EU Children's Participation Platform

Code of Conduct

February 2025

Scope of Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to all individuals engaging in any EU Children's Participation Platform (hereafter, the Platform) activity, regardless of role or responsibility. It defines the ethical and professional standards expected from staff, partners, associates, representatives, and member organisations to ensure that all interactions uphold the Platform's mission, values, and safeguarding commitments.

By reading and acknowledging this Code of Conduct, all individuals commit to acting with integrity, transparency, and accountability in all aspects of their engagement with the Platform. Ethical and responsible conduct is essential to maintaining a safe, inclusive, and meaningful environment for both adults and children.

To reinforce child safeguarding, the Code of Conduct is complemented by the Code of Behaviour for Working Safely with Children. This document provides specific guidance on appropriate and safe interactions with children. All staff, member organisations, consultants, and contractors working directly or indirectly with children must also sign the Code of Behaviour, ensuring that child safeguarding remains a shared and enforced responsibility across the Platform.

Adhering to both the Code of Conduct and the Code of Behaviour ensures that safeguarding standards, ethical principles, and child protection responsibilities are upheld across all Platform activities.

Professional and Ethical Commitments

The following professional and ethical commitments are drawn from Save the Children's Code of Conduct[1] and SOS Children's Villages Code of Conduct[2] both of which are established safeguarding partners of the Platform.

These commitments set the expected standards of conduct for all individuals engaging with the Platform. They apply to all staff, partners, associates, representatives, and members, ensuring that all actions and decisions align with the Platform's mission, values, and safeguarding commitments.

While this Code of Conduct outlines professional standards, the Code of Behaviour for Working Safely with Children provides specific guidance on appropriate and safe interactions with children. All individuals working directly or indirectly with children must adhere to both documents.

Commitments Under This Code of Conduct:

- Maintain high ethical standards – Act with integrity and professionalism in all interactions. Do not engage in any actions that could compromise the Platform's credibility, reputation, or mission.

[1] Save the Children's Code of Conduct and Expected Standards - code_of_conduct.pdf (savethechildren.org.uk)

[2] SOS Children's Village International's Code of Conduct - Code of Conduct (sos-childrensvillages.org)

- **Follow safeguarding protocols** – Comply with the Platform's Child Safeguarding Framework, ensuring that children's safety is always the top priority. Immediately report any concerns, suspicions, or allegations of harm or abuse.
- **Act on safeguarding concerns** – Uphold the trust and confidence placed in all individuals by the Platform and the European Commission. Report safeguarding concerns without delay and cooperate fully with any investigation.
- **Promote diversity and inclusion** – Contribute to an environment where different perspectives, backgrounds, and opinions are valued. Act ethically, fairly, and respectfully towards all individuals, including children, colleagues, and partners.
- **Foster a harassment-free environment** – Do not engage in or tolerate discrimination, harassment, abuse, exploitation, or intimidation. Immediately report any violations.
- **Use professional power responsibly** – Do not exploit positions of trust or authority for personal gain. Avoid conflicts of interest and act in the best interests of the Platform and its stakeholders.
- **Respect boundaries** – Maintain professional boundaries in all interactions, especially with children, and avoid actions that could be misinterpreted or cause concern. Adhere to the Code of Behaviour for Working Safely with Children.
- **Protect confidential information** – Safeguard intellectual property, sensitive information, and assets of the Platform and its delivery partners. Do not disclose sensitive or potentially damaging information to external parties without authorisation.
- **Adhere to EU values** – Uphold the fundamental values of the European Union, including human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and human rights.
- **Ensure GDPR compliance** – Process personal data lawfully, fairly, and transparently, in line with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)[3]. Protect personal data from unauthorised access and report any breaches immediately.
- **Report breaches of the Code of Conduct** – All individuals have a duty to report actual or suspected breaches of this Code of Conduct. The Platform is committed to ensuring protection from retaliation for individuals who report in good faith.

While the Code of Conduct sets out expectations, based on our values and commitments, it is not a standalone document. It links to the Platform's Safeguarding Framework and supporting documentation.

All individuals engaging with the EU Children's Participation Platform are expected to read, understand, and follow this Code of Conduct. Acting with integrity, professionalism, and respect is essential to ensuring that all interactions reflect the Platform's mission, values, and safeguarding commitments.

The standards set out in this Code of Conduct are not exhaustive. In situations not directly covered, individuals are expected to apply good judgement and act in line with the principles and purpose of this Code.

[3] GDPR - EUR-Lex - 32016R0679 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)