



Child Protection Policy

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1. Introduction

Associação Humanidades (AH) is a Private Institution of Social Solidarity (IPSS) that aims to promote the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups, particularly women, youth, and children, through the development of an integrated approach to social problems. It is based on innovative and flexible methodologies that promote the participation, training, and empowerment of its target-groups.

AH's ongoing services primarily target pregnant and/or postpartum young women and women with children who are at emotional and/or social risk, including a Life Support Centre (CAV), providing care, monitoring, and residential care, and a daycare center (CRECHE), both facilities have a cooperation protocol with Social Security Institute (ISS) - Social Responses. AH also maintains its focus on promoting sociocultural intervention projects.

This Child Protection Policy aims to define the guidelines, principles and procedures of the internal policy for the protection and promotion of the well-being of children and young people who are directly or indirectly related to actions promoted by AH, namely through its Social Responses and Projects, and applies to all employees and other people who directly or indirectly come into contact with children attending the daycare center and their guardians, with families/mothers and their children who are part of CAV's activities and with project participants, complementing the obligations in the remaining internal regulations and procedures.

By defining a Child Protection Policy, AH undertakes the commitment to, in all actions and/or projects it promotes, guarantee the best interest of all children and young people, "without discrimination regardless of any consideration of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion of the child, their parents or legal guardians, or their national, ethnic or social origin, fortune, disability, birth or any other situation"¹.

AH is committed to protecting children and young people and promoting their rights, within or outside the Organization, complying with the principles enshrined in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child², the Convention on the Rights of the Child³, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union⁴, the European Union Strategy on the Rights of the Child⁵, the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic⁶, the Law on the Protection of Children and Young People at Risk⁷, as well as the UN and Council of Europe Recommendations to Member States regarding the protection of children and the promotion of their rights.

¹ Article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

² Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 November 1959

³ Adopted by the United Nations on November 20, 1989

⁴ Proclaimed on 7 December 2000, at the Nice European Council and ratified by the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December 2009

⁵ Adopted by the European Union in 2021

⁶ CPR, article 69

⁷ Law No. 147/99, of September 1

2. Objectives

This document was prepared in accordance with the principles governing AH, specifically its mission and values. The main objective is to protect children and young people and promote their rights in all its activities. More specifically, it addresses:

- Ensure that the AH promotes the rights of children and youth, as reflected in national and international legislation and directives.
- Ensure that the AH carries out its activities in line with the guidelines of the entities with competence in matters of childhood and youth.
- Ensure that employees, volunteers, partner organizations and other stakeholders are aware of this document and adopt methodologies and procedures appropriate to the needs of children, with a view to promoting their rights and protecting them.

3. Commitments

In its actions, AH is committed to being an agent of change and protection, promoting a safe, healthy and stimulating environment for the development of children and young people, contributing to a more just and egalitarian society, namely:

- Ensure that all activities carried out respect human rights, including the right to education, health, protection against violence, exploitation and discrimination, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Implement protective measures that ensure safe environments, free from abuse, neglect, exploitation or any form of violence, acting both in prevention and intervention in risk situations;
- Promote awareness/ information campaigns and projects in the community, among professionals, and families;
- Provide social and legal support to children, youth, and their families, fostering collaboration with other specialized services;
- Encourage the participation of children and youth in decisions that affect them, promoting opportunities for expression and dialogue, respecting their opinions, and fostering their autonomy;
- Work in partnership with public entities, non-governmental organizations, schools, and communities to strengthen integrated actions to protect and promote rights;
- Act with transparency, ethics, and responsibility, always prioritizing the best interest of children and young people in all actions taken.

As part of its mission and activities, AH is particularly attentive to danger signs among institutionalized children and young people, those living in poverty and/or social exclusion, migrants and refugees.

4. Guiding Principles

AH assumes as guiding principles those contained in article 4 of the Law on the Protection of Children and Young People in Danger:

- a) Best interest of the child and youth - intervention must prioritize the interests and rights of the child and youth, without prejudice to due consideration of other legitimate interests within the scope of the plurality of interests present in the specific case;
- b) Privacy - the promotion of the rights and protection of children and youth must be carried out with respect for their privacy, right to image, and the confidentiality of their private lives;
- c) Early intervention - intervention must be carried out as soon as the dangerous situation is known;
- d) Minimal intervention - intervention must be carried out exclusively by entities and institutions whose actions are essential to the effective promotion of the rights and protection of children and young people at risk;
- e) Proportionality and timeliness - intervention must be necessary and appropriate to the dangerous situation in which the child or young person finds themselves at the time the decision is made and may only interfere in their lives and that of their family to the extent strictly necessary for that purpose;
- f) Parental responsibility - intervention must be carried out in such a way that parents assume their responsibilities towards the child or young person;
- g) Prevalence of the family - in the promotion of rights and protection of children and young people, priority should be given to measures that integrate them into their family or promote their adoption;
- h) Mandatory information - the child and young person, their parents, legal guardian, or the person with actual custody have the right to be informed of their rights, the reasons for the intervention, and how it is carried out;
- i) Mandatory hearing and participation - the child and young person, alone or accompanied by their parents or a person of their choice, as well as their parents, legal guardian, or the person with actual custody, have the right to be heard and to participate in the actions and in the definition of the measure to promote rights and protection;
- j) Subsidiarity - intervention must be carried out successively by the entities with competence in matters of children and youth, by the child and youth protection commissions and, ultimately, by the courts.

5. Responsibilities

AH responsibilities are:

- Respect and ensure the protection of children and youth, as well as the promotion of their rights, across all its areas of activity, adopting a holistic and integrated approach.
- Disseminate this Child Protection Policy to all employees, volunteers, interns, and partner organizations involved in the work with children and youth.
- Ensure the implementation of the Child Protection Policy within the organization.
- Create a safe environment for the children and youth in its care, implementing procedures that facilitate the identification of risk and protective factors, hazard assessment, and risk prevention/minimization.
- Collaborate effectively with national and international entities, maximizing the impact of initiatives promoting the rights of children and young people.

The responsibility of employees and volunteers is to:

- Respect and guarantee the rights of all children and young people in their care, regardless of age, ethnicity, sex, language, territory of origin, religion, sexual orientation, political conviction, education, economic situation and/or social condition of the child, young person, their guardians, legal representatives or other reference persons;
- Always make decisions based on the best interests of the child and young people, in accordance with the current law on the promotion and protection of children and youth;
- Promote the active participation of children and youngsters, involving them whenever possible in the process of sharing information, discussion, and decision-making;
- Support the various stages of the Life Project of children and youth at the AH Temporary Residence, always promoting the empowerment of those being supported and/or sheltered;
- Respect the responsibilities, rights, and duties of parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for the child or youth;
- Provide families with information about their children's development and areas of interest, and ensure their participation in developing the educational project;
- Communicate with families clearly and transparently, according to their literacy level, ensuring the confidentiality of information;
- Ensure that children and young people receive the protection and care necessary for their well-being and safety;
- Provide necessary care if the child or young person is sick or injured, following established procedures;

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- Comply with procedures regarding the safety of children and young people during high-risk activities, particularly outdoor activities (outings, transportation, parties, among others);
- Comply with the AH measures and procedures to ensure a safe and healthy work environment for colleagues, children, and young people, undertaking to comply with the legislation of occupational safety, health, and hygiene applicable to their activities and facilities, as well as adopting appropriate measures to prevent accidents and damage to the facilities;
- Do not use cell phones during working hours, while providing care and supervision to children and young people, except in urgent personal and family situations;
- Reject any and all forms of physical, psychological, or sexual violence;
- Report any suspicion of neglect, abuse, or other violations of the rights of children and young people, following the established procedures;
- Share information about children, youth, and families, to the extent strictly necessary, with full respect and consideration for their privacy and dignity, ensuring the confidentiality of data processed under legal terms and, whenever possible, guaranteeing the right to access, rectify, and delete data;
- Maintain confidentiality regarding all information related to reported cases and only discuss them with those responsible for supervising the children and youth;
- Obtain prior, informed, and free authorization from guardians or legal representatives to photograph, film, disseminate, and publish images of children and youth online or in other media;
- Assume responsibility regarding the development of personal and professional skills, benefiting from training opportunities that occur during and after work;
- Respect AH regulations, procedures, and work instructions;
- Submit Criminal Record annually, demonstrating suitability to work with children and young people.

6. Procedures

The following procedures must be adopted to fully comply with the Child Protection Policy:

- Provide up-to-date information on data protection, confidentiality, information sharing, and other legal issues that may impact child protection (DOC.02.CD);
- Provide information specifically targeted at children, young people, and families about their rights and available support;
- Ensure compliance with current internal procedures whenever a potential or actual situation of neglect, abuse, or violence is observed/ identified (CAV.PC2.PR3, CRE.PC2.PR6);

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- Annually identify and address the risks and opportunities associated with the development of activities with children and young people (IMP.01.02.GRO);
- Periodically monitor the terms of this policy as part of the monitoring of key AH processes;
- Ensure that all employees and volunteers sign the Code of Ethics and Conduct upon their hiring (DOC.10.RH);
- Ensure that all employees and volunteers have up-to-date criminal records;
- Include specific training in the Annual Training Plan on preventing child abuse and promoting children's rights;
- Make the Child Protection Policy available on the AH website, in Portuguese and English.

7. Definitions

Child sexual abuse

Involvement of a child or adolescent in activities aimed at the sexual gratification of an adult or older adult. It can occur in various forms, including: harassing the child or adolescent; forcing them to be aware of or witness obscene conversations, writings, or performances; using the child in photography and filming; engaging in intercourse (copulation, anal, or oral); vaginal or anal insertion of body parts or objects; and manipulation of sexual organs.

Child and Adolescent Protection Commissions (CPCJ)

Official, non-judicial institutions with functional autonomy that aim to promote the rights of children and adolescents and prevent or end situations that may affect their safety, health, education, or overall development.

Child and Adolescent Rights

These rights are enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and include the right to life, health, education, freedom of expression, and a name and nationality. For children and young people in Portugal, these rights are ensured and complemented by laws that guarantee, for example, healthcare, food, housing, education, protection, and the opportunity to be heard.

Multidisciplinary Technical Support Team for Courts (EMAT)

A Social Security team composed of several professionals whose role is to provide technical support to the courts, particularly through the preparation of social reports, to influence and improve the efficiency of judicial proceedings, such as in cases of regulating parental responsibilities.

Best Interests of the Child

All decisions made by public or private entities must take into account the best interests of the child.

Physical Abuse

These are intentional actions, isolated or repeated, that cause (or may cause) physical harm to the child. Physical violence includes pushing, kicking, slapping, throwing objects, twisting, burning, spitting, pulling hair, pinching, stabbing, beating, strangling, among others. Psychological/Emotional Abuse

This type of violence fails to provide an environment of safety and emotional well-being, essential for the balanced growth, development, and behavior of children and young people. Psychological violence includes: name-calling, threats, criticism, humiliation, devaluation, intimidation, social isolation, deprivation of contact with family and friends, denial of access to healthcare, among others.

Child Neglect

Failure to ensure that the child or young person's basic needs are met, essential for their proper growth and development. This includes: lack of basic needs, such as hygiene, food, affection, education, health, safety, and housing; child abandonment; and begging (begging on the street). Protection of Children and Youth

A set of measures and rights designed to guarantee their well-being, safety, health, integral development, and protection against any form of neglect, abuse, exploitation, or violence, ensuring the necessary conditions for everyone to have their fundamental rights respected, in accordance with the Law on the Protection of Children and Youth in Danger (LPCJP) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Violence against Children and Youth

This refers to any non-accidental action or omission, committed by parents, caregivers, or others, that threatens the safety, dignity, and biopsychosocial and emotional development of the child or youth.

There are several forms of violence, namely: neglect; physical abuse; psychological/emotional abuse; sexual abuse; and Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy.

8. Related Documents

DOC.06.RH_Welcome Manual

DOC.07.RH_Code of Ethics for Harassment Prevention

DOC.10.RH_Code of Ethics and Conduct PPCY

CAV.PC2.PR3_Signalization and Management of Neglect, Abuse and Violence Situations

CRE.PC2.PR6_Signalization and Management of Neglect and Abuse Situations

DOC.002.CRE_DayCare Internal Regulations

DOC.01.08.CAV_Life Support Centre Internal Regulations

DOC.02.CD_External Documented Information

IMP.01.GRO_Identification and Treatment of Risks and Opportunities

IMP.05.GEST_Occurrence Registration Form

9. Revision History

This document will be revised whenever required by law or professional practice. The Technical Directorate and Resource Management are responsible for proposing changes, and the Administration Board is responsible for approving any and all changes to this document.

Version Date Changes

Version	Date	Changes
01	29/09/2025	Initial version

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