



CHILD WELFARE POLICY

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Introduction

Football for Refugees works with refugee children and their health and safety is our paramount concern. For the avoidance of doubt a child is anybody under 18 years of age.

The aims of this policy are:-

- i. To best protect all refugee children who participate our football activities, in order for them to do so in a safe and enjoyable environment.
- ii. To provide appropriate guidance and advice to all volunteers and employees working with Football For Refugees in all matters concerning child welfare and protection.
- iii. To demonstrate best practice in the area of child welfare and protection.
- iv. To promote ethics and best practice standards throughout soccer.
- v. To ensure that all suspicions and allegations of abuse/poor practice are appropriately addressed and by the relevant authorities.

Rules for interacting with Children

Volunteers with Football For Refugees are engaged in supervising the transportation of children from refugee camps to football facilities and while at those facilities the direction and supervision of those children in football activities. As our activities demand us to work closely with, and exercise authority over, refugee children, each volunteer is obliged to follow these rules:-

Pairing

1. For the protection of refugee children, and indeed a volunteer, no volunteer should engage with, or supervise children alone. Each volunteer will have a designated pair, with whom he or she will be expected to work.
2. No volunteer should be alone with a refugee child, or children, out of the sight of other adults, at any time.

No social activity

3. No volunteer may socialise or keep company with a refugee child, other than within the supervised structure organised by Football For Refugees.

No intimate contact

4. Refugee children are ordinarily energetic and disposed toward volunteers who work with them. At no point should this lead a volunteer to gestures of intimacy, such as kissing or intimate embraces of any kind. Holding hands of a very small child or carrying such a child is appropriate if required to assist that child, but again it is stressed that this contact should be in clear view of a pair volunteer.

Needs of a child

5. Where a child requires to attend a toilet and as a consequence of his or her age requires to be accompanied, he should be accompanied by two volunteers of the same gender. Where an adult from an NGO responsible for the child is in the near vicinity a volunteer may pair with that party for the purpose of bringing the child to the toilet.
6. Where a child requires hydration or first aid, those requirements should be attended to immediately and a water facility and first aid will at all times be available for that purpose.
7. Where a child requires to be disciplined for unruly behaviour, he or she may be directed away from any group activity. However, at no point should the child remain unsupervised or out of sight of volunteers running activities. Where a child requires

to be transported back to his or her refugee camp, this should be done by two volunteers.

8. The watchword of every volunteer is “**never go it alone.**”

Record of children in care

9. Where ever a group of children are placed in the exclusive care of Football For Refugees, an accurate record of the number of children will be recorded at all times.

Child Welfare Officer and Risk Assessment

The rules for volunteers set out above have been prepared having regard to the risks associated with running activities for refugee children in the manner planned by the organisation. In addition, Football for Refugees will have a policy of insurance in place to cover the interaction of our volunteers with the refugee children.

However, situations may develop over the course of the planned tournament which demand a special response. A Child Welfare Officer has been designated to supervise the activities of all volunteers and to continually assess any risk to the children with whom we work.

The Child Welfare Officer for the Summer Festival 2017 is Cormac McLoughlin, Director of Football For Refugees.

Procedure for dealing with Child Abuse Concerns or Allegations

It is important to note that the investigation of an allegation of any abuse of children, physical or sexual, is the responsibility of the Statutory Authorities in Ireland, the Gardai and HSE, in Greece, the local police force.

No investigation of an allegation of abuse of children will be undertaken by the Child Officer of Football For Refugees.

Where an allegation of abuse is made by a child or person who alleges that they witnessed abuse, the Child Officer will immediately report that fact to the relevant policing authority where the volunteers are the operating. Such a report will be made on notice to the parents of the child concerned, save where taking this step could jeopardise the investigation or further endanger the health and safety of the child.

The fact of the allegation will also be made known to the party who has been the subject of an allegation. His or her response should be passed to the relevant authorities.

Acknowledging that malicious and false allegations can be made against volunteers, appropriate support will be made available to a volunteer who contends that the allegation is without foundation.

In addition to the above, there may be circumstances where a volunteer has a suspicion that a child has been the subject of physical or sexual abuse. Where a volunteer has reported such suspicions, the Child Welfare Officer will consider whether the report constitutes reasonable grounds for concern, such as to warrant reporting to the relevant authorities. If he is any doubt about that fact, he will seek guidance from the relevant authorities.

The End.