta Foundation ("the Award") is committed to safeguard the well-being of its participants, volunteers, and staff. All personnel over 18 years of age should always show respect and understanding of this policy and follow it at all times.

2. Introduction

The Award is the leading youth achievement award for young people all over the world. The Award in Malta encourages life skills and qualities which are an invaluable foundation for the growth of tomorrow's society.

The Award provides a platform for non-formal education, which is an integral part of a young person's development. Non-formal education should - be considered within the sphere of learning which is essential to the holistic education of young people. The award is an opportunity for young people to take part in activities outside the classroom and formal education.

3. Scope

This Child Protection Policy is applicable to all aspects of operations, activities, and engagements within the Award. It establishes guidelines and procedures to protect the welfare of all participants and governs the conduct of all associated personnel, including:

Target Group	The policy covers all participants in the Award Programme aged 14 to 24, as well as volunteers, staff members, and third-party service providers involved in any capacity.
Environments Covered	This includes all interactions occurring in physical locations such as events, outings, and residential camps, as well as digital engagements through platforms used for communication and activity management related to the Award.
Recruitment and Supervision	The scope includes processes related to the recruitment, vetting, and ongoing supervision of volunteers and staff to ensure they meet the stringent standards required for working with minors and maintaining a safe environment.
Activities and Interactions	All activities planned under the auspices of the Award, including educational, recreational, and developmental programmes, are governed by this policy to ensure they are conducted in a manner that prioritizes child safety and ethical conduct.
Procedures and Protocols	Detailed protocols for responding to, documenting, and managing any incidents of concern, allegations of abuse, or breaches of policy are included. This ensures all situations are handled with the utmost seriousness and confidentiality, in compliance with legal standards.
Legal and Compliance Obligations	Compliance with national laws and regulations concerning child protection, including data protection laws regarding the handling of personal information of participants. Also, compliance with the international licence agreement as set by the International Award.
Reporting Mechanisms	Clear guidelines for reporting incidents, both internally and to relevant authorities, to ensure transparency and accountability in managing child protection issues.

4. Principles

This policy is based on these five principles:

Child Welfare Priority	The welfare of the child takes precedence over all other considerations.
Zero Tolerance on Abuse	Any form of abuse against children is unacceptable.
Safety and Security	Every child has the right to participate in activities in a safe and secure environment.
Respect and Dignity	Children are to be always treated with respect and dignity.
Confidentiality and Transparency	Ensuring confidentiality in handling reports of abuse, while maintaining transparency in actions taken in response to accusations.

5. Responsibilities

The Award	To integrate child protection into the heart of the organization's culture and to provide necessary resources to support the implementation of this policy.
Staff and Volunteers	Must adhere to the guidelines set out in this policy and report any concerns about abuse or maltreatment immediately, following the specified procedures.

1 Recruitment, Vetting and Training

All staff and volunteers will undergo rigorous screening including:

- Detailed application forms to gather sufficient information about background and experience.
- Mandatory background checks, including a recent Police Conduct Certificate.
- Training on child protection, ensuring updated and effective knowledge and practices.

APPLICATION FORM

An application form should be completed by every individual who shows interest in volunteering with the Award. The form should be filled in and submitted together with a recent copy (not beyond the last three months) of the Police Conduct Certificate of the mentioned individual.

VETTING

While not all volunteers involved in the Award will have direct contact with participants, it is essential that every volunteer undergoes thorough screening to ensure they are individuals of integrity. This process helps safeguard the participants and maintains the positive reputation of the Award. Therefore, it is crucial and necessary to screen all volunteers and staff members, whether they are working directly with participants or in any other capacity within any authorized unit of the Award. This comprehensive approach ensures the safety and well-being of participants while protecting the overall image of the Award.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR VETTING

Vetting is a mandatory requirement for all volunteers and staff involved with the Award. Both Award Centres and Operating Partners are responsible for conducting thorough vetting of their respective volunteers and staff to ensure suitability for roles directly involving the Award.

Key Steps in the Vetting Process:

Initial Vetting
Each Award Centre and Operating Authority must vet new and existing volunteers and staff to assess their suitability. This includes verifying their background, conduct, and character to safeguard the participants of the Award.

Documentation
After the completion of the vetting process, all relevant documentation such as application forms, police conduct certificates, and any additional vetting results should be compiled.

Submission to National Operator
The vetted documentation should then be submitted to the National Operator for filing and record-keeping. This ensures that a central record is maintained for transparency and accountability.

By centralizing the documentation process and clearly defining the responsibilities of the Award Centres and Operating Partners, the Award ensures a uniform and efficient approach to safeguarding across all its operations.

Vetting process: Annual POMA reporting obligation
In compliance with Maltese law, The Award is required to submit an annual report under the Protection of Minors Act (Act XXIII of 2011) (POMA). This report must detail all relevant activities and vetting processes conducted throughout the year to ensure ongoing adherence to child protection standards. The Award is legally responsible for ensuring that this report is compiled accurately and submitted to the Maltese law courts by not later than March of each year. This process is critical for maintaining transparency and upholding our commitment to the safety and welfare of all participants involved in the Award.

7. Behaviour and Practices

APPROPRIATE INTERACTIONS:

An adult must never be alone with young people in secluded environments; and it is recommended that at least two adults should be present during activities. Activities involving personal care should only be conducted with full consent and understanding of both the child and their guardians. If there is an accident or an incident involving a young person or member of staff, one should ensure that there are enough people remaining to supervise the group safely should circumstances warrant it.

It is the responsibility of all adults to ensure that:

- Their behaviour is appropriate at all times.
- They observe the rules established for the safety and security of young people.
- They follow the procedures following suspicion, disclosure or allegation of child abuse.
- They recognize the position of trust in which they have been placed.
- In every respect, the relationships that they form with the young people under their care is appropriate.

PRACTICES TO BE AVOIDED.

The following practices should be avoided except in cases of emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge or the young person's parents/legal guardians. Adults should:

- Never spend excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others.
- Never take young people to one's home where they will be alone with an adult involved in the award.

It may be sometimes necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for young people, particularly if they are impaired. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents/legal guardians and the participants involved.

USE OF IMAGES:

Written consent must be obtained from both the young person and their parents or legal guardians before any use of any images.

The use of images of young people, for example on the web, in the media or in publications require consent. Consequently, one is to:

- Obtain in writing the permission of the parent/ legal guardian to use the young person's image as this ensures that they are aware of the image itself and the way the image is to be used to represent the Award.
- Following parental/legal guardian's written consent, ask for the young person's permission to use their image. This ensures that the young person is aware of the image itself and the way the image is to be used.
- If an image is used (with parental consent) in any media situations, preferably no names and details of the young person are mentioned.

Failure to receive parental consent will result in the breach of the Data Protection Act. It is recommended that written consent of the young person is always sought. If consent is not given, the Award should refrain from using such images.

8. Reporting and Responding to Allegations

An adult volunteer or staff in contact with young persons may forward a complaint if he/she feels that other persons, internally or externally, are making unjustified allegations against him/her in terms of inappropriate behaviour. In this case the volunteer should follow the Complaint Policy.
No member of staff should investigate reports of abuse by themselves.

9. Alcohol and Substance Policy

There is a strict prohibition on the consumption or use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or any other harmful substances in the presence of minors during any activities associated with The Award. This policy is in place to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all participants and to maintain the integrity and reputation of the Award. Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all staff, volunteers, and third parties involved in the Award, and violations will be addressed with appropriate disciplinary actions.

10. Third-Party Collaboration Policy

The Award Leader or Coordinator must ensure that all third-party volunteers, including trainers, instructors, supervisors, and assessors invited to assist with The Award, undergo a due diligence process prior to their involvement. This process should aim to confirm that these individuals are suitable for working with minors and have no known history of misconduct.

While comprehensive vetting like that performed for regular staff may not be feasible, every reasonable effort should be made to assess the reliability and integrity of third-party collaborators. Additionally, all third parties must be briefed on and agree to adhere to Award's Child Protection Policy, ensuring they are aware of their responsibilities towards maintaining a safe environment for all participants.

11. Annual Incident Reporting

All Operating Partners and Award Centres are required to submit an annual declaration to the National Operator detailing all incidents related to child protection issues that occurred during the year. This report must include comprehensive details of each incident, regardless of its nature.

It is mandatory to submit this declaration even if no incidents have occurred, ensuring that the Award maintains a complete and accurate record of child protection efforts and occurrences throughout the organisation.

Empower Future Generations to Excel

Your centre is more than a place of learning—it's where young people ignite their passion for adventure and acquire a thirst for knowledge. As a Duke of Edinburgh's Award centre, you uphold the highest standards of safety and incident reporting. This steadfast commitment ensures that young adventurers can explore and grow with peace of mind, secure in the knowledge that their well-being is prioritised, paving the way for their lifelong success

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S INTERNATIONAL AWARD
MALTA

Empower excellence

If you have any questions regarding our policies or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us. Comprehensive details of our policies can be readily accessed on our website.

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