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Child Protection Policy

POLICY

RIXC Center for New Media Culture (Riga, Latvia) is committed to ensuring a safe environment for all visitors, participants, employees, volunteers and associates, primarily focusing on providing a secure environment for the most vulnerable and safeguarding the welfare and rights of children interacting with RIXC. RIXC is dedicated to ensuring the security and well-being of all children involved in any of the activities organized by RIXC, namely: exhibitions, exhibition tours, festivals, symposiums, presentations, discussions, lectures, workshops and other RIXC events involving children.

RIXC will place a particular emphasis on prioritizing the safety and protection of children in the AUGE 2nd project co-organized by RIXC, as it is designed with youths as its main target audience, including children and minors. Our commitment to safeguarding children extends across all our initiatives, but we recognize the heightened responsibility of catering to the needs and vulnerabilities of the children engaged in this particular project.

AugE | Augmented Europe is a project funded by the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV) AUGE 2nd is aimed at involving European youngsters, actively and through digital media – to shape the future of Europe. They will be supported by young “artists” (artists that are also activists) to shape new ideas to boost visions, dreams, actions that will inspire and guide future ways of living together in Europe in a more sustainable, inclusive and beautiful way.

More information on the project: <https://augenext.eu/auge-2nd-second-chapter/>

Child Protection Policy is a shared commitment by RIXC and all the organizations involved in the AUGE 2nd project, namely, MEET Digital Culture Center (Milan, Italy), Public Art Lab (Berlin, Germany), Espronceda Institute of Art and Culture (Barcelona, Spain), Laznia Center for Contemporary Art (Gdansk, Poland) with an aim to ensure the safety, well-being and rights of all the young participants and children.

As part of the AUGE 2nd project (2023-2024), the project partners including RIXC organize a series of on-site and online arthathons, involving youths to share and shape projects on 5 challenges: Media literacy and digital awareness (MEET), Gender diversity and inclusion (Espronceda), Climate change and space colonization (PAL), Blockchain and future economies (RIXC) and Democracy and public health (Laznia). The arthathon program consists of a series of lectures, presentations, workshops and discussions, involving the youths as participants and taking place at the institutions of the partners on-site and online. The audience of youths also includes children under 18.

Through well-defined child protection policies, comprehensive child protection procedures applied across the organization, rigorous staff training and clear accountability of monitoring and reviewing the child protection measures, RIXC aims to create a safe and nurturing environment for children.

Code of Conduct

RIXC is determined to prevent and respond to any cases and reports of child abuse, neglect, bullying, discrimination, privacy violation and exploitation, either physical or emotional, as well as exposure to inappropriate content, or any other factors that could jeopardize the well-being and rights of children.

RIXC condones any unacceptable behaviors working with children. This includes but is not limited to physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse, corporal punishment, bullying, neglect, privacy violation, discriminatory behavior, intimidation, harassment, bullying, or any form of exploitation. RIXC has a zero-tolerance policy towards such behaviors and has clear and defined child protection procedures, reviewing and monitoring methods, as well as reporting mechanisms for concerns. RIXC prioritizes appropriate conduct when interacting with children, such as treating them with respect and dignity, listening to their concerns, providing positive feedback, maintaining appropriate boundaries, providing confidentiality and ensuring their safety and rights.

Glossary of terms

1. Code of conduct: a set of guidelines that establishes acceptable behavior and expectations for all staff, volunteers, and associates when interacting with children, outlining the boundaries and appropriate ways to engage with minors.
2. Safeguarding: protection of children who could be easily hurt emotionally and physically
3. Child protection: protection, response and prevention of child abuse, neglect, harm, bullying, discrimination and exploitation or any other factors that can jeopardize the safety of children and bring them harm.
4. Child abuse: behavior in which adults intentionally treat children in a cruel or violent way, namely, physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, child exploitation.
5. Physical abuse: involves causing intentional harm or injury to a child through actions such as hitting, kicking, shaking, burning, or other forms of physical violence.
6. Emotional or psychological abuse: involves harming a child's emotional well-being through actions such as constant criticism, belittling, humiliation, threats, rejection, or isolating the child from social interactions.
7. Sexual abuse: involves any form of inappropriate sexual behavior imposed on a child, including molestation, exploitation, rape, or any other sexual activity that the child cannot understand or consent to.
8. Child neglect: failure of responsible adults to provide the necessary care, support and supervision for children which can result in harm of the child's physical, mental or cognitive well-being.
9. Exploitation: using children in order to get advantage, personal gain, or profit, at the expense of the child's well-being, safety, and rights.

10. Child bullying: aggressive behavior that involves a repetitive pattern of intentional harm inflicted by one or more individuals (bullies) upon a child (the victim).
11. Harassment: unwanted and offensive behavior directed at the child, creating a hostile, intimidating, or offensive environment for the victim.
12. Discrimination: treating a particular group of children differently, especially in a worse way than the way in which one would treat other children, because of their race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, etc.
13. Privacy violation: any breach or infringement of a child's right to privacy, confidentiality, or personal information. It occurs when sensitive information about a child is accessed, shared, or disclosed inappropriately, without proper consent, or in a manner that could harm the child's safety, reputation, or well-being.
14. Corporal punishment: physical force or pain as a means of discipline or punishment for a child. It involves intentionally inflicting physical pain or discomfort to correct or control behavior.
15. Inappropriate content: any material or media that is unsuitable, harmful, or damaging for children to access or be exposed to, namely: explicit or sexual content, violence and gore, hate speech and discrimination, bullying and harassment, drug and substance abuse, self-harm and suicide, scams and deceptive practices, sensitive topics.
16. Zero-tolerance policy: a strict and unwavering stance against any form of harm, abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children, meaning no instance of inappropriate behavior or violation of the child protection policy is tolerated, regardless of the severity or the person involved.
17. Procedures: detailed and specific steps or actions that outline how RIXC will implement the policy to protect children from harm and ensure their safety and well-being

PEOPLE

Roles and Responsibilities: The roles and responsibilities of the RIXC staff, volunteers and associates who interact with children include a duty of care and supervision, they should take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of children involved in RIXC activities and they should ensure adequate supervision to prevent potential risks or accidents. They should adhere to the RIXC Child Protection Policy, code of conduct, and procedures. They should maintain appropriate professional boundaries with children, be vigilant in recognizing signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation and report any concerns or suspicions to the designated child protection officer or relevant authorities as per the RIXC's reporting procedures.

Expectations: The RIXC staff, volunteers and associates are expected to prioritize the safety and well-being of children above all else in all interactions and activities, maintain a zero-tolerance approach towards any form of abuse, neglect, or harm to children, regardless of the circumstances and demonstrate professional behavior and conduct when interacting with children, ensuring respect, privacy, confidentiality, empathy, and appropriate boundaries. They must comply with all child protection policies, including the child protection policy, code of conduct, and reporting procedures, as well as adhere to all legal requirements and obligations related to child protection and child welfare.

In order to support a child-safe environment and the fulfillment of the roles and responsibilities of the RIXC staff, volunteers and associates who interact with children in accordance with the Child Protection Policy, RIXC has developed specific procedures, described below, under Procedures.

PROCEDURES

Recruitment and Screening: The RIXC process for recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers, includes references and background checks aimed at preventing individuals with a history of child abuse from gaining access to children. The roles and responsibilities for the relevant positions of employees or volunteers regarding the work with children are clearly defined, outlining the qualifications, experience, and skills required for the role. For new hires, a probationary period is implemented, during which their performance and conduct are closely observed before confirming their permanent employment.

Training and Capacity Building: RIXC organizes training and capacity building for all the staff members and volunteers, to inform them about the RIXC Child Protection Policy and to ensure they understand child protection principles, policies and procedures and know how to respond to child protection issues effectively. Child Protection Policy applies to all employees, volunteers, and RIXC partners, including trainees and external staff, and accordingly, RIXC ensures they are informed about the RIXC Child Protection Policy and consent to upholding it. The training is organized for all new hires and continuous capacity building on updated Child Protection Policy is organized through the duration of employment or affiliation with RIXC.

Participant registration: Each event involving minors should have all its participants registered either online or on-site at the venue of the event, including full name and contact information. The information is processed in accordance with applicable data protection laws. This procedure provides a record of who is present at the event, making it easier to identify and address any concerns or unauthorized individuals, to gauge the number of participants and ensure that RIXC staff can adequately plan for logistics, safety measures, and resource allocation, as well as it is vital for effectively communicating with participants and their parents or guardians before, during, and after the event and contacting them in case of emergencies.

Data Protection: RIXC collects and manages participant information responsibly, and ensures compliance with data protection regulations, maintaining the privacy of participants' personal details. Data protection is a critical aspect of organizing events involving minors, ensuring the responsible handling of personal information to safeguard privacy and security. To achieve this, RIXC limits data collection to necessary information and maintains secure data storage practices.

Other RIXC Child Protections **procedures** which concern Accountability are described below under **Accountability**.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Supervision, Monitoring and Risk Assessment: RIXC employs direct observation methods and regular check-ins in order to uphold the child protection policy. The supervisors regularly observe activities involving children to assess staff and volunteer behavior and interactions with children and to also conduct a risk assessment to identify potential risks and ways to mitigate them. Supervisors organize regular check-ins with staff and volunteers, as well as children involved in the RIXC activities to discuss their experiences and address any concerns or challenges they may be facing.

Reviewing, Evaluation and Updating: The RIXC Child Protection Policy is regularly reviewed and updated based on the feedback of children and RIXC staff and volunteers. RIXC especially encourages child feedback to involve children in evaluating the organization's activities and programs through age-appropriate feedback methods, considering their perspectives on safety and overall experience, helping to improve the existing policies and methods. The Child Protection Policy is reviewed once a year, taking into account the feedback of children and the observations of supervisors and employees, ensuring that the Child Protection Policy is relevant, up-to-date and a practical and helpful framework for ensuring the safety and well-being of children.

Reporting Mechanism and Response to Incidents: RIXC takes with extreme seriousness any reports on violations of the Child Protection Policy. They are handled confidentially and in accordance with the local legislation. The designated person for reporting any incidents on violations is the RIXC director Rasa Smite, who can be contacted via the organization's e-mail rixc@rixc.org or phone number +371 67228478. All reports are promptly investigated and reported to the relevant authorities in case of ascertaining any violations of the Child Protection Policy and code of conduct. In case of immediate emergencies the RIXC staff, volunteers and associates must report the incident to the relevant local authorities immediately.



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