



# Child Protection Policy of the Bronislaw Geremek Foundation

Warsaw, June 2024

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In accordance with the mission of the Bronisław Geremek Foundation, we commemorate and protect the thought and achievements of Prof. Bronisław Geremek. We promote the values of public life that He represented. We popularise European values - shaping attitudes, influencing public opinion, stimulating debate. We create a space for action for committed people who share these values.

All Bronisław Geremek Foundation staff and associates are actively engaged in efforts to strengthen civil society, intercultural dialogue, education, the protection of human rights, and the fight against disinformation and fake news. We value gender equality, anti-discrimination, tolerance and the protection of human rights. We are guided by the welfare and best interests of the child. We see children as partners in the creation of an environment that is friendly, safe and respectful of each other.

The purpose of the Child Protection Policy is to raise awareness among all Geremek Foundation staff and associates of the importance of taking action to protect children from harm and abuse, to outline the responsibilities of individuals for the safety of children in the Foundation's care, to intervene appropriately in cases of suspected child abuse and/or imminent danger to the health and life of children, and to identify preventive and intervention measures to ensure the safety of children.

## **STANDARD I. POLICY**

Part of the Geremek Foundation's activities are directed towards children and are aimed at developing them into conscious, socially and civically active Europeans. The Foundation runs activities for children, usually in collaboration with educational institutions. The Foundation's team – staff, associates and volunteers – is committed to creating a welcoming environment for children to thrive in and to ensuring that its activities are safe for children and do not cause or expose them to harm. The purpose of this policy is to make all staff, associates and volunteers aware of the importance of child protection activities, to identify actions to keep children safe and to develop the Foundation's working culture based on children's rights. The Policy has been prepared in line with the Child Safeguarding Standards introduced by the Act of 28 July 2023 amending the Act – Family and Guardianship Code and certain other acts (the so-called Protection of Minors Act) and based on the four standards developed for the document 'The International Child Safeguarding Standards and how to implement them'.

### **§ 1.**

#### **Explanation of terms**

1. The Policy is understood to mean the Child Protection Policy applied in the course of the activities carried out by the employees and associates of the Bronisław Geremek Foundation.
2. The Foundation and the Geremek Foundation are understood to mean the Bronisław Geremek Foundation.
3. According to Polish law, a child is a person under the age of 18.
4. An employee of the Foundation is a person employed by the Foundation on the basis of an employment contract.
5. An associate of the Foundation is a person employed on the basis of a civil law contract or who performs unpaid work for the Foundation within the framework of an internship programme on the basis of an internship contract, a volunteer contract, an apprenticeship contract or any other cooperation agreement.
6. The Foundation Team is the staff and associates of the Foundation.

7. The Coordinator is the person responsible for the Child Protection Policy, a staff member appointed by the President of the Management Board to oversee its implementation at the Geremek Foundation.

8. Harm is any intentional or unintentional act or omission by an individual, an institution or society as a whole, and any consequence of such act or omission, that violates the equal rights and freedoms of children and/or interferes with their optimal development.

9. Legal intervention means notifying the police or the public prosecutor's office of a suspected offence against a child, or notifying the competent district court, family and juvenile department of a threat to the child's welfare.

10. Guardian of the child – the guardian is the parent(s) with full parental rights or a legal guardian with the right to represent the child.

11. The consent of the guardian means the consent of the person entitled to represent the child, in particular the child's legal representative (parent, guardian) or any other person entitled to represent the child under special provisions or a court decision. In the case of parents, it means the consent of one of them. In case of disagreement between the child's parents, the matter shall be decided by the court.

**There are 4 basic forms of harm:**

1. **Physical violence against a child** is violence whereby a child suffers actual physical harm or is potentially threatened with such harm. This harm occurs as a result of an action or inaction on the part of a parent or other person responsible for the child, or on the part of someone the child trusts or has authority over. Physical violence against a child may be a repeated or one-off act.

2. **Psychological child abuse** is a chronic, non-physical, harmful interaction between a child and caregiver, involving both actions and inactions. It includes, but is not limited to: emotional unavailability, emotional neglect, a relationship with the child based on hostility, blaming, denigration, rejection, developmentally inappropriate or inconsistent interactions with the child, failure to recognise or acknowledge the child's individuality and psychological boundaries between parent and child.

3. **Sexual exploitation of a child** is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that the child is not capable of fully understanding and giving informed consent to, and/or to which the child is not developmentally mature and cannot consent in a legally valid manner, and/or which is incompatible with the legal or moral norms of a given society. Sexual exploitation occurs when

such activity occurs between a child and an adult or a child and another child, if these persons, due to their age or stage of development, are in a relationship of care, dependence, authority.

4. **Child neglect** is the chronic or incidental failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs and/or to respect his or her basic rights, resulting in disruption to his or her health and/or developmental difficulties. Neglect occurs in a child's relationship with a person who has a duty of care, nurture, concern and protection to the child

## **STANDARD II.**

### **STAFF**

#### **§ 2.**

#### **The Foundation's organisational culture in the context of the Child Protection Policy**

1. The Geremek Foundation has high ethical and moral standards which are required of the members of the Foundation Team.
2. The team's organisational culture is based on mutual respect, dialogue, shared values and belief in the Foundation's mission.
3. All employees and associates of the Geremek Foundation:
  - Treat all children equally, regardless of their background, appearance or beliefs;
  - Respect the child's possible otherness, other beliefs, other experiences, other perspectives arising from being a child;
  - Listen carefully to the child and take the child's statements and version of events seriously;
  - Use non-judgmental, non-judgemental language appropriate to the child's developmental level;
  - Create a culture of openness and mutual accountability within the Foundation that encourages the raising and discussion of all issues and concerns relating to child protection. Członkowie Zespołu Fundacji są zobowiązani znać prawa dziecka.
4. The entire Foundation Team works to protect children from abuse.
5. Educational activities for children are prepared by professionals, pedagogues and psychologists and are adapted to the developmental level of the children.
6. Child safety provisions are included in the contracts signed by the Foundation for child-directed activities.
7. The partners where Geremek Foundation volunteers work are obliged to train the volunteers in the safety rules for children in their institution.
8. Recruitment of Foundation employees shall be carried out in accordance with the obligations of employers to safely recruit employees, in accordance with the provisions of Art.21, paragraphs 1-11. of the Act of 28 July 2023 amending the Family and Guardianship Code and other acts (PL).

9. The President of the Management Board of the Foundation is obliged, within the limits of his/her abilities, to verify the veracity of this information, including verifying this information in the Sexual Offenders Register.
10. When recruiting members of the Foundation Team who will have contact with children, the job/volunteer advertisement includes a description of the form of work with children and the competences required for this.
11. Candidates' competence in this area, as well as the attitude towards children and the values on which the candidate bases the cooperation with children, are analysed – through the information provided in the recruitment form and during the interview.
12. Candidates are asked whether they have been convicted of an offence against sexual freedom, morality or an offence of violence against a child and whether they have any criminal proceedings pending in this respect.
13. The information, obtained in accordance with the provisions of Art.21, paragraphs 1-11. of the Act of 28 July 2023 amending the Family and Guardianship Code and other acts (PL) shall be recorded by the employer in the form of a printout and attached to the employee's personnel file or to the documentation concerning the person admitted to Foundation-related activities.
14. President of the Management Board in order to identify the employee, must have from the candidate the identifier of information issued from the Polish register if accessing the register online, or his/her data: name, date of birth, PESEL, family name, father's name, mother's name, contact details of the candidate.
15. New members of the Foundation Team receive this policy on commencement, including the Division of Responsibilities for Implementation of the Child Protection Policy attached as Appendix 4 of the Policy.
16. All members of the Team shall make a written declaration that they have read the Policy. The statement is attached as Appendix 3 of the Policy.



**STANDARD III.  
PROCEDURES**

**§ 3.**

**Responding to risk factors for child abuse**

1. Staff are aware of, and apply, the Foundation Team-to-Child and Child-to-Child Safe Relationship Rules and Requirements set out in the Foundation. The principles and requirements are attached as Appendix 1 and 2 to the Policy.
2. Any information about suspected child abuse is taken seriously and investigated, whether it comes from a child/carer/professional and whether it concerns suspected abuse by another child, a child's carer, a professional or a member of the Foundation Team.
3. In a situation of child abuse by a member of the Foundation Team, a witness to the incident is obliged to draw the attention of such a person and report the incident to President of the Management Board.
4. Child abuse situations observed by the Foundation Team are reported to the Foundation Board. The Foundation Board intervenes with the relevant persons/services, including the Public Prosecutor's Office.
5. In the event of an imminent threat to a child's life or health, the member of the Foundation Team who has obtained such information have to intervene immediately by telephoning the relevant police unit immediately to report the imminent threat or breach to the child's life and health.
6. All intervention activities are documented and communicated to the Policy Coordinator.

**§ 4.**

**Rules on the protection of the child's image**

1. The Foundation ensures standards for the protection of children's personal data in accordance with current data protection legislation.
2. Materials must not show children in an unfavourable light.

3. The recording and making public by a member of the Foundation Team or any other person of the child's image recorded in any form (photograph, audio/video recording) is not done against the child's will and it requires the written consent of the child's guardian.
4. In order to obtain the consent referred to above, the Foundation Team must contact the child's guardian and agree how to obtain consent
5. If the image of the child is only a detail of a whole, such as a gathering, a landscape, a public event, the consent of the parent or legal guardian is not required for the recording of the child's image.
6. The written consent referred to in paragraph 3 should indicate where the recorded image will be placed and in what context it will be used.

**STANDARD IV.  
MONITORING**

**§ 5.**

**Policy implementation and monitoring**

1. The Child Protection Policy of the Bronislaw Geremek Foundation enters into force upon publication of its full version by the Management Board in a manner accessible to all employees/associates and upon posting on the Foundation's website: **www.geremek.pl** (<https://geremek.pl/fundacja/o-nas/dokumenty/>)
2. Management Board of Foundation appoints a Coordinator responsible for coordinating the implementation of and compliance with the provisions of the Child Protection Policy. A list of the Coordinator's responsibilities in this regard is available in Appendix 4 of the Policy.
3. Whenever changes to the Policy are made, they must be announced to all employees and associates of Foundation.
4. The President of the Management Board and the Coordinator are responsible for receiving reports of child endangerment incidents.
5. All employees and associates shall make a written declaration that they have read the Policy. The statement is attached as Appendix 3 of the Policy.
6. The policy is approved and signed by the President of the Management Board or the Legal Representative of Foundation.

**Appendix 1**  
**PRINCIPLES AND REQUIREMENTS**  
**FOR A SAFE RELATIONSHIP FOUNDATION TEAM – CHILD**

**I. Activities with children**

1. Children's contribution to activities should be valued and respected, actively involved and treated equally regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, ability/disability, social, ethnic, cultural, religious status and beliefs.
2. Favouritism towards children must be avoided.
3. It is forbidden to have an inappropriate relationship with a child. This includes sexual comments, jokes, gestures and sharing erotic and pornographic content with children.
4. It is not permitted to capture a child's image (filming, voice recording, photography) for private use.
5. Alcohol, tobacco or illegal substances must not be offered to children or used in the presence of children.
6. It is not allowed to accept money or gifts from the child or the child's guardian that express any kind of dependency or financial benefit. This does not apply to voluntary, traditional, occasional gifts, for example in connection with holidays.
7. The Foundation's staff and associates are never left alone with the children - the children are always looked after by a responsible person - a parent or guardian (e.g. a teacher).

**II. Physical contact with children**

1. Acceptable physical contact must be naturally related to play, helping the child with hygiene activities, the need to keep the child safe, the need to reassure the child: it responds to the child's needs at the time, taking into account the child's age, developmental stage, gender, cultural and situational context.
2. However, it is not possible to establish a universal appropriateness for all such physical contact, as behaviour appropriate for one child may be inappropriate for another. Professional judgement should always be used, listening, observing and noting the child's reaction, asking for the child's consent to physical contact (e.g. hugging, helping to use the toilet) and being aware that even with good intentions such contact may be misinterpreted by the child or others.

3. Physical contact with a child must never be implicit or hidden, involve any kind of gratification, or result from a power relationship.
4. In situations involving grooming and hygiene activities with the child, other than necessary physical contact with the child should be avoided.
5. Any violent action against a child is unacceptable.
6. It is not permitted to hit, poke, push or in any way violate the physical integrity of a child.
7. It is not permitted to touch a child in any way that could be considered indecent or inappropriate.
8. It is not permitted to engage in activities such as pretending to fight with children or violent physical play.
9. It is always important to be prepared to explain your actions.

### **III. Principles for organising support for children with disabilities and special needs**

1. Geremek Foundation makes every effort to ensure that children with disabilities and special needs are able to participate fully in the Foundation's activities.
2. The Foundation team ensures that these children are not discriminated against in any form by anyone.

### **IV. Online safety**

1. It is not permitted to have contact with children through the acceptance or sending of invitations on social media sites.
2. When the Foundation Team organises activities involving children's use of the Internet, the Team is obliged to take measures to protect children from accessing content that may pose a risk to their proper development.

## **Appendix 2**

### **PRINCIPLES FOR SAFE CHILD-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS**

1. Geremek Foundation respects the law as well as the obligations under the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the UN General Assembly.
2. A properly organised educational process involves the formation of mutual relationships between children.
3. Relationships between children are formed in a way that is adapted to the child's needs and perceptual abilities.
4. Behaviour that is not allowed in relations between children is in particular: physical violence, verbal aggression, destruction of other people's property, extortion, blackmail

**Appendix 3**  
**EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT**

Warsaw, on.....

Name:

Position:

Statement

I, the undersigned, declare that I have read the "Child Protection Policy" of the Bronislaw Geremek Foundation and undertake to abide by it.

.....

Signature

**Appendix 4**  
**Division of responsibilities for implementation**  
**Child Protection Policy**

**Management Board of the Bronisław Geremek Foundation:**

- Approves the Policy, approves amendments.
- Publishes Policy.
- Resolves bindingly any doubts regarding the interpretation of the provisions of the Policy.
- Appoints a Policy Coordinator.
- Communicates significant modifications to the Geremek Foundation Council for consultation.
- Initiates proceedings in the event of suspected child abuse by employee/associate of the Geremek Foundation.

**Child Protection Policy Coordinator:**

- Coordinates the preparation and delivery of initial and refresher training on the Policy.
- Maintains a list of frequently asked questions.
- Conducts monitoring of the application of the provisions of the Policy in the form of a survey and consultation at least once every 2 years by:
  - a) Conduct a survey once every 2 years to check the operation and relevance of the provisions of the Child Protection Policy and the level of awareness of these among members of the Foundation Team;
  - b) Carry out an internal audit once every 2 years of the level of development of the standards introduced by the Policy using tools developed by Keeping Children Safe (e.g. Keeping Children Safe self-assessment tool and the self-assessment web)
- Once every two years, or more often if necessary, make proposals to the Board for changes to the Policy based on the results of the surveys.
- Clarifies, in consultation with the Board, any doubts regarding the application of the Policy
- Explains, in consultation with the Board of Directors, violations of the provisions of the Policy.



**Human Resources Department:**

Provides each new employee with the Child Protection Policy for familiarisation and collects in the employee file, in addition to other documents indicated by law, statements of familiarity with the aforementioned documents.

**Foundation team:**

- They are familiar with and comply with the provisions of this Policy.
- Before working with children, they shall make the appropriate declarations to the employer in accordance with the applicable legislation .
- When child abuse is suspected, they report the matter to the Policy Coordinator.
- Raise concerns about the interpretation of the provisions of this Policy with the Policy Coordinator.
- Report violations of the Policy to the Policy Coordinator.

*The Child Protection Policy has been prepared based on the document 'The International Child Safeguarding Standards and how to implement them' [accessed 19.06.2024], , the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the knowledge and materials of other civil society organisations, most notably those involved in the implementation of children's rights.*

Child Protection Policy adopted by the Resolution of the Management Board of the Geremek Foundation on 20 June 2024 r.



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