



CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY



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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this Child Protection Policy

This policy is here to inform any staff, volunteer, member, potential and formal project partner, as well as beneficiaries of QUEST's activities (including schools, parents, teachers and children) about QUEST commitment and responsibility in :

1. Ensuring the safe and healthy development of children through QUEST's daily activities and within the scope of specific projects
2. Guaranteeing that every child is free of harm, abuse, exploitation and neglect in any action within which QUEST, or anyone acting on behalf of QUEST is involved.

This policy will serve as the basis to ensure the safeguard and the promotion of children's rights in regards to :

- Any activity or project led by QUEST
- Actions from QUEST's associated partners within the framework of joint projects
- QUEST's staff members and volunteers' conduct towards children
- QUEST's members
- Any individual's conduct when acting on behalf of QUEST
- Any individual's conduct at events and activities organised by or falling under the responsibility of QUEST

More than informing, this policy sets the commitment of any individual or organisation acting on the behalf of QUEST to promote, guarantee and protect children's rights within the scope of their work.

Key principles

This Child protection policy follows key principles the signatories take at heart to follow.

a. The respect of Children's rights

By this Children protection policy, QUEST formally commits to respect the rights of children and young people, promote their meaningful participation and healthy growth, as identified in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child.

b. The Do no harm principle

Respecting children's rights is not sufficient. Actions must be led to prevent and protect children from any type of harm. Harmful treatments encompass : physical abuse, emotional abuse, signs of neglect, mistreatment, exploitation, discrimination or other equitable treatment, sexual abuse, child pornography, commercial exploitation and violence. Concerning the understanding of each harmful behavior, QUEST follows the definitions outlined in Keep Children Safe safeguarding guideline, available [here](#).



c. Active listening and democratic decision making

Children know best what makes them happy and have a strong sense of inner motivation to learn, when accompanied by helpers actively listening to their needs. QUEST commits to taking every opportunity to listen to what children participants need, want and how it can be fulfilled in respect to each and everyone's rights. Processes of democratic decision making are ideal in that regard to ensure the rightful consideration of every voice and find collective solutions.

d. Non-violent communication

Violence can take multiple shapes, including words. Emotions and perceptions must therefore be shared in a respectful manner, by taking one's own responsibility towards its own emotions and embodying a posture of understanding towards others own feelings. Non-violent communication is a core principle of QUEST's working culture and must be practised by every person engaging in activities engaging QUEST.

e. Equity and inclusion

The above principles apply to everyone, irrespective of their age, gender, religion, country of origin, disability or any other discriminatory perception. Every child must be equally respected and given equitable opportunities for healthy growth. Projects must ensure that no activity creates, renews or aggravates discriminations against children. On the contrary, activities must pay attention to inequalities affecting children and support equity in learning and beyond.

f. Sustainable futures

QUEST must ensure that no harm will be carried out on children within the scope of activities and beyond. This means guaranteeing that project activities will contribute to shaping sustainable futures for children. This can be achieved through promoting children's personal and professional future prospects, but also through the preservation of healthy learning environments and democratic societies. The preservation of our planet, its biodiversity and the quality of its resources also contribute to this principle.



PROTECTION POLICY

1. Staff and Code of Conduct

a. Hiring process

During the hiring process, future employees are asked about their experience with children and attention is brought to the child protection policy. Any person refusing to follow this policy is not hired. A clearly defined job description will outline whether the staff member or volunteer is expected to engage with children within its activities at QUEST. If so, at least two recommendations will be asked of the candidate, from professional relations having known the candidate for at least two years and being able to testify the candidate's respectful behaviour concerning children. The candidate must also be able to demonstrate a police record free of any harmful behaviour, officially issued by the local authority from the country of residence. Only after these documents are received can the candidate start its contract.

b. Code of Conduct

As inscribed in every contract, employees and volunteers are expected to respect QUEST's code of conduct, within which the following staff members' and volunteers' responsibilities are stated :

Article 40a : confidentiality

The employees must abstain from, during and after the contract, divulge to any party or to use for personal ambitions, directly or indirectly, the inventions, methods, client lists or any other confidential information. This article extends to the information gathered on or with children, on other employees or project partners and beneficiaries. This way every employee and volunteer must ensure that every personal and confidential information gathered during its time at QUEST remains confidential. It is strictly forbidden to contact a child outside of the predefined framework of a project, for motives other than professional or through different means than predefined with children and within the project proposal.

Article 40b : Communication

The staff members and volunteers must respect the values of the NGO, meaning embodying a respectful attitude, availability and active listening, non-violent communication. This article also extends to project partners and beneficiaries during projects. It must be applied in any context, especially when in contact with children.

Article 40c : Non-discrimination

An equal treatment, without any distinction based notably on religion, convictions, nationality, ethnic or social origin, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability, is expected from every staff member and volunteer at QUEST. This equal treatment must be applied in every circumstance, notably when in contact with children.



Article 40d : Careful execution of missions

Every member staff and volunteer must perform its missions with care, honesty, consciously and according to the defined time and place, including during projects. In contact with children, every action must be planned and taken to ensure children's well-being, learning and respectful exercise of their rights. Unless conducting to a right violation, every employee and volunteer must respect its line managers' and the child protection policy officer's decisions when implementing activities with children. Every staff member and volunteer is encouraged and welcomed to ask for and follow additional training on children participation, collective decision making, emotional intelligence and non-violent communication, children's rights and well-being.

Article 40e: Effective collaboration

Every staff member and volunteer is expected to follow responsibly and be accountable for the objectives and missions relating to its position. To do so, it must adopt communication, experience sharing and collaboration as key working principles. Every employee and volunteer is welcomed to participate, take initiative and be creative, as long as any proposed initiative or activity remains respectful of human rights. Every staff member and volunteer accepts to be mindful of their colleagues', project partners' and beneficiaries' (including children) lifelong learning opportunities, and to share its knowledge and experience when beneficial. Again, this knowledge must be shared in a respectful and empathetic manner.

Article 40f : Respectful sharing of common working spaces

Every staff member and volunteer participates in the creation of a positive and agreeable learning and working environment within QUEST and funded projects. In contact with children, this means guaranteeing that every learning environment is safe, healthy, promotes meaningful dialogue and participation. Employees and volunteers are therefore expected to verify that activities themselves, as well as the environments in which they take place are safe of (physical, emotional, mental) harm for every participant.

Article 40g : Respectful use of material

Every employee and volunteer must carefully use any material needed for the completion of their daily missions and within project activities. This includes ensuring every learning material used with and for children is adapted, mindful of their rights and returned in good condition. The employee or volunteer acting outside of this article will be taken accountable for the caused damages and may be asked to replace or pay a compensation for the damaged materials.

c. Training

When entering QUEST, every staff member is trained to nonviolent communication, sociocracy and to the democratic education pedagogy. Nonviolent communication is being implemented as a core process within every activity, and is expected from the staff



member or the volunteer in every setting. The principles from the democratic education pedagogy, highlighting the importance of children's right to self-determination and participation within community democratic processes, are also expected to be adopted by every staff member and volunteer. Sociocracy is implemented throughout QUEST's organisational structure, promoting horizontal discussions and participation from each and every actor within QUEST.

d. Presentation of the Child protection policy

Within QUEST's onboarding process, a session is also given to present the child protection policy. QUEST's designated Child protection officer is then responsible to ensure that every staff member and volunteer has signed an Child Protection Pledge, stating its commitment to respecting and promoting children's rights, as well as preventing harm and acting responsibly if any case of perpetrated offence has occurred within the scope of its work or under its watch. This Child Protection Pledge will be transmitted by QUEST during the onboarding process to the candidate. The onboarding process takes place the first week of contract, and must be completed before a staff member or a volunteer engages with children. The Child Protection Pledge must also be signed beforehand.

If any question arises during a staff member's or volunteer's time at QUEST, specific dedicated sessions will be allocated between the child protection officer or the management to answer concerns and give additional explanations. Additionally, after new project feedback, if considered relevant by QUEST's child protection officer or management, a new presentation can be organised to either remind the staff about the child protection policy, share good practices or outline points of improvements.

e. Visiting organisations

Within the scope of a funded project or in their daily working activities, staff members and volunteers may be led to visit spaces in which children develop. QUEST's membership, for example, accounts for 34 schools at the time of writing. In the case of a visit, QUEST staff members and volunteers are expected to :

1. Re-read the children-protection policy
2. Prepare with the visited organisation the team's arrival, overall stay, activities and engagement with children as to guarantee that every prevention is taken to promote children's rights and prevent harm.
3. Continuously ask for children's informed consent during the running off the prepared activities
4. Promote children's participation in the definition, implementation, evaluation and communication of activities
5. Respect children's choices and rights when implementing an activity
6. Ensure data privacy from every participant and the sole use of information when a formal written consent is given
7. Ask for feedback from both adults and children to improve QUEST's actions to promote children's rights and participation



f. Visits by external actors participating on behalf of QUEST

Any journalist, photographer, expert and other external visitor to a regular or project activity in which children are involved should sign QUEST's Child Protection Pledge, read QUEST's child protection policy and comply with the safeguarding measures explained in the following policy. If and when needed, the child protection officer will explain and clarify the safeguarding mechanisms. If any action from the side of an external visiting actor raises concerns towards the safeguard of children's rights it's involvement will be stopped.

2. Promoting child protection as a network

a. Child Protection Pledge

To become a member of the QUEST network, education organisations must first sign a Child Protection Pledge outlining their commitment to respecting children's rights and their meaningful participation. This Child Protection Pledge is included within the membership application form they fill in, and is part of a broader package including QUEST's statutes - specifying the rules of membership and, under article 9, the possibility of exclusion in cases of "serious violation of the statutes or the laws", including the violation of human and children rights. The child protection policy is shared within the membership package, which members are also asked to sign. A member that refuses to sign either the Child Protection Pledge or the child protection policy is not granted membership.

b. Network capacity-building

As a network, QUEST seeks to promote children's rights within the EU. To do so, QUEST first acts internally, by sharing its child-protection policy and proposing training on how to create and implement a child-protection policy. Upon request, additional one-to-one sessions can be given to answer members' questions and clarify its use. Case examples can then be shared, highlighting the risks of not having a child-protection policy and safeguarding mechanisms for daily activities with children and within funded projects.

c. Rights violation from a member

In the case of a right violation being reported to QUEST, whether anonymously or by a known contact, a due diligence investigation will be triggered. Every complaint is taken with equal seriousness.

The due diligence investigation will establish whether:

a. A violation has taken place

If a violation has taken place, the investigation will define whether it has been sufficiently considered and answered. The response mechanisms triggered must be in alignment with children's rights, done in a timely manner while ensuring the protection of the children having been hurt as well as the rest of the participants.



If the violation has not been handled well, QUEST will study the organisation's child protection policy and safeguarding mechanisms. Feedback will then be given and the following of a specific training, given by QUEST or an external recognised entity may be asked from the member organisation. If the member organisation refuses to follow the training and upgrade its safeguarding mechanisms, it may expose itself to exclusion from QUEST's membership.

If no proof of right violation is found, attention will be kept on the member organisation in the following months and proofs of established safeguarding mechanisms will be asked to monitor their effectiveness in preserving children's rights.

b. Preventing repetition

The due diligence investigation will also determine whether any specific action has been taken to ensure that this violation will not be repeated in the long-term. If only short-term actions have been taken, QUEST will give its support through recommendation or training, according to the situation. Learning from failing to protect should inform renewed actions and strategies to promote and preserve the well-being of children and every participant in future activities and projects.

c. A systemic or systematic violation

In the case the investigation could underline systemic procedures or actions hampering the rights of children, QUEST will consider its responsibility to alert first the member organisation, ask for a change in structural procedures, staff, physical space and materials, or culture. If no action is taken to change these harmful practices, QUEST reserves the right to terminate the membership and inform the relevant authorities. QUEST is willing to support any member organisation in updating their safeguarding mechanisms to make them more sufficient, through training, experience sharing and recommendation.

3. Building child-safe activities, projects and programmes

a. A dedicated Child protection officer for QUEST

QUEST has a designated Child protection officer, responsible for supervising the systematic consideration of the child protection policy within projects. In case of long absence of the Child protection officer, a replacement is also named to take on the role.

b. Designation of Child protection officers within projects

Before the start of a project, the project team will designate a child protection officer. The child protection officer, informed by the different partners' children protection policies, will be responsible for ensuring the safety of the children involved and the continuous respect of their rights. If any problem arises, complaints should be gathered and welcomed by the child protection officer. Every project participant, and person having been affected by the project, can come to the child protection officer to raise a complaint. Every complaint must be considered equally and shared to the partner



organisations protection focal point. A replacement to the child protection officer will also be designated between the partner organisations, in case the child protection officer is unable to responsibly uptake its role.

c. Protection at every stage

Children's protection must be considered and included at every stage of a project (from design to implementation and evaluation). To guarantee the protection of children along QUEST's activities, a risk assessment will be systematically carried out. This implies the preparation of a prevention plan before the running of the activities. If too many risks are identified, the project or the activity must be either rethought or cancelled. Additional guidance can be given by QUEST's child protection officer to the team or by the project's child protection officer. The Child Protection Officer can intervene in the design, implementation and evaluation of a project if the child protection policy is not sufficiently streamlined.

d. Engaging with children

Every project or activity participant is expected to interact with all the other actors, including children, in a respectful and mindful way, while embodying the QUEST's principles of nonviolent communication, effective collaboration, confidentiality, Active listening, democratic decision making, non-discrimination, equity and inclusion, respect of others, the environment and resources. This includes:

1. Paying a careful attention to one's own words and actions
2. Being responsible for one's own emotions and sharing them, when needed, with empathy and care for others
3. Reflecting of the consequences specific actions and statements might have on others' opportunities, health and well-being

e. Children's participation

No child will participate in activities or projects without his and his legal guardian's formal consent. The signed consent form should define clearly, and in a child-friendly manner, the different activities that will be carried out. The child has the right, at any moment, to refuse to participate in the activity. The child's wish must be respected by all QUEST and associated partners' staff members and volunteers. If the child proposes a different way to run the activity, to which he would consent, it may be considered and proposed to the other participants. Only if all the participants agree may the activity be updated. A reflective and respectful conversation between all the participants may then take place, and must be considered by staff members and volunteers as the right of the participating children, as well as the opportunity for them to develop transferable skills.

Before every activity, information must be shared to the participating child as to :

- Grant the child the right to informed choices and consent
- Create a sound understanding of the way the activity will take place and what will be the role, place, rights and responsibilities of the child within the activity
- Make sure the child is rightly prepared and emotionally ready for the activity
- Present the activity as a learning opportunity



Every information must be given in a child-friendly way. After information has been given, feedback must be asked as to whether the explanation was sufficiently clear and whether other information is needed. Sufficient time must be allocated within activities to answer children's questions, reflections, clarifications and prepare them physically, psychologically and emotionally to the start of the activity.

At the end of each activity, feedback from children must be asked - to ensure their well-being has been preserved and to serve as an opportunity for children to learn from sharing collectively their perceptions, feelings and learnings.

f. Informed Safeguarding

Safeguarding should be monitored throughout the project and the activities that might affect or in which children participate. Feedbacks will be gathered for future projects to improve child protection. Every QUEST project team will write a synthetical safeguarding report, on the good practices and limits identified in the project regarding child protection.

QUEST's child protection officer will then gather the information, update its child protection policy communications, and present the lessons learned to the rest of the team. The report will also be sent to associate partners to promote child protection outside of QUEST.

g. Potential partners

QUEST ensures that every associated partner respects children's rights and promotes the prevention of any harm in a responsible and comprehensive way. To do so, QUEST asks potential partners to read its child protection policy and sign its Child Protection Pledge before the submission.

Before submission, QUEST also analyses the child-protection policy of potential partners. If loopholes are found in the policy, QUEST reserves itself the right to outline the gaps in the child protection policy, ask for an update or refuse the project partner. QUEST also encourages each potential partner to designate a child protection focal point in their own organisation.

Additionally, QUEST systematically asks partners to share their child-safeguarding policy when a project can affect the life of children and directly engages them within project activities. Following the organisation of training sessions on child protection policy to QUEST members, which will occur in 2024-2025, QUEST will progressively start to refuse partners that do not have a child-safeguarding policy to run projects.

QUEST is willing to share its child-protection policy as well as advice on how to build a comprehensive child-protection policy, with strong accountability mechanisms, to potential partner organisations.

h. Partners and projects

Within projects, the same Child Protection Pledge is expected to be signed by all project



participants and proof of background checks will be asked from partners regarding the staff members and volunteers involved in the project.

When the project happens within one project partner's facility or broader geographical context, QUEST will ask, from the concerned partner, a short analysis of the education context in which children will evolve. This shorter analysis will complete the risk assessment made before the start of the project and ensure that the project's activities could not affect the lives of children (involved in the project or more broadly in the geographical zone in which the project occurs).

If QUEST learns about systematic children rights' violations occurring from one of its associated partners, before a project's acceptance, during the project or at the end of the project, QUEST will terminate the partnership it has with the organisation. No more projects will be run with the cited organisation. In consultation with the remaining partners and the funding agency, and proportionately to the situation, key actions will be taken to replace the partner or adapt the project, in a manner respecting the rights of every child. Children involved in the project will be consulted to ensure no harm has been caused from their engagement with the project partner in question. If violations have occurred, QUEST will bring its support to affected children. The support can take various forms according to the situation (psychological, emotional, support to legal actions taken by the legal representatives...). These actions will be orchestrated by the project's designated child protection officer, in collaboration with each of the partner organisations' child protection focal points and the broader management.

4. Communication and media

a. Personal data

QUEST also to not take any pictures or videos portraying children as undressed, in any inappropriate position, acting in a position of vulnerability (desperation, sadness...), or in any circumstance in which the child's consent would not be respected. Children's own preference as of how they want to be portrayed will be prioritised, in accordance with their rights. Children's context will also be taken into consideration, as to not use any content that could limit children's rights or pose a risk to their interactions with their community.

Any type of personal data shared (pictures, testimonies, videos...) will be used solely in the professional context and for professional purposes. The misuse of personal data by staff members or associated partners will be considered a grave breach of this policy.

To share this content, QUEST will systematically request formal consent from the child (either written by the child itself or helped by a legal representative, in the second case this should be stated on the consent form) and the consent from the child's legal guardians. The child and their guardians retain the right to refuse the use of the child's personal data at any time before, during and after the project or the activity. In that case, QUEST will do its best within its own power to withdraw the content and not use it in further communications. This option is shared to legal guardians and children within QUEST's consent form.

These personal data should only be used according to what is stated within the consent



form, agreed upon by the child and the legal guardian, sent and signed. If another use is envisaged, a new specific consent form should be sent and signed. If any additional request of information is made by either the child or the legal guardian, QUEST will take the time to bring clarifications, and if needed, to organise an encounter (either online or in-person, depending on the circumstances) to share the necessary information.

If before, during or after the use of personal data by QUEST, concerns or questions are raised by either the child or a legal guardian, QUEST will organise an encounter (online or in person, depending on the circumstances) to bring clarity about the issue. A common agreement will then be reached with the concerning parties about the rightful use of the data. Options include the withdrawal of any personal information from QUEST's social media and overall communications.

b. The use of technologies

If a project entails the use of technologies, an introduction session will be organised to present the technology in a child-friendly manner, bring a collective reflection about the benefits, responsibilities and risks of its use, as well as the relevant prevention measures to apply. The project managers implementing the activity (being staff members from QUEST or an associated partner) will be accountable for informing the children and running this information in a comprehensive, understandable and respectful manner. Feedback from children will systematically be asked at the end, to ensure that the later use of the technology does not bring any harm. QUEST will verify with project partners whether and how that session has taken place.

Before any use or proposal of use of technologies, children should be consulted as to whether they want to use the particular technology, how they want to use it, to what purpose and what result they expect from it. Any product of technology (document, video...) done by or portraying children should not be used without their consent or in a different way than previously agreed on with them (unless they give their consent).

The technologies must be used solely by project participants having received a dedicated training on how to use the technology, experts or participants accompanied by an adult having been trained on using the technology.

Filters and blocking software are to be installed on every device used for an activity potentially exposing children to harmful content. An IT consultant will verify the security of the devices used during the project before it starts. Associated partners will be asked to do so for their teams. Any harmful content received should not be shared any longer. Complaints should be directed to the child protection officer and within the concerned partner organisations without the harmful content. The transmission of any type of harmful content is considered a crime under international law.

In case there is a breach in these prevention measures, renewed attention and checks will be given to the devices to increase its security. Personalised attention will be given to the harmed child, as to ensure its emotional protection and a discussion with the legal guardians will be organised (with the child depending on its own willingness to join).

Staff members and volunteers should also communicate to their manager if they have received any harmful content. A personalised discussion will also be run with the affected member or volunteer as to ensure their emotional protection. If the staff



member or volunteer has been deeply affected by the event, a replacement should be found to guarantee children's rightful consideration during the activities. Any voluntary consultation of detrimental websites or sources of information by staff members and volunteers however will not be permitted, and can justify an immediate dismissal.

The project's evaluation, and its relative consultations, will pay particular attention to the introduction of technologies within the project, their presentation and use.

c. Interviews, surveys, focus groups and other research activities

No research must be led on subjects or using methodologies that would not respect the rights of children. Every methodological approach should therefore be based on international law. When the research involves children, formal written consent is required from both the child and the legal guardian. When requested, information gathered must remain confidential and anonymous. The gathered information will solely be considered for professional use, precisely defined before the collection of data and shared in a comprehensive and understandable way to both the child and the legal guardians.

When interviews or focus groups are being conducted with children, children must be informed about their rights, the context of the interviews and how it will be conducted. They must give their informed consent before any interview or focus group is led.

Consideration must be also given to the socio-economic and emotional context of the child being interviewed and how it may affect its well-being during the interview.

- **Gender:** Girls and boys might be more comfortable talking to a woman or a man, the question must be considered when preparing for the interview.
- **Privacy:** Allowing children to run interviews in a space where they feel comfortable, safe, and where their privacy will be respected.
- **Accessibility:** Every interview should be equally accessible to every child, considering differences in terms of disability, access to technology or other resources, mobility, perceptions and personalities.
- **Respect of ideas:** When running an interview, the sharing of children's perceptions should be encouraged. No idea should be imposed on the child by any adult. New reflections can be presented as a learning opportunity.
- **Support:** An additional person, with which the children feel comfortable, should be present during interviews, if the person running the interview itself is not known sufficiently by the children.
- **Safe and healthy space:** Every interview should always be organised in a healthy environment, supporting their rights. No space potentially harmful for their health and well-being should be selected.
- **Right to information:** If notes or pictures are being taken or if the interview is recorded, the child and its legal guardians should be informed about the future usage of the collected information, their implications and how they will be collected.



5. Raising a complaint

a. Who can raise a complaint?

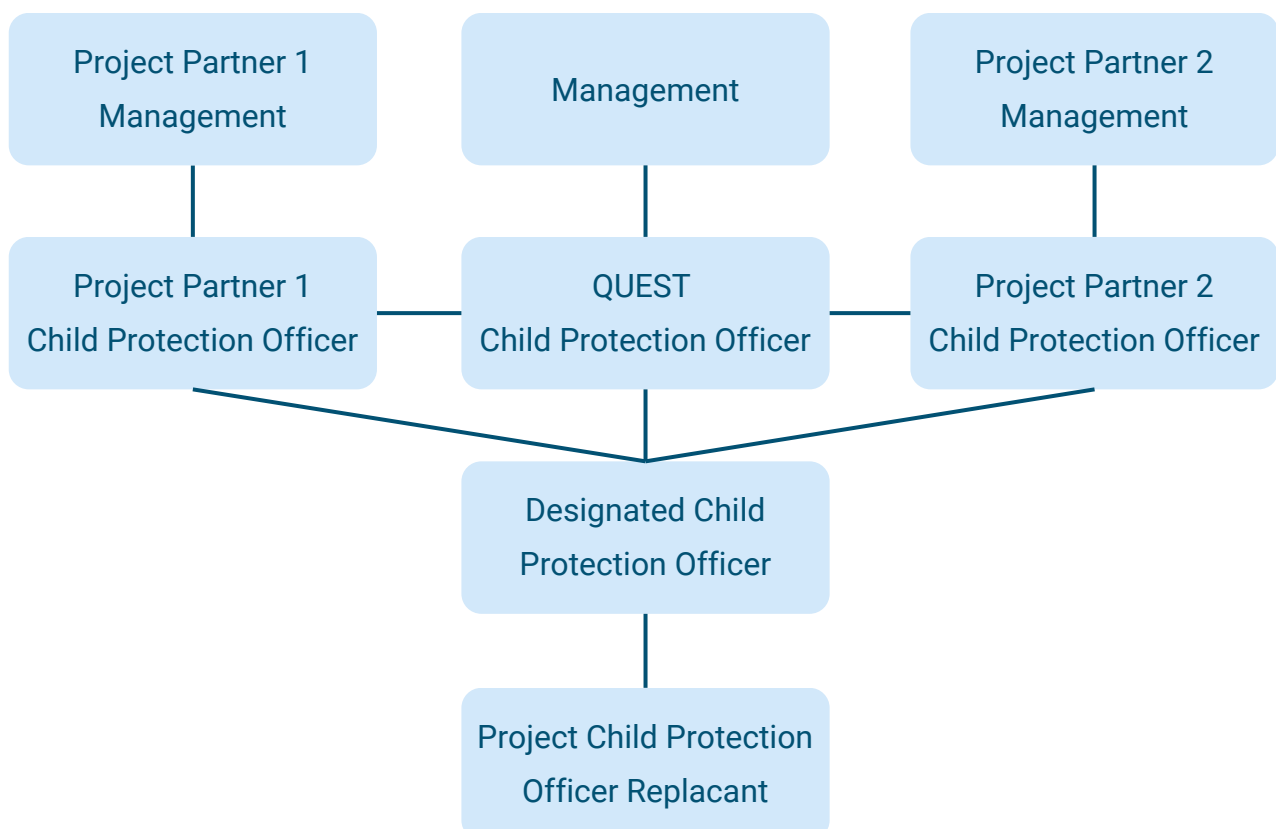
Everyone can raise a complaint :

- A child having been affected by an activity, a staff member, a volunteer, a person from the community in which the activity takes place
- An employee
- A volunteer
- Project partners
- A Child Protection Officer
- An external individual that might have been affected by the project or an activity
- A community
- An institution

The key purpose of raising a complaint is to alert on the breach of a human right, including children rights, and to trigger solutions to re-establish, when possible, the rights of the person affected, compensate them if needed, assist with the psychological/emotional/physical coping of the affected individual and strengthen mechanisms to guarantee human rights' protection both during the activities and on the long-term.

b. Raising a complaint to a Project Child Protection Officer

PROTECTION CHART



Concerns and rights violations can be hard to share. To make sure concerns are being raised, the designated Child protection officer will, at the beginning of every project, present its role to the different participants and encourage them to raise their concerns when needed.

Any staff member or volunteer having witnessed a right violation is asked to fill a protection report that will inform the designated project's Child Protection Officer's actions as well as the later decisions taken between project partners and/or the management. The Project Child Protection Officer is also expected to fill this form, stating the actions taken following the rights' violation with justifications of the actions taken. The gathered testimonies and information are also to be included on this form.

Each and every complaint will then be taken seriously, in an equal manner. The responsibility then falls on the Project Child Protection Officer to identify the next steps to take, according to the following guidelines :

1. Protection of the collective :

- a. If the name of the accused person has been communicated, the person must be distanced physically from the participants, especially the children, until a full investigation has been conducted.
- b. If the name of the accused person has not been shared, a collective discussion must be held, first between the project partners and the Project Child Protection Officer, then with the rest of the participants to define how to proceed. Investigation must be led to measure if other victims are to be accounted for, notably by encouraging to bring forward a complaint, either in person or anonymously as described in the sections below.
- c. If participants raise a complaint on methods, pedagogies, technologies, tools and their use, as breaching their rights, a collective discussion should be held on whether to pursue them, adapt their use, replace them with alternatives or abandon them.

Children should always be granted the possibility to give their perspective and participate in finding/implementing solutions, when desired. However, their abstention to the discussion will also be accepted if preferred.

2. Protection of the affected (child) participant :

- a. If the name of the child is communicated, special attention must be given as to guarantee its emotional, psychological and physical health following the right violation. Legal guardians should be made aware of the incident, and, together with the child should define the next steps to take. QUEST will support the chosen actions to the best of its capacity.
- b. If the name of the child has not been communicated, a gentle call to the group can be made to encourage the person to share a testimony. However, pressure should not be put on anyone to do so if no open reaction is taken. To raise additional information, the Child Protection Officer can encourage the collective to share their testimonies in person, through the anonymous box or QUEST's website.



3. Alerting the relevant authorities :

Following the investigation's results, the Child Protection Officer is responsible for alerting the relevant authorities, sharing the gathered information and pursuing the contact for as long as required by the case.

4. Protection of the accused :

Following the principle of justice, no individual should be treated as faulty before an investigation is led. QUEST leaves the responsibility of judging to legal authorities, and will, however, focus its attention on :

- a. Investigating the case, while remaining respectful of everyone's rights and sensibility
- b. Assisting both the affected individuals and the collective in handling the incident
- c. Restoring the safety of every participant and the preservation of everyone's rights

Accordingly to the gravity of the complaint, the Project Child Protection Officer, in coordination with the project team, can urgently take action to safeguard the rights of every participant. However the chosen actions must be proportionate, justified and respectful of every participants' rights. The proportionality and relevance of the actions taken will then be discussed and measured by the Management circle and QUEST's Child Protection Officer. Project participants and team members raising concerns about the Child Protection Officer will be considered with equal gravity.

After a concern has been raised, the project's designated child protection officer will communicate it to QUEST's Child Protection Officer. QUEST's Child Protection Officer will in turn contact its peers in the partner organisations. A meeting will be held to define relevant action to be taken. According to the case's gravity, QUEST's management can be involved.

c. Anonymous complaint

At the beginning of projects and activities, participants will be introduced to the complaint box, a physical box systematically placed in a discreet setting, and within which participants can share a complaint anonymously. The usage of the box will be explained by the Project Child Protection Officer. Complaints coming out of this box will be treated with the same seriousness as the ones shared in person.

In 2025-2026, QUEST will additionally add a Complaint box on its website, to allow anyone to raise a concern anonymously. The concern raised may be linked to QUEST's activities, project partners, members, staff and volunteers... The dedicated page will be composed of :

1. The contacts of QUEST's Child Protection Officer in case the name of the plaintive is wished to be communicated.
2. An anonymous box in which any plaintive may describe its case, to the length it so wishes, with the possibility to joint documents



d. Confidentiality

Every gathered information on a right violation, whether gathered anonymously, through proof-finding or by an in-person testimony, will remain confidential and will only be shared to the local authorities in charge of the case, the legal guardians and the management.

6. Accountability, monitoring and review

At QUEST, we are committed to ensuring that our Child Protection Policy is both effective and inclusive, while continually improving it through regular monitoring and evaluation.

To achieve this, we conduct:

1. **Regular Monitoring and Reporting:** The implementation of the Child Protection Policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis. Progress and performance will be reported annually by the Child Protection Focal Person to the Management Board.
2. **Self-Audit and Evaluation:** QUEST will conduct regular self-audits to assess whether the standards outlined in the Child Protection Policy are being effectively implemented and whether safeguarding measures are functioning as intended. This process will help identify areas for improvement and inform policy updates.
3. **Reactive Monitoring:** In addition to regular monitoring, reactive monitoring will take place following any incidents or concerns. This will allow QUEST to learn from these situations and, if necessary, revise the policy or reporting procedures to strengthen safeguarding practices.
4. **Policy Review and Feedback:** The Child Protection Policy will be reviewed every two years, with feedback gathered from QUEST's 78 member organizations, including 34 schools. A child-friendly version of the policy will be developed in 2025-2026 with the help of our youth advisory board to ensure children understand their rights and the measures in place to protect them.



7. Signature

I have read and understood this Child Protection Policy. I adhere to the listed principles and hereby commit to rigorously follow this Policy to protect and promote children's rights in my work.

Name:

Position :

Date and signature:



A. DEFINITIONS

These definitions are progressively being elaborated, systematically shared with QUEST members within consultations and updated according to their feedback. In 2023, the definitions of well-being in education and quality education were validated after a member consultation lasting for about a month. In 2024, a new consultation will be led to present the following definitions of child, children's rights and meaningful participation.

Child

QUEST follows the definition of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is also the definition adopted by the European Commission. The definition is the following : *Every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.*

Quality education

A quality education is a process allowing the development of every learner's full potential, in connection with oneself, others and the world, in a flexible, learner-based and evolving manner. Quality education thus promotes lifelong learning and skills' adoption in a holistic way. It recognises the learning experience as multiple and influenced by its political, cultural and economic contexts, while occurring within healthy, safe and varied environments.

As such, Quality Education to be implemented, should be composed of the following 8 aspects:

1. Self-education of the adults
2. Trustful relationships
3. Intrinsic motivation
4. Personal development in democratic environments
5. Free play
6. Contact with the real world
7. Situational and process orientated
8. No discrimination or segregation

Well-being in education

Well being in education is a combination of positive feelings, experienced by both educators and learners, about oneself and their environment, as well as the simultaneous development of one's potential, thanks to a safe and healthy education context promoting everyone's connection to oneself, to others and to the world.

Concretely, as the European Education Area defines it, "well-being at school means:

- feeling safe, valued and respected
- being actively and meaningfully engaged in academic and social activities
- having positive self-esteem, self-efficacy and a sense of autonomy
- having positive and supportive relationships with teachers and peers
- feeling a sense of belonging to their classroom and school
- feeling happy and satisfied with their lives at school

Pupils who experience well-being can build and enjoy positive relationships with others and feel belonging to their school community."



B. PHOTO AND VIDEO CONSENT FORM

Quality Education in Europe for Sustainable Social transformation (QUEST) is a network based in Brussels that connects pioneer schools and educational organisations to promote research, policies and practices that support democratic, inclusive and sustainable education. If you have received this form, your child or yourself appear in the footage/pictures produced on [date] and we need your consent on the points stated below.

I, [recorded person's full name] do hereby consent to the use of my image, video, voice, or all three of them. This authorization grants permission to use my image (still or moving) and/or my spoken words for educational, communication and dissemination purposes of QUEST, in order to promote the importance of democratic, sustainable and inclusive education.

By signing this document, I agree:

1. To allow the recording of my image and voice (e.g., photographs, audio, or video)
2. To distribute my image or recording in any medium, be it print or electronic form, which may include the Internet.
3. To grant permission to the QUEST network to reproduce the images or recording for educational, communication and dissemination purposes.
4. That there is no reimbursement for the right to take, or to use my photograph or video or recording.
5. That my image or recording may appear publicly as part of QUEST's website, social media and/ or other dissemination material.

Children retain the right to change their mind regarding the publication and dissemination of their image/voice. In such case, QUEST will do its best within its power to withdraw the content and not use it in further communications. I have read and fully understand the intent and purpose of this document and am signing it without reservation.

If the recorded person is an adult:

Date:

Signature:

If the recorded person is a minor:

Signature of Minor:

Signature of Guardian:



C. MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership Application Form – Associated Member QUEST - 2024

The organisation requests to become an associated member (*membre adhérent**) of QUEST - Quality Education in Europe for Sustainable Social Transformation. The organisation declares to accept [QUEST statutes](#) and to support the [mission, values and objectives of QUEST](#).

As expressed in the Art.7, Art 8 & Art. 11 of the statutes, and as deliberated by the Board of Directors, associated membership is for free and has an annual duration**.

Name of organisation:	
Country:	
Type of organisation (public authority, NGO, school, higher education.....):	
Email of the organisation:	
Website:	
Phone number:	
Legal representative full name:	
Legal address:	
Year of foundation of your school/organisation:	
Contact person's full name (if different from legal representative):	
Contact person's email:***	
Contact person's phone number:***	
Application date:	

* After 9 months from signing this form, associated members can request to become effective members and have voting rights in the General Assembly.

** The membership is automatically renewed every year if no communication is received by the member by the end of January

*** Personal data are strictly for internal use only and will not be spread outside the organisation





Describe your organisation in short (vision, mission, educational approach)

Are you regularly in contact with children?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

How many children do you represent?

	In your country	Outside of your country
In total (below 18 years old):		
Below 6 years old:		
Between 6-12 years old:		
Between 13-18 years old:		

Does your organisation have a Child Protection Policy?

- ☐ Yes, if so please send it to QUEST with this application form
☐ No

How many teachers do you represent?

In your country :

Outside of your country :



QUEST

Have you or do you lead research on the following topics?

If so feel free to send it to us, we can promote it and share it to EU decision makers

- ☐ Children's rights
- ☐ Children's participation
- ☐ Democratic education
- ☐ Inclusive education
- ☐ Sustainability in education
- ☐ Mental health and well-being
- ☐ Digital education
- ☐ Teachers' well-being
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ No, we don't do any research

In which Member Forum(s) are you most interested in within QUEST organisation?

A Member Forum is a gathering of members around a specific topic, where discussions take place, questions raised. It is a moment of networking around specific interests and evaluating what QUEST can do to promote them.

Tick the box(es) that are most relevant to your organisation.

<input type="checkbox"/> Democratic education	<input type="checkbox"/> Inclusion in education
<input type="checkbox"/> Nature and sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/> Community, citizenship and Life-Long Learning

Where could QUEST possibly help your organisation/school/institution with?

Tick the box(es) that are most relevant to your organisation.

<input type="checkbox"/> We are interested in policy evolutions and updates	<input type="checkbox"/> We want to be part of the network, build relations, get to know other organisations (through newsletter, via gatherings and member forums)
<input type="checkbox"/> We want to follow the QUEST trainings and workshops	<input type="checkbox"/> We want to be informed about EU funding opportunities



Do you have other needs?

By applying to QUEST's membership, the organisation commits to :

- Read and abide by QUEST's statutes and Child Protection Policy
- Promote Children's rights and meaningful participation
- Establish safeguarding mechanisms to prevent any harm, abuse, exploitation or neglect being carried on children within the scope of the organisation's work

Date and signature :

Thank you for your interest in becoming a QUEST Member!

D. CHILD PROTECTION PLEDGE

By acting on behalf of QUEST, I pledge :

1. To respect and treat every child equally, which means :

- a. Offering equitable opportunities to children, taking into account their specific social, economic, cultural and personal characteristics
- b. Protecting equally every child from harm, abuse and neglect
- c. Actively listening to every child's perceptions, ideas, voice and emotions
- d. Answering to every child's learning needs and adapting learning activities accordingly
- e. Sharing information, my own perceptions and ideas in a respectful, responsible and child-friendly way, using nonviolent communication
- f. Respecting the children's right to privacy and confidentiality relating to any data I might have been exposed to

2. To act continuously towards protecting every child's rights, which means :

- a. Having read rigorously the Child Protection Policy and systematically implementing it with my team
- b. Guaranteeing a safe and healthy learning space for all present and future children, through activities, actions and words promoting a culture of peace, collaboration, democracy and respect of the environment
- c. Making sure that none of the activities, of my actions or my words can harm a child, including those not taking part in activities
- d. Alerting and triggering the safeguarding mechanisms depicted in the Child Protection Policy if having witnessed or having been brought aware of a right violation.
- e. Acting responsibly and proportionally to protect the harmed child as well as the rest of the participants.

3. To promote children's participation in every matter affecting their life, which means :

- a. Encouraging children to share their ideas, perspectives to the group while respecting their choice if choosing not to participate
- b. Creating spaces for children to take part in decision making surrounding matters affecting their own lives
- c. Facilitating collective decision making processes by sharing values of meaningful collaboration, active listening and empathy
- d. Supporting children's participation in the design, implementation, evaluation and communication of their learning activities, projects and opportunities
- e. Federating children with their broader communities
- f. Spreading the vision of children as positive change makers in society

Name:

Date & Signature :

Position:

Project/Activity:



E. PROTECTION REPORT

Have you been made aware of or witnessed a right violation? Fill this form to the best of your knowledge and share it to both your Project Child Protection Officer and QUEST's Child Protection Officer. Your report will remain confidential and will solely be used for the right violation investigation and the following actions taken either by the Protection Officers, the Management or the authorities involved.

Your report might protect children from harm, abuse or neglect, thank you!

1. ABOUT YOU

First name

Last name

Gender

Age

Are you:

- ☐ The Designated Project Child Protection Officer ?
- ☐ The Child Protection Replaçant
- ☐ A Project partner representative
- ☐ A Project Participant
- ☐ An external witness
- ☐ A child wanting to give a testimony

Your job title

The organisation you work for

Preferred mean of contact

2. THE PROJECT / ACTIVITY

Name of the Project

Name of the Project Child
Protection Officer



3. ABOUT THE CHILD

How many children were involved in the incident?

Child(ren)'s name(s)

Child(ren)'s gender

Child(ren)'s age(s)

Legal guardians' name(s)

Legal guardians' contact

4. THE RIGHT VIOLATION

Was the incident

- ☐ Observed by you
- ☐ Suspected
- ☐ Disclosed by someone else, if so specify by whom and the relationship of the person with the child :
- ☐ Shared anonymously via the project complaint box

Organisation(s) under which the child(ren)'s supervision falls

Type(s) of right violation(s)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical | <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional | <input type="checkbox"/> Neglect |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psychological | <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual | <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial exploitation / data privacy breach |



Please share here only what you personally observed of the event (please do not share opinions or assumptions, only factual observations)

Has someone else disclosed to you additional information about the event? Please share this information here, specifying if it is a child, an adult, the relationship with the affected child and your response to the testimony.

Has the affected child shared with you a testimony? If yes, please record factual details of what has been said, and how you have responded

Date of the incident

Time of the incident

Location of the incident

Name of the alleged perpetrator (if applicable)

How many times did the right violation occur?

Were there any other children involved in the incident?



5. FIRST ACTIONS

Has treatment been given to the child(ren)?

☐ Yes

☐ No, only some children received treatment. Specify the names:

☐ No

Treatment(s) given by:

Has a child been driven to the hospital?

☐ Yes all, precise which hospital :

☐ Yes but only some, precise the name of the children and the hospital:

☐ No

By whom, how and when was/were the child(ren) taken to the hospital?

Has/have the child(ren) received psychological care following the event ?

☐ Yes all, precise :

☐ Yes but only some of the children, precise :

☐ No



Actions taken by you

Actions taken by others

Has your testimony been already shared to the Project Child Protection Officer?

☐

Yes

☐

No, precise why :

I certify the validity of the information shared within this document.

Signature

Date



F. PROTECTION EVALUATION FOR CHILDREN

Did you like participating in this project?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Would you like to tell us why?

During the project have you felt that your voice counted?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Would you like to tell us why?

Did you learn about your own rights during the project?

☐ Yes

Would you like to tell us which ones?

☐ No

Have you felt that all your rights were respected?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Would you like to tell us why?

According to you, what could we improve to make children feel that their rights are respected?

During the project have you felt that you could participate in activities, propose changes or new activities?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Would you like to tell us why?



Have you felt safe in all the activities of the project?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Would you like to tell us why?

Did you know who to talk to if you felt unsafe?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Did you know you could make an anonymous complaint, and where to do so, in case you needed to?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Did you need to make a complaint?

☐ No

☐ Yes

If so, did you like the project team's reaction?

Do you have any feedback you would like to give us?

Thank you for your answers! We can learn from your experience and do our best to improve our work!

QUEST's team



G. PROTECTION EVALUATION FOR ADULTS

Have you been informed at the beginning of the project about the Child protection measures put into place to prevent any incident from happening?

☐ Yes

☐ Not sufficiently, specify why :

☐ No

Was this information clear?

☐ Yes

☐ No, specify why :

Who gave the information?

Do you know the names of the Child Protection Officer team for the project?

☐ Yes, specify the names :

☐ Only one Child Protection Officer, specify the name :

☐ No

Were all child protection measures implemented to prevent incidents?

☐ Yes

☐ Not sufficiently, specify why:

☐ No

Do you think that all the project activities were safe for children?

☐ Yes

☐ Not sufficiently, specify why:

☐ No

Do you think that children's rights were respected all along the project?

☐ Yes

☐ Not sufficiently, specify why:

☐ No



Has any right violation been reported?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Do you think the complaint has been well responded to?

☐ Yes

☐ Not sufficiently, specify why:

☐ No

What would you have done differently?

Any other feedback?





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