



Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy Statement

What The Finland ry

1. Introduction

This Policy reflects the commitment of **What The Finland** to protect children from all forms of harm and to ensure their dignified, safe participation in all our programmes. It applies equally to staff, volunteers, contractors, partners, interns, and anybody representing, and working on behalf of the organisation. This Policy also applies to all events, online activities, and external partnerships.

2. Scope & Definitions

- **Child:** any person under the age of 18.
- **Safeguarding / Child Protection:** the responsibility to ensure our operations do no harm; to prevent abuse; and to respond to concerns.
- **Risk behaviours:** including physical aggression, emotional maltreatment, neglect, sexual abuse, bullying, abuse via digital communications, boundary violations.
- **Unacceptable behaviour:** any behaviour towards a child that is exploitative, discriminatory, harassing, coercive, or abusive.

3. Principles

- The child's best interest always comes first.
- No child should face harm or abuse while engaged with our organisation.
- We promote inclusion, equality and non-discrimination in all interactions with children.
- All staff must behave in ways that protect children and themselves.
- Transparency, accountability, and confidentiality (with exceptions where reporting is required).

4. Safe Recruitment & Vetting

- Role descriptions will include safeguarding requirements.
- References, background checks, police / criminal record checks, interview screening.



- Probation / trial period with additional monitoring.
- Inclusion of safeguarding clauses in contracts and codes of conduct.

5. Training & Capacity Building

- Induction training in safeguarding for all new staff/volunteers.
- Regular refresher sessions (at least annually).
- Periodic updates when policies or relevant laws change.

6. Designated Child Protection Officer (CPO)

- The organisation appoints one or more CPO(s).
- The CPO is responsible for:
 - receiving reports and disclosures,
 - assessing and investigating concerns,
 - liaising with external child protection agencies,
 - maintaining records securely,
 - advising staff and ensuring policy compliance.
- Contact details of the CPO will be made available to staff, children, and families.

7. Reporting & Response Procedures

- Any staff or volunteer who suspects or receives a disclosure of harm must **immediately** report to the CPO.
- Reports can be made anonymously, and all reports will be taken seriously.
- The CPO shall follow a written internal procedure that includes:
 - an initial assessment,
 - documentation of all details,
 - decisions on next steps,
 - referral to external authorities if required,
 - follow-up, support, and corrective action.
- Confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible, except when mandatory reporting is required by law.



- Whistleblowing protection: no person reporting in good faith will be penalised.
- The organisation must provide support (psychosocial, counselling, safeguarding) to the child, family, staff involved.
- The welfare of the person who made the report is also supported.

8. Data Protection & Record Keeping

- Personal data about children and families will be stored securely and limited to what is necessary.
- Access is restricted to authorised individuals.
- Records of safeguarding concerns and actions will be retained for a defined period (e.g. 7 years), in compliance with applicable law.

9. Monitoring, Review & Revision

- This Policy is formally reviewed at least every **two years** or sooner if there is a safeguarding incident, legal change, or organisational change.
- Staff are involved in reviewing and revising the policy to ensure relevance.
- A child-friendly summary will also be made available.

10. Publication & Endorsement

- This Policy is endorsed by the Board, which also monitors its implementation and compliance.
- It will be made publicly accessible (website: www.whatthefinland.fi).
- All staff, volunteers, partners must sign an acknowledgement that they have read, understood, and will abide by the policy.

Officially endorsed by the Board, last updated 29.9.2025