

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Organisation: **GrowthCoop SCA**

Date of approval: **12/01/2026**

Review date: **13/04/2026**

## 1. Purpose, Scope and Commitment

GrowthCoop is fully committed to ensuring the safety, protection, and well-being of all children (defined as any person under the age of 18) who participate in or are affected by its activities. As an organisation working with families, young people, and vulnerable groups, GrowthCoop recognises its responsibility to create a safe environment where children are protected from harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation, and discrimination.

This policy establishes the principles, procedures, and responsibilities that guide safeguarding practices within the organisation. It reflects GrowthCoop's commitment to uphold children's rights, dignity, and best interests in all contexts.

GrowthCoop adopts a **zero-tolerance approach** to any form of abuse or harmful behaviour towards children. Safeguarding is integrated across all project phases, including design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

This policy applies to:

- All staff members (permanent and temporary)
- Trainers, facilitators, and consultants
- Volunteers and interns
- Partner organisations and subcontractors involved in activities with children.

## 2. Definitions and Types of Harm

GrowthCoop recognises different forms of harm that may affect children, including:

- **Physical abuse:** Any act causing physical harm or injury
- **Emotional abuse:** Behaviour that damages a child's self-esteem or emotional well-being
- **Sexual abuse and exploitation:** Any form of sexual activity or exploitation involving a child
- **Neglect:** Failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional, or developmental needs
- **Discrimination:** Unequal or unfair treatment based on gender, disability, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or socio-economic background

The organisation acknowledges that children in vulnerable situations may face multiple risks and requires special attention to ensure their protection.

### 3. Guiding Principles

GrowthCoop's safeguarding approach is based on the following principles:

- **Best interests of the child:** All decisions prioritise children's safety and well-being
- **Non-discrimination:** All children are treated equally, regardless of background or identity
- **Participation:** Children's voices and perspectives are respected in an age-appropriate manner
- **Prevention:** Risks are identified and mitigated before harm occurs
- **Confidentiality:** Sensitive information is handled responsibly and securely
- **Accountability:** All individuals involved are responsible for safeguarding children

### 4. People: Safe Recruitment and Code of Conduct

#### 4.1 Safe Recruitment

GrowthCoop ensures that all individuals working with children are suitable and properly selected:

- Recruitment processes consider professional experience, qualifications, and values
- References and background checks may be requested where appropriate
- Candidates are informed about safeguarding responsibilities

#### 4.2 Awareness and Training

- All staff and collaborators are informed about this policy
- Safeguarding awareness is integrated into project briefings and training sessions
- Staff are encouraged to report concerns and act responsibly

#### 4.3 Code of Conduct

All personnel must:

- Treat children with respect, dignity, and fairness
- Ensure appropriate and professional behaviour at all times
- Avoid being alone with a child whenever possible (apply group-based approaches)
- Not engage in any form of inappropriate, harmful, or exploitative behaviour
- Not use discriminatory, abusive, or offensive language
- Respect cultural differences while ensuring children's rights

Any breach of this Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action.

### 5. Procedures: Reporting and Response

GrowthCoop has clear and accessible procedures for managing safeguarding concerns.

#### 5.1 Reporting Concerns

Any staff member, volunteer, or participant who suspects or becomes aware of a safeguarding concern must:

- Report it **immediately** to the designated Safeguarding Responsible Person
- Provide clear and factual information
- Maintain confidentiality and avoid sharing information unnecessarily

## 5.2 Response Mechanism

Upon receiving a concern, GrowthCoop will:

- Assess the situation promptly and ensure the child's immediate safety
- Document the incident securely
- Take appropriate action, which may include:
  - Internal investigation
  - Implementation of protective measures
  - Referral to relevant authorities if required

## 5.3 Safeguarding Responsible Person

**Javier Morales Luque**

**Position:** Project Manager

This person is responsible for:

- Receiving and managing reports
- Ensuring appropriate follow-up actions
- Acting as a contact point for safeguarding issues

## 6. Risk Prevention and Safe Implementation

GrowthCoop integrates safeguarding into all activities involving children by:

- Conducting **risk assessments** before activities
- Ensuring safe and inclusive environments
- Promoting group-based participation rather than one-to-one situations
- Ensuring appropriate supervision during activities
- Adapting activities to the needs of children (age, gender, disability, etc.)

Special attention is given to activities involving families, community events, and training sessions where children may be present.

## 7. Accountability and Monitoring

GrowthCoop ensures continuous monitoring and improvement of safeguarding practices:

- This policy is **publicly available** on the organisation's website

- It is **reviewed regularly** and updated when necessary
- Safeguarding is included in internal evaluation and quality processes
- Feedback from participants and stakeholders is considered

All partners involved in projects are expected to respect and align with these safeguarding standards.

## **8. Communication and Awareness**

GrowthCoop promotes a culture of safeguarding by:

- Sharing this policy with staff, partners, and stakeholders
- Raising awareness about children's rights and protection
- Ensuring that safeguarding is visible and understood in all project activities.

## **9. Compliance with Standards**

This policy is aligned with the **Keeping Children Safe Child Safeguarding Standards** and fulfils the requirements for participation in EU-funded programmes, including CERV.

GrowthCoop ensures full compliance with child safeguarding standards through a publicly available Child Protection Policy, trained staff, and clear reporting and response mechanisms aligned with the Keeping Children Safe principles.