

Child Protection Policy

2026



symplexis

symplexis.eu

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Introduction

Symplexis is an organization that strives to ensure equal opportunities for all through actions and measures that build skills, empower and promote active engagement and participation focusing on the most vulnerable categories of the population and particularly those with fewer opportunities. Symplexis' mission is to elevate social cohesion through integrated actions and project-based activities that aim at promoting the inclusion of disadvantaged groups at risk of marginalization and exclusion, while promoting and protecting the rights of various types of population groups that face discrimination focusing on the empowerment and support of victims, awareness raising and information sharing at all level. Our main areas of work include:

- **Protecting and promoting human rights:** Our activities promote individual dignity and self-empowerment so as to create equal opportunities, rights and obligations for every person in all essential walks of life. In practice, this means that we work with populations that face constant violation of their basic rights, such as discriminated women, children and elderly people, victims of violence and human trafficking, the LGBTQI community, Roma and unaccompanied minors, migrants and asylum seekers/ refugees. Our efforts focus on both preventing phenomena of human rights' violations (having education and learning as the main relevant vehicle), as well as on supporting the persons having suffered such violations.
- **Promoting social and economic inclusion:** Our team's main objective is to reduce poverty and promote the social and economic integration of those most in need, focusing on marginalized groups and especially third country nationals who seek a better future within the EU. Our activities focus on labour market integration, civic participation and social cohesion through a wide variety of proactive initiatives that target from simple every day activities of social life to more complex, psychological and mental health issues.
- **Upskilling, capacity building and empowerment of vulnerable groups:** We strongly believe that learning is not only a lifelong process, but also a fundamental right of every person, regardless of sex, age, gender, ethnicity/race, religion, sexual orientation or any other social or personal characteristics. In this regard, one of our main pursuits is to promote a more inclusive educational system, one that invests on equal opportunities, participation and enrolment as vehicle to local and community integration, especially for those on the margins of society, on the basis of shared values and respect for fundamental rights. We first serve those with fewer opportunities, the so-called low-skilled

A “child” as defined in Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), means “every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”

disadvantaged people both by trying to redirect them to the formal education system and also by utilizing alternative paths for complementing their skills and competences.

- **Advance child and youth development:** Our work in this area is committed to the psychological, physical and social development of children and youth, in an effort to build both personal and community resilience and address youth unemployment through long-term development-oriented processes that help reduce youth poverty, promote child protection and stimulate social inclusion and development. In doing so, we target a wide variety of modern-world fields that include, but are not limited to education, employment, civic and social participation, which altogether may bring a more sustainable future for our youth.

Symplexis' work is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Convention on the Rights of the Child is a legally binding international instrument supporting children's rights to survival, development, participation and protection. The UNCRC was adopted in 1989, and has been signed and ratified by 194 countries.

We believe that child protection is crucial to ensuring that children under the age of 18 have the rights, information and space in which they can express their views and communicate effectively with other children and adults. Children can only become empowered agents of change to improve their lives and that of their families and communities if they are safeguarded from abuse, discrimination and harm of any kind, be it physical, sexual, emotional or neglect.

Symplexis' Child Protection Policy constitutes a framework of rules, standards and guidelines intended to:

- make all employees, experts and associates of Symplexis realize the importance of taking action to protect children against abuse;
- undertake appropriate intervention in the case of suspected child abuse and/or direct threat to their health and life;
- develop within the organization a culture of work based on children's rights and constant learning.

This policy applies to all Symplexis' Management Board members, employees, trainees and volunteers, consultants, contractors, experts employed by or working with the organization, as well as adults accompanying children to events and activities and those who participate in events and meetings involving children organized by Symplexis, including journalists, donors etc.

We would like to acknowledge the following organisations as we have drawn material from their Child Protection Policies: Eurochild and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of the Australian Government.

Definitions

1. A “**child**” is defined as anyone under the age of 18, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).
2. According to the World Health Organisation, “**Child abuse**” or “**maltreatment**” constitutes ‘all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.
3. “**Child protection**” is defined as the policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm.
4. “**Child participation**” asserts that children and young people have the right to freely express their views and that there is an obligation to listen to children’s views and to facilitate their participation in all matters affecting them within the family, schools, local communities, public services, institutions, government policy, and judicial procedures. World Vision considers child and youth’s meaningful, safe, and appropriate participation a key strategic priority for ensuring sustained child well-being and creating democratic societies with informed and engaged citizens.
5. “**Staff**” includes permanent/temporary staff (under any kind of contractual/employment relationship), volunteers, and trainees of Symplexis, as well as staff/volunteers/trainees of partner organisations whilst they are working with children and young people in the care or supervision of Symplexis.

Statement of commitment

- Symplexis acknowledges that children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- Symplexis is committed to the prevention of abuse and to the well-being of members, children, young people, vulnerable adults and their families.
- Symplexis is committed to acting at all times in the best interest of the children, young people and vulnerable adults to whom it provides a service.
- Symplexis is committed to dealing with abuse, suspected abuse or disclosure of abuse in a timely fashion.
- Symplexis recognises that the family’s primary role in caring and protecting the child should be valued and maintained.

One of the key priorities of Symplexis is to protect and promote within its capacity the rights of all children falling under its mandate.

- Symplexis acknowledges that in cases of suspected child abuse, support for families is important.
- Symplexis agrees that working in accordance with this policy requires staff to be trained and supported.
- Symplexis is committed to complying with the CRC and all relevant national and international legislation, incl. national Law 2101/1991 ratifying the CRC.
- Procedure for Responding to Child Abuse.

Risk assessment and mitigation

The organisation undertakes a risk-based approach to reduce the risk of any child being harmed as a result of operations or activities implemented by Symplexis.

To decide if this approach needs to be taken, the first question asked is 'whether a project or activity involves potential contact with children, impact on children, or working with children'. If the answer is yes, an assessment of child protection risk must be conducted. Relevant risk and decision-making processes and documents must reflect this assessment. This does not need to be a stand-alone process, and can be incorporated into existing activity planning and risk management processes.

If the project or activity is determined to be 'contact with children, impact on children, or working with children' then an assessment of child protection risks is required and, depending on the level of risk identified, risk mitigation strategies must be developed, which minimize the risks to children and shall be incorporated into the design, delivery and evaluation of projects or activities which involve or impact upon children.

Regular monitoring for any change in risk and reporting on the effectiveness of the management of child protection risk must also occur.

Code of conduct

The following is not an exhaustive list of unacceptable or inappropriate behaviours but is intended to provide guidance and raise awareness of the importance of maintaining professional boundaries between staff and children participants.

All staff and/or other associates of Symplexis, undertaking any activity that involves working or contact with children are expected to adhere to the following behaviours:

- treat all children with respect
- always put the child's welfare and safety first

- not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate
- respect a child's personal space
- not engage children under the age of 18 in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity, including paying for sexual services
- involve children and young people in decision-making, as appropriate
- ensure that any personal details relating to children are kept confidential
- wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working near children
- not invite unaccompanied children into private residences, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger
- not sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case the supervisor's permission must be obtained, and ensuring that another adult is present if possible (noting that this does not apply to an individual's own children)
- never use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media to exploit or harass children, or access child exploitation material through any medium
- not use physical punishment on children
- not hire children for domestic or other labour: which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage; which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities; or which places them at significant risk of injury
- comply with all relevant national legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour
- immediately report concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse and policy noncompliance in accordance with appropriate procedures
- immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence that relates to child exploitation and abuse, which occurred before or occurs during association with Symplexis
- be aware of behaviour and avoid actions or behaviours that could be perceived by others as child exploitation and abuse.

Media, communication & information

Concerning the media and the use of images (including photographs and recordings) and stories regarding children, when organizing visits from external photographers, filming crews, journalists or visitors within the scope of Symplexis projects, activities and publications, the following procedure/standards must be applied in all situations:

1. Journalists, photographers/film crews must be fully briefed about Symplexis' child protection policy before they meet the children, who will be interviewed, photographed or filmed, and sign their commitment to adhere to this policy (see Annex 1)
2. At a minimum, obtain and document verbal consent from children and/or their parent or guardian and explain how the photograph or film will be used. Informed consent means that children are told how Symplexis may use the information or image/film and that they are under no obligation to agree to its use. They should also be reassured that locations and other identifying information that might lead to the location of residence of children will be changed. They will need to be asked whether they give consent that their first name is shared with the information or image/film. Written consent should be obtained, where possible (see consent forms in Annex 2)
3. Ensure photographs, films, videos etc. present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner
4. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be perceived as sexually suggestive
5. Ensure images are honest representations of the situations and the facts
6. Ensure the identities of children in photographic and electronic images are not disclosed
7. Ensure these files are stored securely and access is limited on a needs basis to relevant staff only.

Interviewing Children

When interviewing children, the following basic principles must be followed:

- Informed Consent: it includes explaining what subjects are likely to be covered in the interview and if notes/recording of the interview is going to take place, and clarifying the child's right to withdraw their consent at any point. The interviewer should review the child's understanding of consent at the start of the interview (see consent forms in Annex 2).
- Provision of support: there should be someone else present during the interview, who the child is familiar with. Wherever possible, the child should be given a choice regarding who supports them during the interview.
- Respecting the right to say No: it must be made clear to the child, before the start of the interview that they need to talk if they are comfortable doing so, and they can stop and withdraw their consent at any point.
- Gender: the different needs of boys and girls need to be considered and whether they would be more comfortable to talk to a man or a woman.

Procedure for Responding to Child Abuse

Any issues of suspected child abuse must be taken seriously and handled in an appropriate manner that ensures the child's safety.

At meetings and/or activities where children are directly involved, children should be informed about the protection policy, and complaints mechanism in a child-friendly manner.

Staff should normally discuss their concerns with the Director of Symplexis, who is the appointed Child Protection Focal point. Any information provided to the Child Protection Focal point will be handled with strict confidentiality. Discussions held with the Child Protection Focal point should focus on:

- evidence that the child's protection has been breached;
- the identified risks to the child /children;
- measures to safeguarding children and minimise risk; and
- action/next steps

Reporting suspected or actual child abuse is mandatory for all employees, consultants, contractors, experts and volunteers employed by or working with Symplexis. Information about suspected abuse must be accurate and a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure or when the concern arises (Incident Report form provided in Annex 3).

If the personal safety of a child is immediately threatened, and/or when it is suspected that any form of criminal behaviour is taking place at a programme, the appropriate local authorities should be informed immediately and their advice followed, and/or other appropriate services (a list of relevant contacts is provided in Annex 4). Information sharing will be restricted to those who need to know in order to protect the children. Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.

Role and responsibilities of staff

All staff and collaborators of Symplexis are actively involved in promoting child safety – specifically in the context of protecting children against abuse – as well as safeguarding and facilitating children's rights.

The ability of staff to protect children in their care is critical. Symplexis ensures that all staff working with children, both paid and voluntary, have been appropriately vetted and screened, including:

- Mandatory submission of a criminal record certificate

- Requiring references (from at least 2 previous employers/supervisors) and conducting reference checks to assess staff suitability.

All staff are expected to read the Child Protection Policy that will be provided to them, to commit to the Policy by signing a commitment form (see Annex 1), and to undertake training in child protection at a level appropriate to their position. Symplexis will ensure that such knowledge is kept up-to-date and relevant. As part of its child protection training and information provision, Symplexis will:

- provide comprehensive written documents on Symplexis 's Child Protection Policy to all new staff/partners;
- incorporate extensive information on the company's Child Protection Policy in the briefing procedures for new staff;
- make the Child Protection Policy available on the organisation's website (<https://symplexis.eu/child-protection-policy/>);
- provide child protection training for staff assigned in projects where they will work directly with children.

If a Symplexis' member, associate or representative contravenes the policy, whether within or outside the context of our work, in ways that are criminal, grossly infringe children's rights, or contravene the principles and standards contained in this document, Symplexis will take immediate disciplinary action and any other action appropriate to the circumstances.

Monitoring of the Policy

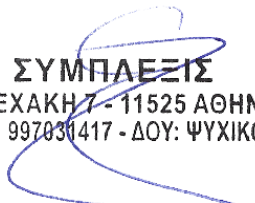
The Board of Symplexis is ultimately accountable for this policy and responsible for its implementation.

The monitoring of adherence to this policy is made through the **mandatory** tracking of the Child Protection Policy implementation standards by all parts of the organisation.

The policy and practices shall be reviewed on an annual basis. Progress, performance and lessons learned shall be reported to the Management Board and included in the organisation's annual reports.

Monitoring and evaluation will be done by checking whether the standards of the Child Protection Policy are implemented and whether safeguards are working. This will be done by carrying out a survey among staff and/or interns and/or volunteers on how they are being met, how effective they are and what needs improving.

This policy has been reviewed and approved by:



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Maria Efthymiou
Director of Symplexis

25 June 2026

Annex 1

Statement of Commitment to Symplexis' Child Protection Policy¹

I, (name)....., have read and understood the standards and guidelines outlined in this Child Protection Policy. I agree with the principles contained therein and accept the importance of implementing and promoting the child protection policies, procedures and practices contained within this document, while working or associated with Symplexis.

I understand that any failure to uphold the Child Protection Policy principles and standards may result in the termination of my engagement with Symplexis, and/or further disciplinary or judicial proceedings if violations breach national legislation.

Name

Signature

Date

¹ Adapted from Eurochild Child Protection Policy. Retrieved from https://eurochild.org/uploads/2020/11/Eurochild_Child_Protection_Policy.pdf

Annex 2

Consent Forms

PERSONAL INFORMATION²

Name and age:.....

Address:

Phone number:

Mobile number (if available):

Email address:

- Are you happy to take part in _____ (e.g. meeting /event /etc)?

☐ YES ☐ NO

- Do you have any allergies we should know about?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Please give details:

- Do you have any additional support needs you'd like us to know about (physical or learning disability, mental health issues, low confidence, difficulties with communication, things you find it hard to talk about)?

☐ YES ☐ NO

² Adapted from Eurochild Child Protection Policy. Retrieved from https://eurochild.org/uploads/2020/11/Eurochild_Child_Protection_Policy.pdf

Please give details:

- Is there anything extra we can do to make sure that you can come along and participate fully?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Please give details:

- Are you taking any medication we should know about?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Please give details:

- Do you have any dietary requirements?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Please give details:

- If you practice a religion, please tell us if there's anything connected to taking part in the event that we should know about:

IN THE EVENT OF EMERGENCY

Contact persons in case of EMERGENCY (It is very important you fill in this section fully)

Person 1:

Name:

Relationship to you:

Phone number:

Mobile:

Person 2:

Name:

Relationship to you:

Phone number:

Mobile:

- In the event of emergency, do you agree that you can receive hospital or dental treatment, including an anaesthetic?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Please give details:

MEDIA CONSENT FORM

Symplexis actively promotes its events and activities on its website and social media networks. We will publish photos and/or statements of participants to inform the public and decision makers.

- Is it okay for you to participate in visual documentation during (event)?
If you say it is ok, we might share photos, film, audio, writing or art on our website or social media; in our reports or leaflets; at our events; and/or in the promotion work we do to people around Europe.
☐ YES ☐ NO
- Is it ok for us to capture your voice in film, photos, audio, writing and/or art and to share this content in the ways listed above?
☐ YES ☐ NO
- Is it ok if we tell people your first name when we share this content?
You can still take part in Symplexis' activities even if you don't want us to tell people your name.
☐ YES you can share my first name ☐ NO you cannot share my first name
- Is it ok for you to talk to the press during (event) (including photos, television/video/camera coverage)?
All media interviews will be conducted in consultation with and in the presence of your accompanying adult and a Symplexis staff member. You have a right not to respond to any questions that you do not want to answer.
☐ YES ☐ NO

My Consent

Signature:

Date:

Parent/Legal Guardian Consent (if under 18)

This child/young person under 18:

- is allowed to participate in (event)
- is allowed to take part in media activities at (event)
- has been informed about the (event) goals, the voluntary nature of participation and anonymity in an age-appropriate way
- has been informed that they can refuse to participate at any time with no consequences

	• is allowed to receive appropriate medical attention from a registered practitioner if at any time my child requires urgent medical attention, Full name: Relationship to child/young person: Signature: Date:
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Annex 3

Incident Report Form

IMPORTANT NOTE

If you have knowledge that a child might be at risk of harm, please complete this form to the best of your knowledge.

Please note that child protection concerns must be reported (orally or in writing) directly to the Child Protection Focal point of Symplexis (preferably within the same working day). Depending on the urgency, this form can be completed before contacting the Child Protection Focal point or afterwards.

The report should be written and signed only by you to guarantee confidentiality and should be sent only to the Child Protection Focal point of Symplexis, who will hold it in a safe and secure place and treat it with the strictest confidentiality³.

³ Adapted from Eurochild Child Protection Policy. Retrieved from https://eurochild.org/uploads/2020/11/Eurochild_Child_Protection_Policy.pdf

1. About you

Name:

Job title:

Organisation you work for:

Nature of your contact with the child:

Contact details:

Tel:

E-mail:

2. About the child

Child's name:

Child's gender/gender identity:

Child's age:

Child's address:

Child's parents/guardians:

Has any treatment been given to the child? Treatment given by

Taken to hospital: ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, which hospital and how taken

3. Details of incident /concern

Was the incident:

☐ Observed by you

☐ Suspected

☐ Disclosed by someone else

If the concern was shared by someone else, please state who and their relationship to the child:

What happened? Give cause (how and why) if known - If you include personal observations, please make a distinction between what is a fact and what is opinion or hearsay (e.g., child's emotional state, visible injuries, etc.):

Did the child/young person or another source say anything to you [if relevant] and how did you respond to them: [Do not lead the child. Record actual details]

Date of the alleged incident:

Time of the alleged incident:

Location of the alleged incident:

Name of the alleged perpetrator (if applicable):

Were there any other children/people involved in the alleged incident? Are any other children at risk of harm?

Action taken by you:

Signature:

Date:

For completion by the Child Protection Focal point:

Incident investigated: ☐ YES ☐ NO

Written investigation report necessary: ☐ YES ☐ NO

In order to determine the cause of the incident, it may be appropriate to interview parties who were involved. Witness detail, statements, etc. can be added here

Annex 4

National helplines and websites

National Helpline for children SOS	1056
National Child Protection Helpline	1107
SAFE.YOUth app	https://www.safeyouth.gov.gr/
Helpline of the Greek Safer Internet Centre	210 6007686 http://www.help-line.gr
SafeLine	2811 391615 https://www.safeline.gr
Together for the Child	115 25
Children's Ombudsman hotline for minors	800 11 32 000
Hellenic Police	100
Sub-unit of minor's protection of Police Headquarters of Attiki	210 6476370 ypa.daa@hellenicpolice.gr
Sub-unit of minor's protection of Police Headquarters of Thessaloniki	2310 388456
Cyber Crime Division	11188 ccu@cybercrimeunit.gov.gr www.cyberkid.gov.gr