

Child Safeguarding Policy

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Effective since: March 2025

LiberoPensatore APS is formally an ETS (Third Party Institution Sector), following the registration provision Single National Register of Third Sector (RUNTS).

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND CODE OF CONDUCT

1. OUR MISSION IN THE FIELD OF CHILD SAFEGUARDING

LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) aims to be a child-safe organisation. Anyone who works with LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) in whatever capacity must be made fully aware of the dangers of exploitation and abuse, above all of a sexual nature, that children face.

LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) will do everything in its power to prevent, report and respond to such problems.

The highest standards must be adhered to at all times by the staff of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) and its partner organisations and their representatives when dealing with children, as outlined in this Child Safeguarding Policy¹ (henceforth referred to as “the Policy”). These standards apply to both the private and professional life of staff and anybody else who carries out whatever kind of activity for the organisation.

2. OUR COMMITMENTS TO CHILDREN

As a group of individuals and organisations working together to create a global movement to defend the rights of children, LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) has the following commitments as regards children:

Awareness: we are committed to ensuring that the staff of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) and partner organisations and their volunteers are fully aware of the problems linked to sexual exploitation and of the associated risks for children. The children themselves and their families will be informed in the most appropriate way of the rules concerning the behaviour they should expect from staff and representatives, and of how they may report any eventual cases of alleged abuse.

Prevention: we are committed to ensuring that the staff of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) and partner organisations and their volunteers minimise all risks so as to prevent any harm being done to children. It is necessary to create an environment in which the rights of children are always safeguarded and the likelihood of abuse prevented.

Reporting: we are committed to ensuring that the staff of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) and partner organisations and their volunteers are clear about when it is necessary to report a concern of possible abuse and what action should be taken.

Responding: we are committed to ensuring that effective action is taken in response to any report of abuse by supporting, assisting and protecting the child involved.

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3. DEFINITIONS AND FIELDS OF APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

This Policy includes the mandatory requirements that are applied to every aspect and area of the work of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy): fundraising, awareness-raising, campaigns, communication and marketing, and the development of humanitarian and emergency intervention.

Any report of exploitation or abuse, including of a sexual nature, will be handled according to the General Procedure for the Safeguarding of Children (henceforth “the General Procedure”) linked to this Policy in line with the disciplinary procedures of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) and current legislation.

This Policy applies to:

- members of the Governing Board, Supervisory Board, Assembly and volunteers;
- staff of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) hired on any kind of contract whatsoever (henceforth “the staff of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy)”);
- donors, journalists, celebrities, and anyone else directly involved in the projects or services of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy);
- staff and representatives of partner organisations and any other individual, group or organisation that has formal/contractual relations with LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) involving direct contact with children (henceforth “the staff of partner organisations”);

The staff of LiberoPensatore APS and partner organisations and their representatives must adhere to this Policy in both their professional and private lives.

4. GLOSSARY

Here are the key definitions:

- **Child:** this term includes children of all ages and so the policy deals with the protection of all persons under the age of 18.
- **Child abuse:** any acts that may cause physical or psychological harm to a child, directly or indirectly result in harm to a child, or damage the prospects of a child’s safe and healthy development into adulthoodⁱⁱ; the main categories of abuse are defined by the World Health Organisation as physical violence, emotional violence, neglect and negligent treatment, and sexual exploitation and abuseⁱⁱⁱ.
- **Sexual exploitation of a child:** the abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust in relation to a child for sexual purposes, whether successful or not; this includes – but is not limited to – profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation.

LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) considers that:

- any sexual activity without consent is to be considered abuse and is a criminal offence
- any sexual activity with a child under the age of legal consent of the country in which s/he lives, irrespective of whether s/he gave her/his consent, is to be considered abuse
- consensual sexual activity with a child over the age of legal consent of the country in which s/he lives, but under the age of 18 (even though it is not a crime), will in any case be treated as a breach of this Policy and Code of Conduct.

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5. PROCEDURES FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN

LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) establishes the General Procedure for reporting and dealing with cases of suspected maltreatment, abuse or exploitation of children.

In particular, the General Procedure requires as follows:

The Governing Board (Comitato Direttivo) must elect one of its members to be responsible for the implementation of this Policy (Responsabile Protezione Minori).

The appointed officer (Responsabile Protezione Minori: RPM) ensures that a national mapping is carried out of the infrastructure and services for the safeguarding of children in those areas in which LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) operates, providing information concerning the policies, procedures, practices, contact points and services.

The RPM must ensure that, on the basis of the information provided by the mapping, national and local procedures are developed and implemented to respond to reports of possible cases of abuse and manage any subsequent action taken.

Any breaches of the Policy must be reported centrally to the RPM as the Focal Point for Child Safeguarding.

As prescribed by the General Procedure, the RPM must be informed of any complaints received and be directly involved in the handling of these complaints. Reports assessing the implementation of the Policy are submitted every six months to the contact Governing Board (Comitato Direttivo) for this Policy.

The staff and volunteers of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy), when signing any type of employment contract or describing their activities as volunteers, must receive and fully understand:

- the Child Safeguarding Policy, which includes the Code of Conduct;
- the General Procedure, which includes all the necessary information concerning who should be contacted to report a complaint.

All the partners and other organisations that have a formal contractual relationship with LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) involving direct contact with children must include in their contracts the obligation to:

- adhere to every aspect of this Policy and know how to proceed should they have to report an alleged case of child abuse;
- adhere to the Code of Conduct included in the Policy.
- Any alleged breach of the Policy must be reported and investigated in accordance with the Policy itself and the relative General Procedure.

Any breach of the Policy may result in disciplinary action which, in the most serious cases, may result in the termination of the person's contract.

All the staff of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy), its volunteers and the staff of partner organisations must:

- promote an environment that is open to listening in relation to the safeguarding children in order to facilitate the discussion of problems and/or the reporting of alleged cases of abuse of children;
- ensure that there is a shared sense of responsibility among staff as regards the safeguarding of children;

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- encourage children to discuss their problems and concerns;
- make parents and guardians aware of the rights of children, and of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable;
- explain clearly to parents and tutors the kind of professional behaviour they can expect from the staff of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy), representatives and partner organisations, and explain in detail what they can do in the case of problems relating to cases of abuse of children.

6. STANDARDS AND CRITERIA OF THE CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The following standards and criteria define the minimum levels for a suitable implementation of the Policy and its monitoring and assessment. These standards and criteria will be checked regularly and updated where necessary.

Awareness Raising and Prevention

a) Dissemination and awareness raising:

LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) ensures that there is broad dissemination of the Policy, the relative Procedure and the Code of Conduct. The dissemination must obviously include the staff of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy), its partner organisations, their volunteers and, above all, children and those who look after them. The dissemination is carried out in such a way as to ensure that the Policy and Code of Conduct are fully understood. This may involve translations into the languages of beneficiaries and the production of child-friendly material.

b) Staff recruitment and selection:

The recruitment and selection of staff, and also other collaborators or volunteers, must reflect LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy)'s commitment to the safeguarding of children, ensuring that the necessary checks and procedures are in place to prevent anyone unsuitable from working with children^{iv}. Successful candidates are informed of the binding nature of this Policy, the relative General Procedure and the Code of Conduct, and of the fact that the principles contained in these documents must be adhered to in both the professional and private life of the person.

c) Implementation of the Policy in Management Systems and Processes:

The Policy must be incorporated into all existing and future management systems and processes of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) that affect the safeguarding of children so as to create an environment in which the rights of children are respected. The Policy must be reflected in every measure concerning human resources and general management to guide staff in the carrying out their work. Failure to comply with any aspect of the Policy contained in any of these measures will be considered a serious breach of discipline. The costs of implementing the Policy must be included when preparing any operational plans, budgets or funding proposals of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy).

d) Safer Programming, Risk Assessment and Management

All the activities carried out by LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) involving children (whether they are of a humanitarian nature or are related to programmes, communication or fundraising) must be carefully assessed to ensure that every kind of risk for children is identified and suitable checks and controls are developed. Additional needs will be taken into account for those children with specific skills or needs (for physical reasons, religious or ethnic affiliation, sexual orientation or other factors).

e) Training and Development

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The staff of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy), its volunteers and the staff of partner organisations must be assisted in developing the necessary skills, knowledge and experience for the safeguarding of children in line with their role within the organisation. The staff who have to deal with complaints of sexual exploitation or abuse are provided with suitable training so that they can respond to and deal with the complaints. The core principles of the Policy, Code of Conduct and General Procedure must be included in the induction training of staff, and in all subsequent training.

f) Agreements with Partner Organisations and Training

Any agreements between LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) and its partner organisations must include clauses regarding the Child Safeguarding Policy. Partner organisations must adopt the Policy or have already developed their own policies with a similar approach and standards. The agreements with partners must highlight very clearly the agreed procedures for reporting and investigating cases relating to breaches of the Policy. LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) will have a clear plan to develop the skills of its partners in this sector, so that they can develop the necessary policies and procedures, also using resources developed within LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy).

g) Information and Communication Technologies

In the use of information and communication technologies, such as the Internet, websites, social networks and digital photography, LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) takes the utmost care to ensure that children are not exposed to any risks. The guidelines contain guidance on the use of these technologies both by staff and representatives of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (ITALY) that by children who use them in the name and on behalf organization, or in response to a request from you. The involvement of children, girls and adolescents for purposes related to activities of marketing, communication / media and advocacy must always take place with consent informed and must not be a cause of exploitation or worsening of them conditions, or those of their family members / guardians, and increase their vulnerability. It is desirable where possible to avoid identifying them, in particular by combining them personal details, location and image.

Reporting and Responding

a) Centralised System

In accordance with current legislation on privacy, LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) has a system that makes it possible to report, record and evaluate centrally the complaints received and dealt with locally.

b) The General Procedure and Local Complaints Procedures

The General Procedure and local complaints procedures provide a detailed list of what must be done when a complaint is received. A distinction is made between cases originating outside the organisation and cases involving the staff of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy), its volunteers or the staff of partner organisations, as well as cases in which the beneficiaries are the alleged perpetrators of the abuse. The General Procedure and local procedures contain indications as to how and when to report alleged cases of abuse to the competent authorities, local services and specialised local structures for the protection of children.

c) Obligations of the Staff of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) and its Partners

The staff of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy), its volunteers and the staff of partner organisations must report any suspicion of exploitation or abuse involving children when the alleged perpetrator is a member of staff, whether it is the result of a specific complaint or just unconfirmed suspicions. The primary concern of any member of staff informed of a case of abuse is always to protect the child.

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The General Procedure and local procedures for reporting cases allow staff to report cases of abuse even when the alleged perpetrator is external to the organisation. The reports must be made immediately and in any case within 24 hours unless it is impossible or unfeasible to do so or there are exceptional circumstances that prevent the report from being made.

d) Staff Roles and Responsibilities

The LiberoPensatore staff must all be aware of their own roles and responsibilities in reporting and responding to complaints of alleged sexual exploitation or abuse in accordance with the General Procedure and national legislation. The roles and responsibilities of every member of the staff must be clearly specified:

- in reporting any suspicions or alleged breaches of the Policy;
- in handling any such reports;
- in responding to and managing cases;
- in dealing with reports, and coordinating the evaluation and response process;
- of the Responsabile Protezione Minori (RPM), as the person in charge of the General Policy at a national level in the operating of a centralised system for the reporting of cases to ensure the management control of these cases. All the staff involved with minors must receive suitable training, guidance and support. LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) provides standardised forms in the General Procedure to record information and register the main details concerning suspected cases abuse.

e) Principles and practices in responding to accusations of exploitation or abuse

When responding to accusations of sexual exploitation or abuse of children, the LiberoPensatore staff follow the General Procedure and always proceed taking into account the best interests of victims and witnesses, their safety and physical and mental well-being, and their rights to privacy, equality and fair justice. The staff of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) will be asked to cooperate in any investigations and maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality. Any failure to fulfil this obligation will be considered a breach of discipline, which may be punished, in the most serious cases, with the termination of their employment contract. For a more detailed description of the principles and practices referred to in this section, see the General Procedure.

f) Learning from experience

The lessons learnt as regards the implementation of this Policy and the handling of specific episodes will be used to improve the Policy and develop the best practices.

g) Awareness

The staff of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy), its volunteers and staff of partner organisations must be aware of what action can be taken against the alleged perpetrator of abuse, which includes:

- referring the matter to the competent authorities for judicial investigations in accordance with the law;
- internal disciplinary procedures, which may result in the person losing their job or a contract being terminated.

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7. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Responsabile Protezione Minori (RPM) has full responsibility for the creation of a working environment that facilitates the implementation and development of the principles of the Policy. The staff of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy), in line with their own specific functional responsibilities, have full responsibility for creating an identical working environment wherever their project is being carried out. The Responsabile Protezione Minori (RPM) is responsible for delegating responsibility relating to the Policy within the team of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy).

Starting from May 2025, the member of the Governing Board (Comitato Direttivo) delegated as Responsabile Protezione Minori for LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (Italy) is **Lucia Mattarocci**.

8. PROCEDURES RELATING TO THE HEADQUARTERS OF LIBEROPENSATORE APS PERUGIA (ITALY)

The Responsabile Protezione Minori (RPM) is responsible for ensuring that all members of the Governing Board, staff and volunteers know the Policy, asking them to sign a declaration in which they state that they have received and accept the Policy. The Responsabile Protezione Minori (RPM), as the person in charge of the General Policy at a national level⁴ :

- establishes and maintains a centralised system of reporting, ensuring management control of cases regarding alleged breaches of the Policy;
- establishes and maintains a system of regular contacts with the international Child Safeguarding managers of LiberoPensatore APS;
- prepares the communications that the Director General must submit to the Governing Board;
- regularly checks and updates the Policy, at least every three years or sooner should this be deemed it necessary.

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CODE OF CONDUCT

The staff of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (ITALY) and partner organisations and their representatives must never:

- 1) *hit, physically assault or physically or psychologically abuse children;*
- 2) *act in ways towards children that – also from a psychological point of view – may have a negative effect on their development, including their social and relational development;*
- 3) *act in ways that set a negative example for any children present;*
- 4) *engage in sexual activity or have sexual relations with anyone under 18 years of age, irrespective of the definition of the age of majority or the way in which consent is legally recognised in the different countries – believing that a child is older than s/he, in fact, is cannot be considered an acceptable defence;*
- 5) *have relations with a child that can in any way be considered exploitation, maltreatment or abuse;*
- 6) *act in ways that may be abusive or put a child at risk of exploitation, maltreatment or abuse;*
- 7) *use language, make suggestions or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive or abusive;*
- 8) *behave in a manner that is inappropriate or sexually provocative;*
- 9) *establish or engage in “continuous” contacts with beneficiary children using online personal communication (e-mail, chats, social networks etc.) – only professional online tools and environments the organisation knows about may be used and, where possible, a work landline or cellphone for telephone contacts;*
- 10) *allow one or more children with whom you are working to sleep at your home unsupervised or without previous authorisation from your project manager, except in exceptional circumstances;*
- 11) *sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom you are working;*
- 12) *do things for children of a personal nature that they can do themselves;*
- 13) *give money or goods or other benefits to a child that go beyond the parameters or purposes established by the project or without your project manager being aware of this;*
- 14) *condone or participate in behaviour by children that is illegal, abusive or endangers their safety;*
- 15) *act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse;*
- 16) *discriminate against, show differential treatment towards or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.*

This list is not exhaustive or exclusive.

The basic principle is that inappropriate or potentially abusive behaviors towards children must be avoided.

It is also important that the staff and the volunteers of LiberoPensatore APS Perugia (ITALY) as well as the staff of partner organisations and their representatives in contact with children:

- 17) *are quick to identify situations that may place a child at risk and know how to deal with such situations;*

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- 18) report any concerns, suspicions or certainties about possible abuse or maltreatment of a child in accordance with the General Procedure and this Policy;
- 19) organise work and the workplace in such a way as to minimise any risks;
- 20) always be as visible as possible to other adults when working with children;
- 21) foster and maintain an open culture which allows staff, volunteers, children and the people looking after them to raise and easily discuss any type of topic or concern;
- 22) ensure that members of staff develop a sense of responsibility with regard to the way they operate so that any actions or forms behaviour that are inappropriate or may lead to abuse of children do not go unnoticed or are tolerated;
- 23) inform children of the type of relationship they can expect to have with the staff or representatives and encourage them to report any concerns they might have;
- 24) make full use of the children's skills and abilities, and discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and what is not acceptable, and what they can do if they have a problem;
- 25) maintain the highest personal and professional profile;
- 26) respect children's rights and treat children in a fair and honest way with dignity and respect;
- 27) encourage the participation of children so they can develop the ability to safeguard themselves.

ⁱ This Policy is based on the Child Safeguarding Protocol adopted by Liberopensatore APS Board of Directors in March 2025.

ⁱⁱ Minors may be abused by people known to them or, more rarely, by unknown; within their family, in an Institutional context, in a community or in digital environments as well as in the course of practices and procedures that cause an actual or potential harm to health, survival, development or dignity of a child.

ⁱⁱⁱ The law n.1 of October 2012, from the ratification in 2007 of the Council of Europe Convention, a Convention for the protection of minors against sexual exploitation and abuse (Lanzarote Convention), dictates some rules to adapt the internal legal system through the modification of the penal code (introducing the new crimes of solicitation of minors, also through the Internet, instigation and apology of pedophilia and of child pornography), the criminal procedure code and the penitentiary system. It is important to remind that, according to art. 609 quater of the penal code, people who have sex with children under 14, commit a crime, as well as with 16 years old minors if they are the ascendant, the parent, even adoptive, or the cohabitant of the parent, guardian or other person to whom, for reasons of care, of education, supervision or custody, the minor is entrusted or having, with the latter, a domestic cohabitation. Moreover, outside the hypotheses of sexual violence (referred to the article 609-bis of the penal code), the ascendant, the parent, also adoptive, his cohabitant or the guardian who, by abusing the power connected to his/her position, has a sexual relation with a minor under age 16, is punished with the imprisonment from three to six years. It is not punishable the minor who engages in sexual acts with a minor who is 13, if the age difference among the subjects is not over than three years.

^{iv} The Legislative Decree n.39 of 4 March 2014, "Implementation of Directive 2011/93/EU concerning the fight against abuse, sexual exploitation of minors and Child pornography" has introduced some aggravating circumstances for the crimes of abuse, enticement and sexual exploitation of children. It has also provided the obligation for those who intend to employ or involve a person for professional or volunteer activities that includes direct and regular contacts with minors, to check the person's criminal records in order to verify the absence of convictions for sexual exploitative crimes.