



## Child Protection Policy

**Passerell asbl** is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in its care. It recognises the responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures a child is recognised as someone under the age of 18 years.

Staff and volunteers will work together to embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of children and young people.

This document outlines **Passerell asbl** commitment to protecting children.

These guidelines are based on the following principles:

- The welfare of children is the primary concern.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse.
- Child protection is everyone's responsibility.
- Children have the right to express views on all matters which affect them, should they wish to do so.
- Organisations shall work in partnership together with children and parents/carers to promote the welfare, health and development of children.

**Passerell asbl** will:

- Promote the health and welfare of children by providing opportunities for them to take part in safely.
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children.
- Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and protect them from abuse.
- Recruit, train, support and supervise its staff, members and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse and to reduce risk to themselves.
- Require staff, members and volunteers to adopt and abide by this Child Protection Policy and these procedures.

**Passerell a.s.b.l.**

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- Respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children in line with this Policy and these procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Observe guidelines issued by local Child Protection Committees for the protection of children.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of this Policy and these procedures.

### **1/ Passerell's activities, consent and data protection for its beneficiaries :**

**Passerell asbl** welcomes in its premises applicants and beneficiaries of international protection as well as rejected asylum seekers, some of them being children (accompanied by their legal representatives or not). Interactions with children are rare but can occur. Most of our underage public are unaccompanied minors. When they come to our office, they are either with their legal guardian in Luxembourg (often legal custody is given by the jurisdictions to the NGOs managing refugee camps, i.e Red Cross or Caritas) or their legal guardian referred them to our organization and they gave their consent beforehand. We sometimes also welcome parents with their children in our premises but the main points of concern discussed during the meetings are related to the parents and not the children. During the first meeting where children are directly involved, children will be informed about Passerell's safeguarding policy, code of conduct, the existence of the child protection report person and complaints mechanism in a child-friendly manner. Only employees are in direct contact with children.

One of our project officers' main task is to listen and inform these persons about their rights regarding international protection in Luxembourg. For work-efficiency purposes, some data about our beneficiaries are kept on the organization's computers, with safety of these data being a priority. During their first appointment, the beneficiaries sign a **consent form** (see annex), where they give their agreement for their data to be kept by the organisation and sometimes, when the procedure requires it, to be shared with other professionals in relation with their case. Before each sharing, the organization asks the explicit consent of the person concerned.

Their data is then kept on a **secure software**, to which only the organization's employees (and not the volunteers and board members) have access. For the moment, Passerell has chosen to work with the Luxembourgish company "RCarré".

### **2/ Management**

A Child Protection Report person will be appointed among the Board's members who will be responsible for:

- Promoting awareness and implementation of the Child Protection Policy throughout the organisation;
- Monitoring implementation of the Policy and reporting on developments for the other members of the Board;
- Acting as a source of support and information for staff on safeguarding issues.

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### 3/ Risks definition and reporting procedures

Even though children represent a fairly small percentage of Passerell's beneficiaries, the team has identified some risks when it comes to working with children. The most important one being **witnessing behaviours putting children in danger** (being out of school, or children whose physical or mental health, education, or social or moral development is compromised). When Passerell's employees witness or suspect such a risk, the following procedure is implemented :

- The employee in direct contact with the child at risk directly inform the Child Protection Report person. The guiding principle here is that the safety of the child is always the most important consideration.;
- The Child Protection Report refers the situation to the other members of the Board, who then decides on the next step. This usually involves writing a report to notify the competent authorities (in Luxembourg either the "*juge de la jeunesse*" or the youth protection office of the public prosecutor's department) of a minor in danger;
- The employee usually informs the child that they referred what they identified as a "risk" for them to the competent authorities;
- Passerell remains at the disposal of the authorities to cooperate and share information necessary for the investigation and safekeeping of the child.

It might happen that the risk can be intern to the organization, regarding the behaviour of staff. The same report procedures involving the Child Protection Report (CPR) person will take place, who will then consider whether to report to the local authorities. If not, the internal safeguarding procedure will be applied (i.e immediately stopping the work relation between the respondent employee and the child). If yes, as for the external risk mentioned above, the CPR person will report to the designated authorities and follow-up on action taken by the authorities and decide on further response, record case and action taken.

### 4/ Recruitment procedures

**Passerell** pays particular attention to the recruitment of its staff. If not all employees have had a class on youth protection in their initial training, Passerell ensures that a **training period** dedicated to this issue is planned. In general, the organization allocates a budget for training to its employees, who can choose, during their working hours, to train on a topic of their choice.

Passerell conducts a background check on candidates who apply for a position within the organization. This background check includes a **criminal record check**, which is now requested from each candidate.

This process only concerns those who are in direct contact with children, i.e. only employees.

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## Review

This Policy and these Procedures will be regularly reviewed:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children or following any changes within **Passerell asbl**.
- Following any issues or concerns raised about the protection of children within **Passerell asbl**.
- In all other circumstances, at least every three years.

Luxembourg, 07<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Catherine WARIN, president of Passerell asbl

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Warin', is positioned below the name of the president.

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