

Child Safeguarding Standards of Gesundheit Österreich GmbH (Austrian National Public Health Institute)

February 2022

Gesundheit Österreich GmbH (GÖG) is the national public health institute. GÖG's tasks include health planning and research, quality assurance, and health promotion. GÖG contributes to improving the health of the Austrian population and evaluates, secures and optimises the Austrian health system.

GÖG staff members work in the fields of pharmaceutical economics, health economics, health technology assessment, population health, quality development and assurance in health care, health promotion, health monitoring and care planning and offer special expertise in areas such as addiction behaviour, long-term care, health literacy, child and adolescent health, mental health, health workforce planning and rehabilitation.

GÖG understands the protection of children as its responsibility. It ensures that its employees, partners and contractors, as well as its policies and programmes, do not harm children and young people and do not put them at risk of discrimination, neglect, harm and abuse. Any concerns in this regard within the organisation will be promptly investigated and reported to the appropriate authorities as appropriate.

Purpose of this policy

Although GÖG staff do not have direct contact with children and adolescents by teaching, caring for, supervising or providing medical treatment to children or adolescents, they may involve them in research projects and interview them in focus groups or surveys in the field of population health, prevention and health promotion. Especially in health promotion projects, children and adolescents are also direct target groups for whose benefit these projects are funded or commissioned. Furthermore, the work of GÖG has an impact on children and adolescents insofar as it supports policy makers and practitioners in their decision-making. Therefore, GÖG is committed to recognise its obligation to uphold child protection and to take all appropriate protective measures to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people within its means.

This policy is binding for all persons working for and with GÖG inside and outside the institution's premises with children and adolescents or on the topic of child and adolescent health. Any breach of this policy will be treated as a disciplinary matter which may result in immediate termination of employment or contract and reporting to the police, the relevant supervisory authority or other relevant authority.

Declaration of Principles

GÖG works according to the following principles to protect children and young people and ensure their rights:

- » Everyone has an equal right to protection from abuse and exploitation regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
- » The welfare of children and young people is important and must always be taken into account in the decision-making of the management and staff of GÖG.
- » GÖG takes responsibility for meeting its commitments and takes action when a child or young person may be at risk or harmed.
- » GÖG regards children and adolescents as a vulnerable group that is also particularly worthy of protection in the field of research. Although no medical research on children and adolescents is carried out by GÖG, other projects involving this group are only carried out in compliance with strict protection standards and, if necessary, after approval by an ethics committee.
- » GÖG ensures that all its employees are informed about these protection standards. All persons involved in relevant projects – GÖG staff and partners – are also informed about these protection standards in personal discussions at the beginning of the project.
- » When external partners of GÖG recruit children or young people to participate in a study or project and work with them, GÖG ensures that documentation is provided to confirm identity and relevant qualifications.
 - » Interviews, focus groups or other participation methods with children or young people will be based on the following basic principles: Before consent is given, participants must be adequately informed about the aim and planned topics of the interview and about the right to withdraw consent at any time. A child's or young person's understanding of his or her consent must be checked.
 - » During an interview, an additional person familiar to the child should be present if desired. Wherever possible, the child should have a choice of who supports him/her during the interview.
 - » Before an interview begins, it should be made clear that the child need only speak if he or she feels comfortable and that he or she can terminate and withdraw consent at any time.
- » In general, children and young people participating in a study or project can withdraw their participation at any time.
- » In the case of children under 14 years of age, in addition to their own consent (in writing, if they can write), the consent of the person with custody is obtained; in the case of children over 14 years of age, the written consent of the young person is sufficient.
- » If photos or videos of children or young people are taken by GÖG or its partners, both the persons with custody and the children and young people themselves must agree that these photos or films can be used in publications in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation. Children and young people are informed in an understandable and age-appropriate manner about how the photos and videos will be used and also about the fact that they have the right to refuse consent or to revoke it later.

- » When consent is given to use photos, videos or posts on social media, GÖG ensures that the images do not show children or young people in inappropriate poses and that posts on media do not include details about their home or community.
- » GÖG strives to work in a culturally sensitive way that respects the diversity of people.
- » GÖG respects confidentiality and has a responsibility to protect personal data. Information is only disclosed and processed when necessary, i.e. access to the information must be required for the performance of official duties. Only persons who have legitimate reasons for accessing the information may receive it, e.g. a security incident may occur of which the competent authority must be informed.
- » GÖG processes pseudonymised or anonymised data.
- » GÖG ensures that all data collection and analysis processes as well as data storage and use comply with current data protection regulations, i.e. all provisions of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data, on the free movement of such data and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation).
- » GÖG follows section 4(4) of the Federal Act on the Protection of Individuals with regard to the Processing of Personal Data (Data Protection Act – DSG), Federal Law Gazette I No. 165/1999 as amended.
- » GÖG commits to monitor the implementation of the protection policy. This policy shall be reviewed every three years or earlier if necessary.
- » All staff, contractors and partner organisations are obliged to comply with this policy and to maintain an environment that prevents exploitation and abuse and that encourages the reporting of breaches of this policy using the appropriate procedures.

Responsibilities at the GÖG

The management/executive board of GÖG is responsible for the effective implementation of these Child Safeguarding Standards and related procedures.

The management/executive board has established a Taskforce on Child and Adolescent Health to act as the first point of contact and to monitor that the above measures are adhered to.

Internal measures are taken to ensure that all activities and tasks involving children and young people are reported to the Child and Adolescent Health Taskforce.



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 Herwig Ostermann
 Executive Director