

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### Giolli cooperative

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## INTRODUCTION

As a democratic cooperative inspired by Boal and Freire's methods, aiming to build up a world of peace and justice against any oppression (see our Statutes), Giolli is committed to and encourages respect for human rights and dignity. Giolli believes that every child who participates in our activities has the right to enjoy a safe environment and be protected from harm. In line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that all children have a right to protection, Giolli believes that it has a duty of care and obligation to protect those children for whom we are given responsibility.

We believe that the welfare of children is the highest priority and that it is the responsibility of everyone in Giolli to ensure that they are protected. This policy sets out Giolli's commitment to Child Protection and aims to promote good practice in:

- providing children with appropriate safety and protection while in the care of Giolli; and,
- allowing all volunteers and staff to make informed and confident responses to specific Child Protection issues.

## Definitions

- Child: anyone under the age of 18 (in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).
- Adult: anyone aged 18+.
- Participant: every person who attends a Giolli event (training, performance, project...), who is not a "person in a position of responsibility". Note that in some event, participants are adults. Though not children, they have the same right to expect a safe environment and appropriate behavior from other participants and persons in positions of responsibility.
- Person in a position of responsibility: any staff, trainer, volunteer or other person who has responsibility for all or aspects of delivering a Giolli event.
- Child Protection: refers to the actions taken in order to prevent or stop all behaviors considered dangerous for the physical and psychological health of children.
- Child abuse: is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. It often occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a child regardless of their age, gender, race or ability. Even in situations where it may be felt that the child accepted or somehow invited the abuse, it is still abuse.

Abusers can be adults (male or female) and other children, and are usually known to and trusted by the child and family. The abuser may be a family member, or they may be someone the child encounters in a residential setting or in the community, including during sports and leisure activities. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming that child or neglecting the needs of the child.

There are four main types of child abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. Children can suffer from one or a combination of these forms of abuse.

- Emotional – the emotional mistreatment of a child which may involve telling a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only to meet the needs of another person. These may include imposing expectations or interactions that are inappropriate or beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limiting the child's ability to explore or learn or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction.

- Physical – causing bodily or physical harm e.g. hitting, poisoning, burning, giving children alcohol or drugs.
- Sexual – when adults use children to meet their own sexual urges; this may or may not include physical contact with the child (e.g. any sexual activity, intimate touching, sexually suggestive remarks).
- Neglect – when adults fail to meet the child's basic needs to an extent that is likely to result in serious impact on the child's health or development (e.g. failing to provide adequate food, shelter, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment).

In addition, bullying is a form of child abuse although often, but not always, the person who is the bully is also a child.

Bullying means deliberate, hurtful behavior towards another person that is usually repeated over a period of time. The outcome will always be painful and distressing for the victim. There are four main types of bullying:

- physical (e.g. pushing, hitting, kicking, slapping or any use of violence);
- verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name-calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages);
- emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group); or,
- sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

#### Part 1 - Our Policy

Giolli will not tolerate child abuse and is committed to:

- Taking into account, in all of our planning and activities, the interests and wellbeing of children;
- Respecting the rights, wishes and feelings of the children with whom we are working;
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from neglect and physical, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse;
- Responding to all suspicions and allegations of abuse swiftly and appropriately; and,
- Recruiting Giolli volunteers and staff to work with children with regard to their suitability for that responsibility and providing them with training in good practice and Child Protection procedures.

Giolli volunteers and staff, who wish to work with children, are responsible for following this Policy at all times.

#### 1.1 Review

The policy will be reviewed every 2 years or whenever there is a major change in the organization or in relevant legislation. Compliance with procedures will be regularly monitored and reviewed.

#### 1.2 Our Policy and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Giolli's Child Protection Policy is based on the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It provides a comprehensive framework for the protection, provision for and participation of all children without discrimination to ensure their survival and development to the maximum extent possible.

### 1.3 Our Policy and National Laws

This Policy must be followed in addition to the relevant national and local laws on Child Protection.

### Part 2: Our Rules

Giolli promotes and expects behavior that is sensitive, respectful, caring and that contributes to creating a healthy and safe environment for children and adults; an environment where children and adults feel able to come forward with concerns and receive support from those around them.

### 2.1 Adult Code of Behavior

Giolli has adopted an Adult Code of Behavior that every single adult involved in a Giolli event and/or a position of responsibility within Giolli, should respect and put into practice at all times. All staff and volunteers will be given a copy of this Code of Behavior during training or other events and must become familiar with its requirements, by reading and understanding the Code. The Code can be found at Appendix One of this policy.

### 2.2 General Behavior within Giolli activities

The above Adult Code of Behavior reflects the guidance and rules set out in the Giolli Ethical Code (see on the website). All persons involved in Giolli activities must be made aware of and comply with these rules, which include forbidding the following in our events:

- Any sexual intimacy or the appearance of sexual intimacy;

- Use of narcotics;
- Underage drinking; and,
- Any form of abuse, corporal punishment or intolerance

Violation of any of these rules will lead to consequences up to and including exclusion from the activity. Violation of some of these rules may lead to consequences up to and including informing the appropriate external authorities.

### 2.3 Health and Safety within Giolli activities

To ensure the physical protection of children, their health and safety must also be provided for. Giolli activity policy includes specific requirements for:

- The ratio of adults to children;
- Upholding all local public health/ health and safety standards and laws;
- Ready access to medical care;
- Healthy diet and nutrition; and,
- Accommodation of special needs, to the fullest extent possible.

## 2.4 Behavior and Communication outside of Giolli activities

People in positions of responsibility must understand that they are in a position of trust at all times in relation to the children for whom they are responsible. This means that all contact with children before or after a programme should reflect the same values and behavior.

Abuse can take place not only in person but also through other forms of contact (e.g. phone, text messages, emails, social networking sites).

It is important to encourage safe on-line or distance communication and to understand that our responsibility to children extends to any contact we have with them, be it by phone, text, chat, social network sites etc.

It is particularly important to recognise that on-line communications present many positive, but also negative opportunities.

The Giolli website and Facebook allows Giolli members to communicate with participants in their activity, before and after the event they attend. They can also communicate with other members of Giolli. However, many Giolli members (youth and adult) may also have a personal account on other social networking sites. Whenever using social network profiles, programme staff and leaders should always bear in mind their responsibility as adults in a position of trust. Giolli expects them to keep the distance on-line with young people that they would keep in the 'off-line' world. Giolli further expects that they would not maintain any on-line friendship on a social media site with a child they know to be under the minimum age required by such sites.

Please refer to Appendix 2 - Safety and Social Networking Sites for rules and expectations on communication with children via social media.

## 2.5 Photography

Care should be given when uploading photographs taken in an activity; only images of children in suitable dress should be used to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. It is difficult to specify exactly what content is appropriate given the wide diversity of activities. Images of these activities should focus on the overall activity, not on a particular child, and should avoid full face and close-up body shots.

Please refer to Appendix 2 - Safety and Social Networking Sites for rules and expectations on use of photographs in social media.

## Part 3: Selection

Giolli relies on our paid staff and dedicated volunteers. We recognise how important it is that we have safe and effective practices in place for recruiting people who will be working with children and to prepare them for their role.

Giolli requires the following steps and precautions in selecting all persons with Giolli responsibility.

The selection process is set out in detail in our website.

Criteria and considerations regarding background and behavior are stated in Selection Guidelines for Persons.

Note. On occasion, people withdraw and replacements have to be found very quickly. In all cases, however, each of the steps below must be followed before a person can be selected for a



position of responsibility. In order to be prepared for such an eventuality, Giolli has a list of possible trainers who have been through these steps and been trained recently as 'backups'.

### 3.1 Age Requirements

Every adult in a position of trust and responsibility in Giolli activities should be at least 21 years old on the day of the beginning of the activity.

### 3.2 Application Requirements

Applicants for a position of responsibility in Giolli activities must complete an application form, giving information about their experience, interests and background. They must also sign to say that they do not have history of criminal activity, illness, child abuse, drug/alcohol abuse, prejudice etc. that would disqualify them from participation in Giolli actions. Applicants must provide 2 confidential references, which must be checked.

### 3.3 Criminal Record Check

Police checks are required for all staff/ trainers/ personnel hired at all Giolli activities. Giolli has to work with the best information it can obtain according to national laws and procedures. It is essential under all circumstances to find out whether an applicant has a criminal record of convictions or arrests, which would make them unsuitable to take on a role of trust with children in a Giolli activities.

The following are considered inappropriate for a position of leadership and trust in Giolli and cannot be chosen for positions of responsibility:

- Persons who are listed on a national Child Protection Register
- Persons who have been charged with or convicted of serious criminal activity. Serious criminal activity includes, but is not limited to: murder; a serious sex offense; an offense committed by an adult involving intentionally wounding or causing grievous bodily harm; indecency offenses; kidnapping; offenses connected with child prostitution or child pornography.

There are also some conditions or tendencies, which could make someone unsuitable for a position of responsibility. Persons with a history of conviction or treatment for the following behaviors, except in cases of unusual circumstances, are considered inappropriate for a position of responsibility in Giolli:

- Alcohol/drug abuse;
- Dishonesty;
- Emotional or behavioral disturbance;
- Prejudice or intolerance;
- Violence or lack of self control;
- Unable to handle stress appropriately.

Having a criminal record, in itself, does not necessarily mean that the person cannot assume a role of responsibility. It depends on the contents of the record and whether it relates to 'serious criminal activity' or other behaviors or attitudes that would make the person unsuitable for a position of trust with children.

### 3.4 Interview

All applicants will be required to attend an interview with Giolli representatives.

A check should be made that the application form and procedures have been completed in full.

The requirements and responsibilities of the role should be clarified so that they understand what is expected of them and what they can expect.

#### Part 4: Training

Safe recruitment practices of volunteers and staff must be followed by essential training for the roles they are undertaking. Our trainer, staff and volunteers must all be trained to recognise the situations where abuse of children may occur in order to enable them to react appropriately if they have concerns.

Training after recruitment should help all to:

- Understand the Adult Code of Behavior;
- Consider their own practices against what is considered good practice;
- Understand and follow the Giolli procedures for reporting and recording concerns;
- Recognise their responsibilities;
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child;
- Work safely and effectively with children; and,
- Understand how Giolli's Child Protection Policy also protects them in their work with children.

#### Part 5: Acting to Protect the Child When Abuse is Suspected

Part of providing a high standard of care is reacting appropriately when something does happen, or is suspected to have happened, and there is a need to protect the endangered child. In the case of suspected or actual child abuse, you must ensure that your first priority is always for the safety and welfare of the child and that no child is ever left in an un-safe situation. It is often very hard to admit that abuse is taking place within our organization, especially to children we know and particularly by people we trust. We cannot assume that because we work in a ethical organization all individuals are caring individuals, as this may lead us to fail to hear or recognise or deal with the possibility that abuse is happening.

If you have a child protection concern, it can be difficult to know what to do. You may be worried about raising your concern and may think it is best to keep it yourself, perhaps feeling that it's none of your business or only a suspicion. Giolli will always treat your concerns seriously and if you have such concerns, we want to hear from you – we all have a responsibility to protect the children in our care.

It is important in all circumstances to share your concern with someone who can make sure that the matter is looked at and dealt with as soon as possible. You should always pass on your concern to the 'person in charge' or, where your concern is about them, to the Supervisor.

#### 5.1 Hearing a child's disclosure

It is not the responsibility of the person first hearing or encountering a case of alleged or suspected abuse to decide whether or not abuse has taken place; it is their responsibility to immediately report the concern.

Giolli should create a positive atmosphere where children feel free to come forward in case of abuse. It may be that the abuse is taking place outside of the Giolli activities, in the child's home or community. Every child has the right to be listened to. It is our duty to listen to any concern they may have and to take them seriously, especially when talking about harm or

abuse. It is helpful to ask 'open' questions that need more than 'yes' or 'no' responses but no attempt should be made to investigate.

It is important to tell a child who discloses abuse that such information must be shared and cannot be kept 'secret' or confidential. The child should be told that the information will only be shared with those who need to know.

## 5.2 Reporting to the Giolli person in charge and the Supervisor

When someone has a concern, they must immediately discuss the concern with the 'person in charge'. The 'person in charge' in Giolli is the trainer present in the activity, responsible for the activity itself.

The 'person in charge' is responsible for letting the person who has reported the concern know how it will be dealt with. The person reporting the concern should ensure they receive this information.

The 'person in charge' will then contact the Giolli Supervisor immediately, or as soon as possible that day.

If the concern is about the Supervisor, the President or also another member of staff should be approached.

The Supervisor is responsible for responding within 12 hours and then, as soon as possible, investigating and/or seeking relevant professional advice, advising the staff and ensuring that the incident is documented and reported on an Incident Report Form (see below).

### 5.2.1 Recording reporting and documenting a concern

Giolli members should understand their responsibility to immediately report any concerns they have regarding the behavior or welfare of a child or another volunteer to the person in charge (see above). In some countries there will be a legal requirement to report such concerns to the appropriate authorities (see 5.2.3); the Supervisor will be able to advise on this. After a concern has been reported it is important to record or document the concern. When documenting a concern, care should be taken not to record personal opinion, only facts. If an injury e.g. bruise, cut, has been observed, the location of this injury should be noted on a body chart. The body chart that Giolli uses is available on-line and can be appended where relevant to Incident Report Forms (see below).

### 5.2.2. Filling in a report form

A Giolli Incident Report Form (IRF) must be completed whenever an incident – requiring medical attention, involving criminal behavior and/or violation of Giolli Guidelines – occurs at a Giolli activity. In case of doubt, an IRF should still be completed. Anyone who feels there is a matter that should be reported can fill out an IRF. The form contains instructions on completing it and sending it to the right place.

The form can be found on [www.giollicoop.it](http://www.giollicoop.it) as can the body chart mentioned above.

The Supervisor must ensure that an IRF is completed and submitted and that a copy of the report and all related documents is stored confidentially by Giolli.

Information about suspected abuse must be accurate and a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure or when the concern arises. The information given on an Incident Report Form should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child;
- The child's home contact details;
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of



someone else;

- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information;
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay;
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries using the body chart to indicate the location of such bruises or injury. Also details of any indirect signs, such as behavioral changes;
- Details of witnesses to any incident/s;
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred;
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to?
- If so what was said?
- Details of the alleged abuser, if known.

### 5.2.3. Reporting to the Authorities

Where it is suspected that any form of criminal behavior is taking place at an activity, the appropriate local authorities should be informed immediately and their advice followed.

Supervisor

should investigate and/or involve the appropriate authorities in that community.

### 5.3 Confidentiality

Where there are concerns about a child's welfare, every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and shared on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The person making the allegation;
- The Giolli 'person in charge';
- The Supervisor;
- Parents of the child;
- Social services/police/doctor;

In cases referred to them, the social services/police/doctor will advise on who should approach the alleged abuser or, where the alleged abuser is under 18 years of age, their parents.

### 5.4 Internal Inquiries and Suspension

If the person accused of abuse is internal in Giolli, the Supervisor will also need to consider how to deal with that person. Guidance must be sought from the appropriate local authorities. The Supervisor will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.

Following their inquiries, social services or police inquiries may decide not to pursue the matter. The Supervisor will still assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and/or retrained and how this could be sensitively handled. In such cases, the Supervisor must reach a decision based upon the available information. The welfare of the child must be the highest priority throughout the child's involvement within Giolli.

## Appendix 1

### Adult Code of Behavior

As a person in a position of programme responsibility you are in a position of trust at all times in relation to the children for whom you are responsible.

#### Good Practice

DO treat everyone with dignity and respect

DO set an example you would wish others to follow

DO treat all children equally – show no favoritism

DO respect a child's right to personal privacy

DO avoid unnecessary physical contact with a child – your actions, no matter how well-intentioned, might

be misinterpreted by them or someone else

DO avoid unacceptable situations within a relationship of trust; for example, a sexual relationship

with a participant, even if they are over the age of consent

DO have separate sleeping accommodation for children and adults

DO plan activities that involve more than one other person being present, or at least are within sight and hearing of others – avoid spending time alone with a child in private or out of sight/hearing of others.

DO allow children to talk about any concerns they may have

DO encourage others to challenge any attitudes or behaviors they do not like

DO avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behavior from children, such as tantrums and crushes

DO keep other leaders informed of where you are and what you are doing

DO take any allegations or concerns of abuse seriously and refer them immediately to the person in charge

#### Poor Practice

DO NOT trivialise or belittle abuse or concerns

DO NOT form an intimate relationship with a child or any other relationship that would be an abuse of trust

DO NOT allow abusive activities between children such as initiation ceremonies or bullying

DO NOT engage in inappropriate behavior or contact – physical, verbal, sexual

DO NOT make sexually suggestive remarks or threats to a child, even in fun

DO NOT use inappropriate language, whether speaking or writing – in person or by phone, email

or through use of social media

DO NOT allow a child to use inappropriate language unchallenged

DO NOT let allegations, suspicions, or concerns about abuse go unreported

## Appendix 2

### Safety and Social Networking Sites

In addition to the Adult Code of Behavior, here are some guidelines on how to behave appropriately toward children on-line or in other forms of communications.

- Remember you are in a position of trust and are a role model at all times.
- Conduct yourself appropriately, as you would face-to-face.
- Do not engage in one-to-one communication with children or via text messages, instant messaging or chat facilities unless it relates specifically to your Giolli responsibilities.
- Before sharing your social media accounts with a child, consider the things you like to share with your peers – would they be suitable or appropriate to share with that child?
- When using a social network account, you should always think of how any digital communication might appear to someone else. Compared with a conversation in the real world, technology increases the potential for messages to be seen out of context, misinterpreted or forwarded to others.
- Do not provide personal details about children on your website or social networking group.
- Always ensure you have parental permission to use any photographs of children and only use their first names on any caption.
- Only use appropriate photographs on your site – remember that everyone can view them.
- If you are concerned about the way a child is attempting to contact you, report it immediately to the person in charge.
- If you need to email children, always copy the message to another adult.
- WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT YOU NOT USE YOUR PERSONAL SOCIAL NETWORKING ACCOUNT TO COMMUNICATE WITH CHILDREN.

Below an attachment with the policy signed up.