



Stepping Stones Montessori Kindergarten and Nursery Standards of Protection for Minors



Managing entity:

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Rules ensuring safe relationships between minors and facility staff, as well as requirements for safe relationships between minors, and prohibited behavior.

The rules ensuring safe relationships between minors and facility staff include the following guidelines, which should also be applied to minors with disabilities and minors with special educational needs, taking into account their needs and level of development.

Communication with minors

1. The facility staff is obliged to respect the dignity of every minor, treating him or her with respect and attention, regardless of age, gender and origin.
2. The facility staff may not use physical, psychological or sexual violence against minors. It is also prohibited to tolerate, trivialize or cover up incidents of violence.
3. Communication between facility staff and minors should be open, transparent and safe. First and foremost, it should be based on respect between the parties.
4. Minors should be listened to with patience and answered in a manner appropriate to their age and the situation.
5. Behavior that embarrasses, humiliates, disrespects or insults a minor is prohibited.
6. In the event that sensitive information about a child is obtained from a minor, it cannot be disclosed to unauthorized persons, in particular other children.
7. When communicating with a minor, respect his or her privacy. If it is deemed necessary to provide information obtained from a minor to authorized persons, this should be explained to the minor in a manner appropriate to his or her age and situation.



8. Conversations with a minor should never take place without the participation of third parties (other employees, management) behind closed doors.
9. When communicating with minors, it is prohibited to use vulgar words, gestures or jokes.

Activities with minors

1. All contributions of minors to their activities should be respected and appreciated, and they should be involved in the implementation of activities regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ability or disability, social, ethnic, cultural, religious status and worldview.
2. Giving preference to specific people should be avoided.
3. There can be no romantic or sexual relations with minors, including using inappropriate comments, jokes or erotic gestures.
4. The image of minors must not be recorded for private purposes. Also, third parties cannot be allowed to record the image of children without the consent of the management and parents (legal guardians).
5. Any risky situations involving behavior between employees and minors should be reported immediately.

Physical contact with children

1. The main purpose of physical contact with minors is to provide them with comfort, safety and support in their development. All actions should be taken with the good and interest of the minor in mind.
2. Any physical contact with a minor should take into account his or her age, level of development and cultural context.
3. The use of any violence against a minor is unacceptable.
4. Any action that may violate the minor's physical integrity or be considered inappropriate should be avoided.



5. When performing care and hygiene activities, caution must be exercised and unnecessary physical contact must be avoided.
6. Before engaging in any physical contact, employees should obtain the minor's explicit consent (if possible, considering the minor's level of development), taking into account the minor's reactions and comfort.
7. Any situations that appear risky or dangerous involving physical contact with minors should be immediately reported to the appropriate authorities or management.
8. Each minor may have different limits regarding physical contact. Employees should respect these boundaries and not violate them.
9. Staff should have access to psychological and counseling support if they experience difficulties in interacting with children or in complying with the Standards of Protection for Minors.

Contact outside working hours

1. Employees should limit contact with minors outside working hours to the minimum necessary, provided that such contact must be for learning or educational purposes. The exception is family relations between staff and minors, which should be notified to the management.
2. Staff may not invite minors to their place of residence.
3. Communication with minors outside working hours should take place through official possible, channels.
4. If there is a need for meeting with minors outside working hours, the employee must obtain the consent of the minor's parents (legal guardian) for such contact. Lack of consent means that such a meeting is inadmissible. The facility's management must first consent to the meeting.
5. In the event of maintaining social or family relations with children and their parents (legal guardians) outside working hours, employees are



obliged to maintain confidentiality of all information regarding other minors and their parents (legal guardians).

Principles of Internet security

1. Minors should have limited access to online content that may be inappropriate for their age or may pose a threat to their safety.
2. Staff should maintain the privacy of minors and avoid collecting their personal data or disclosing it to third parties without the consent of their parents (legal guardians).
3. Any workplace-related online profiles or accounts should be set to private to protect minors from unwanted contact or content.
4. Employees should not engage with children through private online communication channels, such as private social media profiles or private messages.
5. Any online conduct that may be considered inappropriate, indecent or dangerous towards minors is prohibited.
6. Any incidents of inappropriate online contact with minors or other incidents related to online safety should be reported immediately to the appropriate authorities.



Rules for use of electronic devices with access to the Internet and security procedures

1. Electronic devices with access to the Internet should be used only for purposes related to science, education and the implementation of tasks related to the facility.
2. Access to inappropriate content, including pornographic, aggressive and other harmful materials, should be blocked.
3. Users of electronic devices should ensure the security of their personal data and avoid disclosing it to unauthorized persons or websites.
4. It is prohibited to use electronic devices to commit acts of cyberbullying, such as hating, stalking or intimidating others online.
5. Users of electronic devices should respect the privacy of others and avoid publishing or sharing their private information without their consent.
6. When using electronic devices with access to the Internet, users should maintain a civil discussion and avoid offensive or aggressive statements towards others.
7. Staff responsible for managing electronic devices have the right to monitor user activity to ensure compliance and online safety.



Intervention rules and procedures in the event of suspicion of harm or availability of information about harm to a minor

1. If a teacher/guardian receives information that a minor is a victim of domestic violence, he or she prepares a note and forwards the information to the principal.
2. The principal shall call the parents (legal guardians) and provide them with the information obtained. A conversation is held with the parents, as well as a conversation with the student in the presence of the author of the official note, and, if the minor's needs require it, in the presence of a psychologist.
3. The principal prepares a description of the minor's school and family situation and a plan to help the minor, including ways to ensure the minor's safety, as well as a description of the support that the school can offer to the minor and the family.
4. The director prepares information about facilities to help the minor and the family, if the minor's needs require it. The document is provided to parents (legal guardians).
5. The director establishes a plan to help the minor with the parents (legal guardians), by specifying how to ensure the minor's safety and by obliging the minor and the family to be consulted by a psychologist.
6. The director, together with parents (legal guardians), develops and establishes a schedule of contacts with people and institutions supporting the family in the event of violence against a child.
7. The director informs parents (legal guardians) about the legal consequences of using violence against a child and the institution's obligations to report cases of violence against a minor to the prosecutor's office and court.
8. The director submits a notification of suspicion of committing a crime to the prosecutor's office or a request for insight into the family's situation to the court.



9. In the event of lack of cooperation on the part of parents (legal guardians), including resignation by parents (legal guardians) regarding the minor's attendance at the facility, the Director shall immediately submit the notification referred to in the preceding point.
10. The director notifies the Interdisciplinary Team operating in the commune about the situation.
11. At the facility, the Director shall be the person responsible for submitting reports on suspicion of committing a crime to the detriment of a minor, notifying the guardianship court and institutions with appropriate powers, as well as initiating the "Blue Card" procedure.



Rules for establishing a support plan for a minor after the disclosure of abuse.

1. A minor's support plan should be developed individually, taking into account the minor's unique needs, situation and well-being.
2. The minor should be involved in the process of establishing a support plan tailored to his or her abilities and age, taking into account his or her opinion, preferences and needs.
3. The support plan should be developed with the participation of a psychologist.
4. The support plan should include clearly defined goals and priorities that will serve to achieve the minor's well-being and improve his or her situation.
5. The support plan should include providing appropriate psychological support for the minor, taking into account the trauma and effects of abuse.
6. Where necessary, the support plan should include access to appropriate medical assistance, including wound care and physical therapy.
7. The support plan should include providing appropriate educational support for the minor, including adapting the curriculum and providing additional learning assistance.
8. The support plan should also include support for the child's family, including family therapy, counseling and problem-solving support.
9. The support plan should be regularly monitored and assessed in terms of the minor's progress and the effectiveness of actions taken within that plan.
10. The support plan should be flexible and adapted to the changing needs and situation of the minor, taking into account his or her development and possible changes in his or her life situation.



Principles for review and update of standards

1. The Standards of Protection for Minors should be reviewed regularly, at least every two years, to ensure they are up to date and continue to serve their purpose.
2. During the review of the Standards of Protection for Minors the opinions and suggestions of all parties involved, including staff, parents, legal guardians and minors, should be taken into account.
3. The review of the Standards of Protection for Minors should include an analysis of any incidents or cases that have occurred in the past in order to identify areas for improvement.
4. The Standards of Protection for Minors should be assessed in terms of compliance with current laws on the protection of minors and other relevant regulations.
5. The review of the Standards of Protection for Minors should also include an assessment of the effectiveness of actions taken on their basis and their impact on the well-being and safety of minors.
6. Where necessary, the review of the Standards of Protection for Minors should include an assessment of the needs for support and training for staff to improve the application of the Standards of Protection for Minors.
7. During the review, care should be taken to maintain clarity and consistency in the Standards of Protection for Minors, with elimination of any ambiguities or contradictions.
8. The results of the review of the Standards of Protection for Minors should be reported to the appropriate supervisory authorities and made available to involved parties in the facility.
9. Following the review, the Standards of Protection for Minors should be updated and any changes should be thoroughly documented and shared with staff and other interested parties.



10. After updating the Standards of Protection for Minors, progress in the implementation thereof and the effectiveness of new procedures should be monitored.



Areas of competence of the person responsible for preparing the facility staff to apply the standards, principles of preparing staff for their use, and way of documenting this activity.

1. The areas of competences of the person responsible for preparing the facility staff to apply standards for the protection of minors should include:
 - 1) detailed knowledge of applicable legal standards regarding the protection of minors, as well as the Standards of Protection for Minors adopted by the facility,
 - 2) training skills enabling the effective transfer of knowledge and skills to staff in the application of the Standards of Protection for Minors,
 - 3) ability to develop training materials, including presentations, practical exercises and other tools to support the learning process,
 - 4) ability to cooperate with other specialists, including psychologists, educators, social workers and experts in the field of protection of minors.
2. Principles of preparing staff to apply the Standards of Protection for Minors:
 - 1) new staff should be provided with initial training on the Standards of Protection for Minors before starting work,
 - 2) regular periodic training (not less than two years) should be organized for all staff in order to update knowledge and skills related to the protection of minors,
 - 3) additional thematic training may be organized for specific issues or risk situations,
 - 4) staff should be involved in the training process through active participation, discussion and exchange of experiences.
3. The preparation of staff to apply the Standards of Protection for Minors shall be documented through:
 - 1) documentation of attendance at training and workshops,



- 2) certificates confirming completion of training related to the protection of minors,
- 3) training evaluations assessing the level of understanding and acquisition of knowledge and skills by staff.



Rules and method of sharing the Standards of Protection for Minors with parents, legal guardians and minors for familiarization and use.

1. The Standards of Protection for Minors are made available to parents, legal guardians and minors in a transparent and easily accessible manner.
2. Parents, legal guardians and minors receive full information on the content of the Standards of Protection for Minors and their importance for the safety and well-being of children.
3. The Standards of Protection for Minors are published on the facility's website.
4. At the request of parents (legal guardians), the Standards of Protection for Minors shall be made available in a printed version at the facility.
5. The Standards of Protection for Minors are presented to minors in a form adapted to the minors' level of understanding and age.
6. Parents (legal guardians) submit a declaration confirming that they have read the Standards of Protection for Minors applicable at the facility and consent to the application thereof.
7. Acceptance of the application of the Standards of Protection for Minors is a condition of participation in the facility.



Persons responsible for accepting reports of incidents threatening minors and providing support to minors.

Each guardian/teacher and the director shall be responsible for accepting reports of incidents that pose a threat to a minor and providing him/her support.

Means of documenting and rules for storing disclosed or reported incidents or events that threaten the well-being of a minor.

Method of documentation

1. Events that threaten the well-being of a minor shall be documented in the content of official notes, as well as on standard forms including a detailed description of the event, date, place and persons involved.
2. The facility maintains an incident report containing comprehensive information on the events, suspects or persons involved, as well as measures taken.
3. As far as possible, the incident report shall be accompanied by photographic documentation as well as statements and explanations from all persons involved.

Rules for storage

1. Documentation relating to incidents or events shall be stored in a manner that protects the privacy and dignity of all persons involved, in compliance with the applicable data privacy standards.
2. Access to documentation is limited to authorized persons, i.e., the director and staff responsible for the protection of minors.



3. Documentation shall be stored in electronic or paper form in a safe location, providing protection against destruction, theft or unauthorized access.