

STANDARDS FOR THE PROTECTION OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN FROM VIOLENCE, EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

V. 1.0



All persons working directly or indirectly with children and adolescents have a fundamental duty of care and responsibility towards them.

This guidance follows a systemic multidisciplinary approach, based on the rights of the child and focused on the needs of the child. It is based on the national legal framework, in particular Law 47/2017, international standards and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.



Matrix of analysis of the CRC (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)

This document, informed by the training exchange sessions with practitioners as part of the Become Safe initiative, is an experimental version that may be revised in the future.

General objective: to increase the level of protection of unaccompanied foreign minors in the reception system and decrease their level of vulnerability.

In particular, this tool has four specific objectives:

- 1) to reaffirm the law-based culture that inspired the system of norms and values of the current applicable standard;
- 2) to provide multidisciplinary and shared reference material that can support the work of professionals in contact with unaccompanied foreign minors;
- 3) to provide a useful tool to assess both one's own work, at an individual level, and the effectiveness and appropriateness of interventions in a group context;
- 4) to provide guidance for professionals on the meaning and functions of their role.

Structure

The outline below is divided into three macro-categories:

KNOW: orientations in terms of know-how, theoretical skills, general information, as well as specific information related to the child and the context that the facilitator must have (KNOWING – BEING INFORMED).

DO: orientations with respect to the direct/indirect activities that the facilitator must undertake in order to adequately respond to his/her institutional mandate, adopting a systemic and programmed perspective (BEING PROACTIVE AND CONSISTENT WITH THEIR ROLE).

BE: orientations with respect to relational skills and the personal attitude required to establish a relationship with a young person, as well as with respect to behavioural, cultural and gender issues that may interfere in the relationship and with the duty to identify, listen without prejudice, promote and protect the child's best interests (ATTITUDE - POSITIONING).

The proposed elements will then serve as information and monitoring variables that each facilitator is invited to consider in order to evaluate their own work individually or in groups.

Finally, there are three aspects of a transversal nature that must accompany the reading of this tool:

- ✓ **Material/structural conditions:** assessing the degree of appropriateness of material conditions and dedicated spaces.
- ✓ **Multidisciplinary/integrated approach:** assess the multidisciplinary dimension and the integration of the team.
- ✓ **Children's participation:** assessing the extent to which the child's perspective, perception and active involvement are taken into account.



KNOW

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

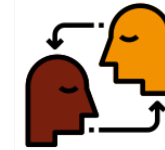
How can I translate the rights of children recognised in the national and international legal framework into practice?

- ✓ I am familiar with the relevant legislation on the protection of unaccompanied foreign minors, the rights of children and the means to enable them.
- ✓ I recognise every child is a legal person.
- ✓ I recognise that every child has a story and I am aware that each one has their own resources and capabilities.
- ✓ I am aware that all adults working in contact with young people are responsible for creating favourable conditions where young people are encouraged and able to express themselves.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

How can I contribute to ensuring the highest possible degree of health and psycho-physical well-being?

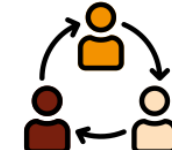
- ✓ I consider health, as defined by the WHO, to be "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of illness or infirmity".
- ✓ I look into the young person's medical history and any previous health problems and/or risk factors, being aware that some cultures have different approaches to the body and diseases.



DO

- ✓ I work within the framework of an operational strategy shared with colleagues, focused on the best interests of the child, his or her interests and aimed at a sustainable care-leaving.
- ✓ I make sure the child knows his or her rights.
- ✓ I use a pedagogical, educational and sometimes rehabilitative logic as the pre-eminent one.
- ✓ I operate using the best interests of the child as a pre-eminent category over my own interests and the interests of the structure/ context I work in.

- ✓ I have frequent exchanges with the young person about his or her health, even if only to find out how he or she is doing, and I invite him or her to report any health problems and/or psycho-physical issues in good time.
- ✓ I observe the young person's health and take action if there are any signs of risk, referring the case to the appropriate parties.

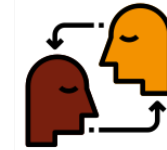


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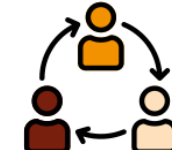
- ✓ I have an empathetic attitude towards children and a collaborative attitude towards colleagues, opposing situations that may jeopardise the rights of young people.
- ✓ I contribute to creating and/or supporting an environment where young people are listened to and respected as individuals.
- ✓ I adopt a caring but also preventative approach.



KNOW



DO



BE

HYGIENE OF SPACES

Contributing to a healthy environment

- ✓ I know that the environment in which a person lives has repercussions on his or her psychophysical condition.
- ✓ I am informed about the organisation of cleaning and laundry.

- ✓ I check the condition of the spaces and report any issues.
- ✓ I promote children's empowerment in taking care of their spaces and bodies.

- ✓ I am sensitive to cultural and gender diversity.

MEALS

How can I ensure that the young person's diet is appropriate for them?

- ✓ I consider meals not only as the act of ingesting food but in its complexity, also as an expression of personal and cultural identity and as a moment of socialisation.

- ✓ I see to it that the child's diet is sufficient, complete and varied, also with respect to special regimes, and I intervene if I identify eating problems or disorders.

- ✓ I set the example in regards to hygiene and the environment.

ACTIVITIES

How can I contribute to the psychophysical well-being of young people through the enhancement of recreational and cultural time and activities?

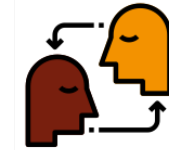
- ✓ I recognise the importance of valuing young people's time.
- ✓ I know that the activities proposed must have an educational value but also provide positive cultural and value references based on human rights.
- ✓ I have a clear idea of the quantity and quality of recreational and cultural activities offered to young people.

- ✓ I promote young people's access to recreational, educational and cultural activities and invite them to make proposals in this regard.
- ✓ I try to make the most of young people's time by proposing activities and I promote active listening in this respect.
- ✓ I observe the degree to which young people are satisfied with the activities proposed.

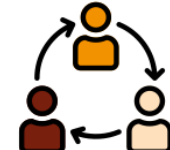
- ✓ I am willing to identify and use contexts, languages and cultural tools that are appropriate and meaningful.
- ✓ I promote both group and individual listening spaces to foster personal and interpersonal reflection.



KNOW



DO



BE

SPIRITUALITY

How can I ensure that the spiritual dimension of each young person is fully respected and recognised?

✓ In recognising the impact that the spiritual/religious dimension has on each person's identity and experience, I look into the religious traditions and practices of young people in the facility.

✓ I endeavour to enable young people to practise their religion, including contact with their ministers of worship.

✓ I check that no one is marginalised and/or discriminated against on the basis of his personal beliefs.

✓ I avoid imposing personal religious/spiritual beliefs.

TRAINING

How can I qualify school and/or vocational training to promote sustainable care-leaving.

✓ I know that every child has the right to an education adapted to his or her needs and abilities and that this is a fundamental resource for the child's development, life project and sustainable care-leaving.

✓ I consider the child's previous school experience and personality, trying to define and propose individualised and appropriate interventions.

✓ I check, together with the young person, the appropriateness of the professional paths undertaken and I promote collaboration with local connections to activate job training paths.

✓ I exchange views with other professionals in order to assess the progress of the child's educational pathway.

✓ I am aware that work represents a crucial dimension for young people's identity, empowerment, autonomy and self-esteem.

✓ I try to understand and enhance the potential of young people and their abilities through transparent and constant dialogue.

✓ I am able to deal with the young person's frustrations and suffering that may arise from difficulties and lack of opportunities, focusing on their capacities, resources and resilience, and, if necessary, I make myself available to find viable alternatives.

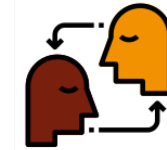


KNOW

SUSTAINABLE CARE-LEAVING

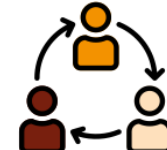
How can I promote sustainable care-leaving?

- ✓ I recognise the importance of an individualised educational project to ensure sustainable care-leaving.
- ✓ I know that every young person has the right to the creation of an individualised and participative educational project that links the opportunities of the local context with, where possible, the project of the family of origin.



DO

- ✓ Together with the young person, I explore his/her personal skills and abilities. I try to understand what kind of support is useful for him/her to strengthen and activate these resources for their protection and development.
- ✓ I work together with the young person to prepare the moment of leaving care from the time they are admitted to the facility and throughout his/her stay in care, taking their individualised project and ambitions into account.
- ✓ I inform the young person about the changes that will take place once he/she turns 18.



BE

- ✓ I am aware that the actions promoted during the stay in care should not be limited to the "here and now" but should also take into account and affect future situations, beyond the age of 18.
- ✓ I try to preserve the young person's autonomy and ensure that I do not take over for him/her by doing what he/she can do alone.



KNOW

ACTIVE LISTENING

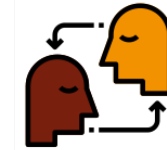
How can I ensure that active listening is promoted?

- ✓ I understand that establishing a relationship of trust requires the availability to listen to the other person and establish a common meeting space.
- ✓ I recognise that authentic listening is an indispensable element in each child's life project and must inform the choices and decisions that concern him/her.

INFORMATION

Adequate information and empowerment

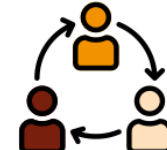
- ✓ I know that the young person has to be informed, in a language he/she understands, about his/her rights, duties, the reception process and the course of the educational pathway.



DO

- ✓ I encourage the creation of moments and spaces for listening and discussion between young people and facilitators - both individually and in groups - with respect to their well-being, inviting them to promptly communicate any concerns or discomfort and promoting a climate of openness and transparency.
- ✓ I listen to the young person when filling in their case file and conduct periodic checks on the progress achieved during the implementation of the individualised educational project.

- ✓ I ensure the young person fully understands the meaning of the communications and information provided.
- ✓ I gather, manage and share information with the other facilitators about each young person in a logic of prevention, protection and intervention.
- ✓ I provide all necessary information about rules and laws in the reception context and the consequences of possible infringements.

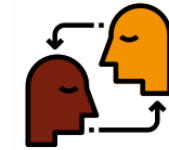


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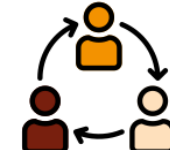
- ✓ I am attentive to my listening skills and ready to improve them, when necessary, by contributing to the creation of more participative contexts.
- ✓ I am willing to establish reciprocal relationships using an empathic approach.
- ✓ I am aware that adequate information is essential to ensure the effective and real participation of the young person.



KNOW



DO



BE

CULTURAL MEDIATION

Cultural mediation and the appreciation of circles of affiliation

- ✓ I understand that cultural mediation is a transversal competence aimed at facilitating mutual understanding, and thus relations between people from different cultural backgrounds (and not only translation/interpretation).
- ✓ I keep myself informed with respect to the young person's culture of origin and background with respect to the migration phenomena.

- ✓ I consider and value the child's diversity, availing myself, if necessary, of the support of a professional (cultural mediator, ethno-psychiatrist)
- ✓ Whenever possible and requested by the child, I try to establish a synergy between the context of origin and the reception structure.

- ✓ I treat all young people with respect, adhering to the principle of non-discrimination.
- ✓ I am proactive in identifying my own needs for in-depth study of the (trans)cultural dimension.

RELATIONSHIPS

Contributing to the development of positive relationships

- ✓ I am aware of the power relationship between facilitators and young people.
- ✓ I recognise the importance of peer relations for the development of young people and understand the value of group work as an indispensable pedagogical tool for effective psycho-educational action.

- ✓ I implement a rights-based logic, trying to balance power relations.
- ✓ I carefully observe interpersonal relations within the facility and act to prevent negative, violent or abusive dynamics both among peers and with other facilitators.

- ✓ I assume a respectful and non-discriminatory attitude towards all young people, promoting spaces for listening and dialogue among peers and with reference adults.
- ✓ I am a positive role model. I adopt a culture of support, respect and tolerance towards young people and apologise if I am wrong.

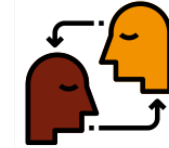


KNOW

PARTICIPATION

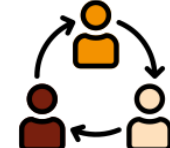
How can I ensure the effective participation of young people?

✓ I am aware that young people's access to safe and reliable complaint mechanisms is an essential complementary element to ensure that their rights are respected.



DO

- ✓ I aim to ensure that young people's complaints are duly considered and evaluated.
- ✓ I ensure that there are no grounds for young people to fear possible negative consequences or retaliation by staff as a result of a complaint.
- ✓ I contribute to a regular analysis of complaints in order to identify possible changes or improvement in practices, policies, legislation.



BE

- ✓ I am aware that having appropriate complaint mechanisms in place is an indication of transparency, reliability and respect for personal rights and freedom.
- ✓ I am aware that the existence of such mechanisms can act as a deterrent and as prevention for violations and abuse.
- ✓ I am respectful of the right to confidentiality throughout the entire complaint procedure.

PRIVACY

How can I ensure that young people's right to privacy is respected?

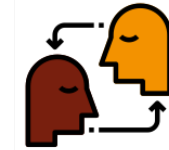
- ✓ I am aware of the importance of the right to privacy for every child.
- ✓ I am aware that objects and other personal effects can have a special meaning and emotional value for children.

- ✓ I try to strike a balance between the right to privacy and the need to protect children.
- ✓ I listen to anything confidential with respect and discretion, trying not to be intrusive and following procedures according to the principle of the best interests of the child.
- ✓ I make myself available to dialogue by assuming a position of active listening, ensuring transparent sharing with respect to the dimensions that must remain private and those that must be shared between facilitators.

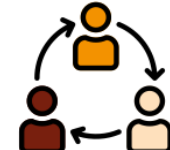
- ✓ I am aware that every person has a private life and I recognise this dimension also for children placed in care facilities.
- ✓ I have a non-intrusive attitude towards the children and welcome anything said to me in confidentiality with respect.



KNOW



DO



BE

PROTECTION

How can I ensure young people are protected adequately?

- ✓ I am aware of situations that may present risks for young people, I know how to handle them should they arise and who to report my concerns to.
- ✓ I recognise that protection from violence depends to a large extent on the quality of the work of professionals.
- ✓ I am aware of the referral system to be activated when a problem arises.
- ✓ I am able to identify phenomena of trafficking and exploitation and am alert to particular circumstances of vulnerability.

- ✓ I pay specific attention to each person's particular circumstances of vulnerability and try to value the resources they have.
- ✓ I help the young person to understand how the reception and protection systems work, including the roles and mandates of the different people they will come across.
- ✓ I collect information for each young person, understand it and share it with the team.
- ✓ I activate opportunities coming from the context and referral network.

- ✓ I am aware of the facilitator's role in ensuring the protection of young people.
- ✓ I am proactive in fostering an open and safe environment that is able to accommodate any reports and/or concerns from young people and/or staff.
- ✓ I am vigilant and attentive and report any concerns about possible risks to young people to the team.

WORK CONTEXT

Positioning/training of facilitators

- ✓ I am aware of the importance of exchange and discussion between colleagues.
- ✓ I recognise difficulties, seek supervision, support and exchange.
- ✓ I am aware of the difficulties that may arise in social work.
- ✓ I am able to recognise signs of fatigue, burn out etc. in myself and in colleagues.

- ✓ I take action to ensure participation in lifelong learning paths.
- ✓ I actively ensure a continuous exchange on cases, working dynamics and mutual difficulties with colleagues during team meetings.

- ✓ I am aware of the relationship between the well-being of the facilitators and the well-being of young people.
- ✓ I conduct a clear-headed analysis on the context and management of the migration phenomenon.



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