

POLICIES FOR SAFE INTERACTIONS OF IYMC/MDSM FOUNDATION STAFF WITH CHILDREN

The guiding principle of all actions taken by educators and front-line staff is to act in the best interest of the child. Foundation employees treat children with respect, considering their dignity and needs. Any form of violence against children is unacceptable. In fulfilling these objectives, employees act within the bounds of the law, the internal regulations of the Foundation, and their professional competencies.

The rules for safe interactions between employees and children apply to all employees, collaborators, interns, and volunteers, as well as any adult in contact with children participating in the Foundation's educational activities, whether such contact occurs with the institution's consent or on its premises. Knowledge and acceptance of these rules are confirmed by signing a declaration.

Interactions between Staff and Children

Staff are required to maintain professional relationships with children and always consider whether their reaction, communication, or action towards the child is appropriate, safe, justified, and fair to other children. It is recommended to act in an open and transparent manner towards others to minimize the risk of misinterpreting your behavior.

GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATORS AND FIRST CONTACT STAFF:

Communication with Children

- 1) Communication with children should be patient and respectful
- 2) Children should be listened to attentively, and responses should be appropriate to their age and to the situation
- 3) Shaming, humiliating, ignoring, or insulting a child is forbidden. Yelling at a child is only permitted in situations concerning the safety of the child or other children
- 4) Sensitive information about a child should not be disclosed to unauthorized persons, including other children. This includes the child's image and personal data
- 5) When making decisions affecting a child, they should be informed, and their expectations should be taken into account when possible
- 6) The child's right to privacy must be respected. If confidentiality must be broken to protect the child, this should be explained to them

- 7) When interacting with the child, the employee must ensure that he or she is within sight or hearing of other employees and caregivers of children at the IYMC/MDSM. In exceptional and justified situations, when the employee needs to be alone with the child, he or she is obliged to notify the child's guardians and inform them of the exact place where they will be with the child
- 8) Do not behave in an inappropriate manner in the presence of children. This includes using vulgar words, gestures and jokes, making offensive remarks, alluding to sexual activity or attractiveness in statements, and using power relations or physical superiority (intimidation, coercion, threats) against a child

Activities with Children

1. An educator and other staff members, while conducting activities with children, should appreciate and respect the children's contributions to the activities, actively engage with them, and treat them equally regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, ability/disability, social status, ethnicity, culture, religion, or worldview
2. Favoritism towards children must be avoided
3. Establishing any romantic or sexual relationships with a child or making inappropriate proposals is prohibited. This includes sexual comments, jokes, gestures, and sharing erotic or pornographic content, regardless of its form
4. It is forbidden to record the child's image (filming, voice recording, photography) for private use. This also applies to allowing third parties to capture the child's image without informing the Director of the IYMC/MDSM and obtaining their consent, as well as obtaining the consent of parents/legal guardians and the children themselves
5. Offering alcohol, tobacco products, or illegal substances to children or using them in their presence is prohibited
6. Employees should not accept money or gifts from the child or their parents/legal guardians. Entering into relationships of dependency with the child or their parents/legal guardians that could lead to accusations of unequal treatment or exploitation for financial or other benefits is forbidden

Physical Contact with Children

Any form of violence against a child is unacceptable. However, there are situations where physical contact with a child may be appropriate and meet

the principles of safe contact: it responds to the child's needs at the moment, considers the child's age, developmental stage, gender, cultural and situational context. Universal appropriateness of such physical contact cannot be defined, as what may be appropriate for one child may be inappropriate for another. Always use professional judgment, listen, observe the child's reactions, ask for consent to physical contact (e.g., holding a child's hand to guide them to another part of an exhibit to find their caretakers/parents), and be aware that even well-intentioned contact may be misinterpreted by the child or third parties.

1. It is forbidden to hit, shove, push, or in any way violate the bodily integrity of a child
2. Never touch a child in a manner that may be considered indecent or inappropriate
3. Staff must always be prepared to explain their actions
4. Physical contact with a child must never be secretive or hidden, involve any form of reward, or arise from a relationship of power. Anyone witnessing any of the above behaviors and/or situations by other adults or children is obliged to report it to the responsible person and/or follow the established intervention procedure