



GLOBAL LIBRARIES - BULGARIA FOUNDATION CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. Main objective

GLOBAL LIBRARIES - BULGARIA FOUNDATION (hereinafter referred to as "GLBF") is a non-for profit organisation founded in 2013, which operates with a network of over 1 000 public libraries on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria: regional, municipal and community libraries, covering 260 municipalities in the country. As such, GLBF recognises the fundamental role that libraries can play in supporting the well-being of children and preventing any form of abuse, neglect or exploitation. GLBF affirms its unconditional commitment to the protection and promotion of children's rights, actively contributing to the creation of a safe, inclusive and accessible environment in all activities and initiatives carried out within the public library network.

2. Guiding principles

GLBF's policy on child protection is based on the following principles:

- ❖ Best interests of the child - is the first priority in all decisions and actions affecting children.
- ❖ Non-discrimination - all children have the right to equal protection and treatment, regardless of origin, gender, age, religion, disability or socio-economic status.
- ❖ Respect for children's dignity - interactions with children should reflect care, empathy and respect for their autonomy and privacy.
- ❖ Consciously involving children in decisions that concern them - children are encouraged to express their views and actively contribute to activities and decisions that concern them, in a safe, responsive and empathetic environment.

3. Scope of application

This policy is applicable to all persons involved in activities organised or supported by GLBF, including employees, librarians, volunteers, collaborators, institutional partners and service providers. All stakeholders are expected to respect the norms, values and commitments assumed in this policy.

4. Prevention and education

GLBF promotes an institutional culture based on prevention, awareness-raising and education in the field of child protection by:

- ❖ Safe recruitment - clear selection and vetting procedures for staff working directly or indirectly with children.
- ❖ Continuous training - providing training and information sessions for staff and collaborators on child protection rules.
- ❖ Code of conduct - implementing a set of rules for ethical and professional behaviour in interactions with children.
- ❖ Safe environment - physically, emotionally and digitally safe organisation and delivery of activities with children.

5. Reporting and intervention

GLBF will aim to create clear and accessible mechanisms for reporting any suspicions or incidents of abuse, neglect or inappropriate behaviour towards children.

In this respect, in case of potentially dangerous situations for children involved in its initiatives, GLBF will:



- ❖ Designate persons responsible at institutional level for receiving and handling complaints.
- ❖ Guarantee Confidentiality of information and protection of the identity of the child involved will
- ❖ Collaborate with the competent institutions (The Social Assistance Agency at the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, General Directorate "National Police" at the Ministry of Interior, specialised NGOs) for prompt intervention in compliance with the legislation in force.
- ❖ Take immediate internal measures to protect children at risk during the investigation.

6. Children's involvement and collaborative feedback

GLBF supports children's right to be heard and involved in activities and decisions that affect them. Child-friendly tools and channels will be developed for the purposes of children-related activities - through which children can provide feedback, signal risks or make suggestions about their experiences.

7. Monitoring, review and optimisation

In order to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of this policy, the GLBF will:

- ❖ Regular risk and impact assessments of protective measures.
- ❖ Regular consultations with librarians, parents, educators, mentors, field workers, etc. to adapt the policy to the realities on the ground.
- ❖ Update the policy in line with legislative, contextual or organisational changes.

8. Institutional collaboration and shared responsibility

GLBF recognises that child protection is a collective responsibility and is committed to actively collaborating with public authorities, educational institutions, non-governmental organisations and local communities to create a safe and protective ecosystem around children. Through coordinated, informed and participatory actions, we aim to transform libraries into trusted spaces for the harmonious development of every child.