Education
ICT Training
Research

Child Protection Policy

Emphasys Centre

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Introduction

Emphasys Centre (hereafter "the Organisation") operates as an 'Education, ICT Training (VET) and Research Centre, based in Cyprus and is approved by the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport (MOECYS).

Emphasys Centre is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in its care. It recognises the responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, exploitation, online abuse, harmful practices), abuse and exploitation. For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures a child is recognised as someone under the age of 18 years.

The staff, associates and volunteers of the organisation will work together to embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of children and young people.

Additionally:

- The organisation is dedicated to promoting, protecting and respecting the rights of all children.
- The organisation aims to advocate and protect children's rights based on the standards of the [1]European Child Safeguarding standards and The International Child Safeguarding Standards[2].
- Part of the organisation's vision and mission is to ensure the best of interests of the children in all actions that affect children.
- The organisation fully advocates the principle of no discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth, sexual orientation or other status.

This document outlines Emphasys Centre's commitment to protecting children.

[1] Keeping Children Safe. (2014). Child safeguarding standards and how to implement them. https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/standards_child_protection_kcsc_en_1.pdf
[2] The International Child Safeguarding Standards https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/f53f19ef-c655-4d63-91e5-db4fee59ca3e_en?filename=KCS-CS-Standards-ENG-200218.pdf

Policy statement

Emphasys' safeguarding policy is part of our commitment to preventing and protecting children from abuse and promoting environments where children can be in a safe environment and their rights sustained. The policy is publicly available on our website (www.emphasyscentre.com) and is reviewed and updated every 3 years.

The organisations contact with children is primarily through our education centre and visits to schools all around Cyprus, by supporting a variety of EU Erasmus projects. Contact with children can also occur through Emphasys participation in various events in Cyprus such as the International Education fair, Erasmus+ days festivals etc.

This policy outlines how Emphasys seeks to fulfil its duty to not put children that we come into contact with at risk of harm (from our staff members, associates or volunteers) and how we respond to concerns about child abuse.

This policy applies to:

- Anyone representing or acting on behalf of Emphasys Centre, including all staff members, associates, volunteers, interns, ambassadors, consultants, supporters and visitors to our premises, events and projects.
- All children regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, religion or geographical location.

Emphasys aims to protect and prevent children from harm (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, child labour, child sexual exploitation, harmful traditional practices) by:

1. Implementing a safe recruitment policy and procedures for everyone working with and for us.
2. Having a Code of Conduct for working with children that is known to all staff members, associates, volunteers, interns, ambassadors, consultants, supporters and visitors to our premises, events and projects.
3. Ensuring all staff members, associates, volunteers, interns, ambassadors, consultants, supporters and visitors to our premises, events and projects are aware of our safeguard policy and responsibilities under it by signing safeguarding commitments BEFORE arrival.
4. Assessing our work in relation to safeguarding and putting in place measures to reduce and prevent harm to children in all that we do.
5. Putting in place procedures for reporting and responding to specific child protection concerns and breaches of the child safeguarding standards policy.
6. Having a designated Child Safeguarding Officer at Emphasys Centre.

Emphasys Child Safeguarding Standards (Updated to align with International Child Safeguarding Standards)

Risk Assessment

Emphasys Centre carries out an annual risk assessment relating to child safeguarding by using the Child Safeguarding Risk Registration form (**ANNEX 1**). This will be completed by the designated Child Safeguarding Officer (CFO) at the beginning of each academic year. The aim of the Risk Assessment Matrix is to identify the probable risks in terms of the probability of the risk and the severity of the consequences.

RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX				
SEVERITY / PROBABILITY	Catastrophic (1)	Critical (2)	Marginal (3)	Negligible (4)
Frequent (A)	High	High	Serious	Medium
Probable (B)	High	High	Serious	Medium
Occasional (C)	High	Serious	Medium	Low
Remote (D)	Serious	Medium	Medium	Low
Improbable (E)	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low
Eliminated (F)	Eliminated			

Figure 1: Risk Assessment Matrix

Human Resources

Emphasys Centre places clear responsibilities and expectations on its members of staff, associates, volunteers, interns, ambassadors, consultants, supporters and visitors to our premises, events and projects and supports them to understand and act in line with these (responsibilities and expectations). Visitors must sign safeguarding commitments BEFORE arrival.

Recruitment

During the recruitment and selection stage of a new member joining the organisation, all reasonable steps are taken to detect anyone unsuitable from having contact with children and identifying those with qualifications, skills and competencies to promote the best outcome for their roles. These steps include all of Emphasys members of staff, associates, volunteers, interns, ambassadors, consultants, supporters and visitors to our premises, events and projects. Recruitment now requires probation periods for all child-facing roles and mandatory safeguarding interview questions.

<u>During the recruitment stage, all applicants are asked to:</u>

1. Provide a clean criminal record
2. Are able to provide up to three references (not family members) who have knowledge of their experience and suitability to work with children.

During the recruitment stage, Emphasys Centre will:

1. Give clear job descriptions to **all** candidates in terms of roles and responsibilities including short-term contractors, consultants etc.
2. Ensure that the selection criteria outlines the relevant experience needed if the post involves direct work with children.
3. The interview will include specific questions that identify people's attitude and values in relation to the protection of children.
4. Provide a copy (either hardcopy or digital) of the European Child Safeguarding standards and The International Child Safeguarding Standards.

An offer of employment (or other form of contract) will be made only after:

1. A clean criminal record has been provided from the candidate.
2. The provision for up to three references from either previous employees or others (non-family members) who have knowledge of the candidates experience and suitability to work with children.
3. The provision of proof of identity and proof or relevant qualifications.
4. The candidate has signed their understanding and commitment to the Child Safeguard Policy.

Training and Supervision

1. An induction training covering the Child Safeguard Policy and procedures must be carried out for everyone working with Emphasys Centre at the beginning of each academic year and to new employees within 2 months of employment.
2. The Child Safeguard Training will be provided to all staff, associates, volunteers, interns, ambassadors and consultants. This training will be given on an annual basis.

The Child Safeguarding Officer (CSO), Child Safeguarding Representative (CSR) and the Child Safeguard Committee (CSC)

Emphasys Centre will appoint at least one Child Safeguarding Officer (CSO) and one Child Safeguarding Representative (CSR) who will be part of the Emphasys Child Safeguard Committee (CSC).

CSC

The Child Safeguarding Committee consists of the CSO(s), the CSR and the director of Emphasys. The role of the committee is:

1. To receive and respond to reports (See Reporting Section).
2. To monitor compliance and development of the Child Safeguarding Policy and practice.

The committee – aside from when receiving reports – will meet every six months to monitor, discuss where improvements can be made to assure the safety and well-being of all children/students that come in contact with Emphasys Centre.

CSO

The role/responsibilities of the CSO are:

1. The CSO will be the focal point for receiving reports of allegations or concerns and implement the Child Safeguarding procedure (See Reporting Section). In the case of any reports of allegations or concerns, the CSO must inform the CSR.
2. The CSO will promote the awareness and implement the Child Safeguarding Policy within the organisation.
3. The CSO will advise and support the Emphasys staff and associates in the Implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy. This will be done by providing trainings directly or through others.
4. The details and contact details of the CSO will be clearly shared throughout the organisation and the CSO will be able to contact all members at any time.
5. During the classes that are conducted by Emphasys Centre, the CSO may supervise to ensure all requirements are met and the instructor is following the European Child Safeguard Standards. In the event of only one student attending a class for any reason, the two-adult rule will apply and a second member of staff will also be present in the classroom.
6. In the case of the organisation of an external event, the CSO will give clear instructions to all Emphasys participants, as to not violate the European Child Safeguarding Standards.

CSR

Additionally, in the Emphasys Child Safeguard Committee (CSC), a Child Safeguarding Representative (CSR) will be appointed. The CSR's role/responsibilities are:

1. In collaboration with the CSO and the director of the organisation, will lead the safeguarding policy and procedures within the organisation and will be his/her responsibility to ensure the review of the policy every 3 years, as to comply with the updated European Child Safeguarding Standards.
2. As a member of the CSC, they will be able to take decisions on actions following reports or allegations relating to members of staff, associates, volunteers, interns, ambassadors, consultants, supporters and visitors to Emphasys' premises, events and projects.
3. In the case of any reports of allegations or concerns, the CSR must report to the director of Emphasys.

Code of Conduct

- Emphasys Centre's Code of Conduct gives clear rules for behaving when working with children. It is provided in full in **Annex 2** and applies to everyone working at Emphasys Centre including Emphasys members of staff, associates, volunteers, interns, ambassadors, consultants, supporters and visitors to our premises, events and projects. It has been extended to cover staff conduct outside of work, child-to-child interactions, online behaviour, and cultural sensitivity.
- Emphasys Centre expects those working with us or representing us to show high standards in their personal (out of work) contact, as well as professional (in work) contact with children. Actions or inappropriate behaviours that cause or put a child at risk in or out of office hours will be considered a violation of this policy and treated accordingly.
- Members of staff, associates, volunteers, interns, ambassadors, consultants, supporters and visitors to our premises, events and projects, **must** report any breaches of the Code of Conduct that they see or become aware of, or concerns that they might have about any inappropriate adult behaviour around children.
- Breaches of the Code of Conduct by members of staff, associates, volunteers, interns, ambassadors, consultants, supporters and visitors to our premises, events and projects will result in disciplinary action.

- The Code of Conduct will be shared to all members of staff, associates, volunteers, interns, ambassadors, consultants, supporters and visitors to our premises, events and projects of Emphasys Centre.

Visitors

- Any external visitors with the intent to teach or present any educational materials to the children/students of Emphasys Centre, must read and sign the Emphasys Child Safeguarding Policy BEFORE arrival. Additionally, a copy (either digital or hard copy) of the European Child Safeguarding Standards will be sent to them before their arrival to the Emphasys Centre premises.
- The manager responsible for leading a visitor to the premises is responsible for seeking advice from the CSO and risk assessing the type of visitor.
- Visitors will always be accompanied by a member of staff from Emphasys Centre and never leave the children unsupervised.
- Visitors will be made aware that images or videos of children should not be taken or posted without the parents written consent. All images that will be allowed to be taken and possibly posted will ensure that the children's faces are covered/blurred.
- A record of all external visitors will be kept to record the names and dates of all visitors to the Emphasys Centres' premises, who will come in contact with children. **Annex 3**

Children's images/videos and information

The safety, dignity and rights of children is a priority in our work.

All members of staff, associates, volunteers, interns, ambassadors, consultants, supporters and visitors to our premises, events and projects must comply with the following:

1. Obtained a sign consent form from the child's parent or legal guardian for taking photographs or videos and using them.
2. Children must be appropriately clothed and not depicted in any poses that could be interpreted as sexually provocative.
3. Images and written materials should not include any identifying information such as their names, school locations or home. Explicit ban on geotagging or identifiers in media.
4. In the event of a classroom having only one student, the two-adult rule will be followed, meaning a minimum of two staff members will be present throughout the lesson.

Consent

1. At the beginning of each academic year, all parents/guardians receive a consent form for photography and publication of photographic material and video, that must be signed and returned to Emphasys Centre. See **Annex 4** for the consent form. (Please note that the consent form is also translated into Greek for parents)
2. At the beginning of each academic year, all children/students are made aware verbally, that during the academic year, photos and or videos may be taken from time to time and posted on the organisation's social media, provided that consent was given.
3. In the event of any representatives of Emphasys Centre visiting another school (not Emphasys Centre) for the purposes of a European project, a separate consent form (similar to Annex 4) will be created with all the project information for all parents and or guardians to be signed prior to our visit.

4. Any web/digital/social media forum linked to Emphasys Centre will be monitored to ensure that children do not place identifying information about themselves. Any such information will be removed by Emphasys Centre's staff as soon as they are made aware of it.
5. Personal data of children and their families (full name, contact details, location etc) must be kept secure and shared only with those who need to know this information. This means that this information is kept in password protected files or with restricted access to the organisation's staff members, associates, volunteers, interns, ambassadors, consultants, supporters and visitors.
6. All signed consent forms, reports and information related to child protection must be kept secure and protected by the CSO and marked as confidential. In the case of email communication with such documents, should also be marked as confidential.

Reporting and responding to concerns

Emphasys Centre will always act upon reports about children at risk of harm with the best of interests of the children and our core concern and guiding principle in all actions taken.

Awareness

Members of staff, associates, volunteers, interns, ambassadors, consultants, supporters and visitors to our premises, events and projects will become aware or show concern about a child at risk. They will be made aware either from another person or child expressing concern, direct disclosure by a child, through their own observations of a child or the behaviour of an adult (i.e breaching the Code of Conduct).

Reporting

1. Reporting allegations or concerns are not easy, but it is important for everyone working with or for Emphasys Centre to understand the necessity and obligation to do so.
2. It is mandatory to report any suspicious activities about child abuse or breach of the Code of Conduct.
3. It is not the responsibility of the person with the concern to investigate the matter further, but to report only. It is important however to observe, so that the child is not at risk and that any evidences are not compromised.
4. Members of staff, associates, volunteers, interns, ambassadors, consultants, supporters and visitors to our premises, events and projects should be aware that failure to report any suspicious activity could result to disciplinary action.
5. All reports will be treated in confidentiality involving only those who need to know, according to the procedures of this policy. Multiple safe reporting channels have been introduced (CSO, CSR, anonymous) , with whistleblowing protection to make sure that members of staff are protected when raising concerns.

How to Report

1. Any immediate safety and well-being needs of a child, should be acted on immediately whilst making a report (i.e medical treatment).
2. All reports should be made to a CSO of Emphasys Centre.
3. If the matter concerns the CSO or the director of Emphasys Centre, then the report should go to the CSR.

Monitoring implementation of policy

Emphasys Centre is committed to ensuring that safeguarding measures are not only implemented but also continually strengthened. The Child Safeguarding Committee (CSC) will carry out annual safeguarding audits and oversee compliance across all programmes, staff, and partners. In addition, an independent external review will take place every three years to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding practices. The organisation will make its safeguarding commitments publicly available (e.g., website, posters, and information sessions) and will actively consult with children and families to ensure their views inform policy improvements. Senior management and the Board are accountable for ensuring resources, training, and oversight are in place to uphold the highest safeguarding standards.

Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office

All reports must be forwarded to the Cypriot Police, specifically the Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office.

The Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office sees to all matters that concern dealing with prevention, repression and handling of domestic violence and child abuse.

Contact:
Telephone: 22808442
E-mail: domviol.childabuse@police.gov.cy

Social Welfare Services

The Minister of Labour and Social Insurance has appointed Social Welfare Officers as Consultants on Family Matters who are responsible to handle cases of reported violence.

An act of violence against children and adults can be reported to a Consultant on Family matters or any Social Welfare Officer in a District Social Welfare Office.

Contact:
Telephone: +357 22406600
Email: central.sws@sws.mlsi.gov.cy

Annexes

Annex 1 – Child Safeguard Registration form

Name:	
Position in Organisation:	
Date:	

**Please see Figure 1 for reference for Probability and Severity*

Risk Category /Description	Category	Probability	Severity	Mitigation Strategy
Contact with Children	Child Safeguarding Standards			
Staff members	Child Safeguarding Standards			
Associates, Volunteers, interns, ambassadors, consultants, supporters	Child Safeguarding Standards			
Partner organisations	Child Safeguarding Standards			
Services & Activities	Child Safeguarding Standards			
Classroom - Teaching	Child Safeguarding Standards			
External Communication	Child Safeguarding Standards			

Signature of Child Safeguarding Officer (CFO)

_____

Annex 2 – Code of Conduct

Emphasys Centre's Code of Conduct outlines the standards of behaviour expected towards children and vulnerable young people and has also been updated to cover staff conduct outside of work, child-to-child interactions, online behaviour, and cultural sensitivity. The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to:

1. Provide guidance on what is appropriate and inappropriate actions and behaviour.
2. Reduce the risk of harm and abuse of children by adults working with or representing Emphasys Centre.
3. Help children and families feel safe when in contact with Emphasys Centres' staff or representatives.
4. Reduce the risk of misplaced allegations about individual conduct.

Personal conduct outside work

Emphasys Centre expects those working with or for us exemplify high personal standards in their personal (out of work) contact as well as professional (in work) contact with children. Actions or behaviours that cause or put a child at risk of harm outside of work hours or duties will also be considered a violation of this policy.

Do

- ALWAYS report any child safeguarding concern swiftly to the Child Safeguarding Officer.
- ALWAYS report any concerns or breaches of the Code of Conduct.
- Treat all children with kindness and equal respect, without discrimination, regardless of their gender, culture, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, or ability.
- Obtain informed consent and ensure proper handling, use and storage of children's images and data that you handle in the course of your role.
- Use the "two-adult" rule, whereby your contact with children is always known, supervised and accompanied by (or at least within sight of) another member of staff.
- Wait for appropriate physical contact to be initiated by a child e.g. holding hands.
- Look out for and report potential for child-to-child bullying, or harmful behaviour by a child towards another child.
- Seek advice from your CSO if in any doubt about appropriate behaviour and interactions with children

Don't

- Hit or in any other way cause physical pain or discomfort to a child; never physically punish a child (e.g. smacking or use of cane).
- Don't shout, use language or behave in ways that may threaten, frighten or humiliate a child. Don't use derogatory language on grounds of race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality, or political persuasion or any other ground.
- Be alone, or out of sight of others, with a child where your actions cannot be accounted for, this includes being alone in a car no matter how short the journey. If you end up in this situation (e.g. taking a child for emergency treatment) you must inform your manager or contact person at Emphasys Centre immediately.
- Share personal contact details (email, phone or social media) with a child, or have private social media or phone contact with a child. If a child requests or contacts you must inform the Emphasys CSO. Where children's contact details are kept for necessary work reasons this should be known and approved by the CSO.
- Share images of children in Emphasys social media, website without written consent from the parents. All photos that will be posted must have the underaged students faces blurred/not visible.

- Invite a child to come to your home or hotel, or allow a child to visit and stay. If a child or family does visit uninvited this must be reported to the Emphasys CSO.
- Visit a child's home unaccompanied, even if their parents/guardians are at home.
- Show favouritism, spend excessive time or encourage close attachments with individual children or families.
- Do things of a personal nature that a child could do themselves e.g. using the bathroom. If your job includes providing care to children follow the guidelines for this strictly.
- Give gifts or money to children or families without seeking prior agreement with the CSO. This is to reduce the risk of adults grooming children or families for such gifts.
- Hug, kiss or touch a child in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way.
- Don't make, share or download sexually explicit images of children or view or share pornography with or around children.
- Drink alcohol, smoke or use drugs in front of children and don't give alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes to children.
- Engage a child in work (paid or unpaid) that poses a risk to their physical, mental or social well-being or interferes with their education.

Sexual Activity & Relationships

Sexual relationships or any form of sexual activity (includes touching outside of clothes) with a child is always prohibited, regardless of the age of consent in the country concerned. No money, gifts or anything else should be offered in exchange for sex. In these cases, such acts are considered to be illegal and will be reported to the relevant police/law enforcers. In the case of Cyprus nationals, Emphasys Centre will report such incidents to the Cypriot social welfare services and/or police.

Given the inherent power imbalance and potential for exploitation between staff/representatives of Emphasys Centre and beneficiaries in our projects, Emphasys Centre prohibits sexual relationships between staff and young people (18-21 years) who are beneficiaries in our projects.

Giving and Receiving of Gifts

Gifts can be used as part of grooming, leading into the abuse of vulnerable children and young people. For this reason, Emphasys Centre requires all staff, representatives or visitors to seek prior approval before offering a gift to any child or family in our projects. Staff may consult the CSO if in doubt about the appropriateness of the gift.

Annex 3 – Visitors Registration form

Emphasys Visitors Registration form

No.	Name and Surname	Name of Organisation	Date	Visitor Signature	CSO Signature

Tel. + 357 22663010
3 A-D P. Dimitrakopoulou Street,
1090 Nicosia, Cyprus
E: info@emphasyscentre.com
www.emphasyscentre.com

Annex 4 – Parents Consent Form

PARENTAL / GUARDIAN CONSENT FOR PHOTOGRAPHY AND PUBLICATION OF PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIAL AND VIDEO

Dear Parents,

Regarding the above topic, we would like to inform you of the following:

• In addition to the courses offered to students, within the premises of our Training Centre, meetings, seminars, events, workshops, briefings, etc. are often held related to the active participation of our Research Centre in various European Programs such as Erasmus +, AMIF etc.

• For the promotion of the work carried out by our Educational and Research Centre, individual photographs / recordings are taken from time to time.

• The photos / videos can be published on the official website and social media of our Centre (eg FB), in posts related to events, in presentations at conferences abroad, in video clips of our Centre, in scientific articles, campaigns for the promotion of digital literacy, information material, exhibitions sent to the European Union, etc.

• Our Centre makes every effort to avoid the use of the faces of students by covering their faces with a special filter.

• Our permanent goal is to protect their personal identity.

With respect, however, to your views, we ask that you complete and submit the following, thus giving your consent:

I …… .... mother, father, guardian (delete accordingly) of / …… I do not object / I object (delete accordingly) to the inclusion of my child in any photograph / visualization by the Emphasys Centre, for the purposes mentioned above.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Commitment

I, Athos Charalambides, director of Emphasys Centre, along with the organisations staff, agree to comply and follow the regulations to protect children's rights based on the standards of the European Child Safeguarding standards and The International Child Safeguarding Standards.

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Athos Charalambides,

Signature

Organisation Stamp

Date: 22/9/2025

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