

Child Protection Policy

JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház

Mission and Vision

The mission of JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház is to provide a safe, supportive, and loving environment for every child, where they can experience the power of community and explore their Jewish identity. We believe in creating a culture of love, respect, and acceptance for the next generations. Our goal is to build a community for children where they feel safe, and where learning, fun, and growth all play equally important roles. We are committed to the protection of minors, ensuring every child grows up in an environment where their rights are respected, their dignity is protected, and they are supported to become strong, confident, and compassionate adults.

JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház is operated by the Bálint Jewish Community House Foundation (registered address: 1065 Budapest, Révay utca 16.; registration number: 01-01-0008237; represented by: Marcell András Kenesei, Director; hereafter: the Foundation). Therefore, any mention of JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház in this document also refers to the Foundation.

This Child Protection Policy was created in the spirit of the JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház mission, based on the child rights defined by UNICEF:

- **Protection:** Safeguarding children from all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, including the special protection of refugee children, prohibition of child labor, and protection from involvement in war.
- **Provision:** Meeting children's basic needs for healthy physical and mental development— e.g., access to nutrition, healthcare, and education.
- **Participation:** Supporting children's growing ability to make decisions and participate actively in community life, including freedom of thought, religion, conscience, expression, and association.

The JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház is committed to educating members of the Jewish community about basic child rights and will visibly display UNICEF's extended list of fundamental child rights within the building (available at: <https://unicef.hu/gyermekjogok>).

1. Scope and Definitions

1.1. Scope

This policy applies to all activities of JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház involving minors and is binding for every employee, contractor, and volunteer of the institution or the Foundation (hereafter: staff). Compliance with this policy is mandatory. Its provisions apply across all operational areas and programs of JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház from the moment of adoption.

The policy is approved by the Foundation's Board of Trustees, which continuously monitors its implementation, takes the necessary actions within its jurisdiction, and reviews the policy at least once a year or more frequently if needed.

1.2. Review of the Document

The Board of Trustees reviews the Child Protection Policy annually by **November 30**, based on the recommendations of the child protection officer. If changes in legislation or practical experiences make modifications necessary, the Board initiates and adopts the appropriate amendments.

If a critical deficiency is identified before the annual review, the child protection officer must immediately address it, providing appropriate documentation.

1.3. Definitions

JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház prioritizes creating an inclusive and supportive environment for children visiting the community center or participating in its programs—one rich in positive experiences and free from any form of abuse or neglect.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), “child abuse and neglect (maltreatment) includes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, and commercial or other exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development, or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power.”

With this in mind, the following general terms used in this policy are defined as:

- **Endangerment:** Long-term obstruction of a child’s physical, intellectual, emotional, or moral development. Severe endangerment includes any abuse or neglect that poses an immediate threat to the child’s life or could cause significant or irreparable harm to their development.
- **State of Endangerment:** A condition resulting from actions, omissions, or circumstances that hinder or obstruct a child’s development.
- **Self-Endangerment:** The child engages in harmful behavior toward themselves (e.g., self-harm, suicide attempts), or other dangerous behaviors such as running away, substance use, or vagrancy.
- **Neglect:** Any failure to meet a child’s needs (intentional or not) that harms their health or development.
 - *Emotional neglect:* Lack of emotional security, permanence, and nurturing relationships.
 - *Physical neglect:* Failure to meet physical needs such as hygiene, supervision, or protection.
 - *Educational neglect:* Ignoring school attendance duties, performance issues, or refusing to cooperate with educational institutions or support services.
- **Abuse:** Any action or omission that harms a child or prevents their healthy development. This includes threats of abuse (e.g., threatening with hitting or torture).
 - *Emotional abuse:* Ongoing, degrading emotional treatment that negatively affects a child’s development or sense of self-worth.
 - *Physical abuse:* Use of force causing or likely to cause physical harm or suffering.
 - *Sexual abuse:* Forcing or luring a child into sexual activity, regardless of their understanding. This includes molestation, sexual touching, voyeurism, exposing the

child to pornography or sexual acts, or any situation where consent is not possible due to age or power imbalance.

- **Exploitation:** Unfair use of a child, such as child labor that endangers education or development. Exploiters often use deceit, false promises, or coercion.
- **Cyberbullying:** Repeated, intentional online harm such as humiliation, threats, exclusion, or reputational damage.

1.3.2. Child Protection Officers

The Board of Trustees

- Monitors the implementation of this policy.
- Evaluates the professional interventions taken under the policy.
- Takes steps to address any identified issues.
- Appoints the child protection officers and their deputy.
- If no child protection officers or deputy are available, the Board assumes their responsibilities.

Child Protection Officer

Beyond individual responsibility, the Foundation—as an organization—is accountable for ensuring that it always acts in accordance with this Child Protection Policy, with the highest degree of care during operations, preparation, implementation, and follow-up.

To guarantee this, individuals are appointed to be responsible for compliance.

The child protection officers and their deputy are selected annually according to the JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház operational schedule. The Board appoints:

- **2 child protection officers**
- **1 deputy child protection officer**
- **1 child protection advisor**, who must hold at least one of the following qualifications:
 - Social worker
 - Educator
 - Psychologist
 - Lawyer (especially in family or child law)
 - Family and child protection specialist
 - Mental health professional

The child protection advisor may be an external contractor, whereas the child protection officers and their deputy must be employees of JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház.

Child Protection Officers for 2024/2025:

- **Berényi Péter** – Operational Director
- **Hete Dóra** – Program Manager
- **Deputy: Sommer Anikó** – Program Coordinator
- **Advisor: Domonkos-Dikker Vanda**

The officers and deputy carry out their tasks according to the annual work plan, always prioritizing children's safety and well-being.

- They are responsible for operating and managing the child protection processes within the organization.
- The advisor ensures the professional quality of child protection procedures.

1.4. Tasks of the Child Protection Officers and Their Deputy

The child protection officers and their deputy are responsible for the following:

- Reporting annually to the Board of Trustees on the implementation of this policy.
- Collaborating with partners to ensure compliance with the policy.
- Maintaining all documentation required by this policy.
- Ensuring all staff are aware of their child protection obligations and receive the necessary theoretical and practical training.
- Keeping a record of who has completed child protection training and the results of the required tests.
- Receiving and documenting both internal and external reports related to child safety.

In case of specific incidents or internal reports, their tasks include:

- Convening a case discussion to determine what actions are needed, which professionals (lawyer, psychologist, psychiatrist, doctor) or external organizations should be involved, and whether official proceedings should be initiated.
- Providing factual information to staff about specific cases, depending on the nature of the case—always prioritizing the child's best interests and complying with data protection regulations.
- Offering follow-up sessions for children and staff to help process incidents, involving appropriately qualified professionals if needed.
- Assessing whether any organizational policies need to be revised or staff require additional training to prevent similar incidents in the future.
- Notifying the Board or relevant foundation bodies if the case requires action at that level.
- Maintaining contact with child protection network members and reporting to the appropriate authorities if necessary.

1.5. Tasks of the Child Protection Advisor

The child protection advisor is responsible for:

- Providing advice and information on child protection to anyone who seeks assistance.
- Supporting any Foundation staff member who, in their professional capacity, is involved as a witness in an official or court procedure related to a child connected to the Foundation. This includes offering proper preparation and guidance.
- Collaborating as needed with colleagues involved in recruitment to assess potential risk factors related to applicants.

In case of specific incidents or internal reports, the advisor's tasks include:

- Performing a **risk analysis** and ensuring the child's safety.
- Offering **feedback and support** to the person who submitted the external report to ensure the case is handled appropriately and that they can continue providing services to the child.
- Reviewing any internally or externally received information and, if necessary, gathering further data to clarify the situation.
- Discussing general or principle-based questions related to child protection together with other staff members and, if needed, with external experts.

2. Child Protection Procedures at JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház

2.1. Overview

JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház ensures the protection of children through the following processes:

- Safe recruitment procedures
- Guaranteeing children's physical safety
- Guaranteeing children's mental safety
- Staff training
- Proper data protection procedures
- Internal and external child protection reporting mechanisms

2.2. Safe Recruitment Procedures

- All staff (employees, volunteers, contractors) must declare whether they are or have been subject to any criminal, disciplinary, or regulatory procedures involving children.
- In line with **Act I of 2012 on the Labor Code, Section 44/A**, a criminal background check (certificate of good conduct) is required at the time of hiring for any role involving:
 - Care, supervision, treatment, or education of persons under 18
 - Provision of leisure, entertainment, or sports-related services to persons under 18

The Foundation records relevant information from the certificate and returns the original to the employee.

Additional obligations before starting work with children:

- Staff must complete child protection training within **one month of contract signing**—and always **before starting any child-related work**. The training covers both theoretical and practical content from this policy and concludes with an exam.
 - A **minimum 80% score** is required to pass. If not achieved, the test must be retaken.
- Staff must carry out their duties according to the principle of **reasonable care**.
- In cases of suspected abuse, endangerment, harassment, or exploitation of children, staff must act in accordance with this policy—especially regarding **reporting, informing, and case handling**.
- All information related to children must be treated **confidentially** and only shared with those who need to know.
- If a staff member becomes aware of a violation of this Child Protection Policy or child protection laws, they are **obliged to report it in writing** to the child protection officer and their deputy using the **Child Protection Report Form (Annex 1)**.
- If a staff member comes into contact with a child through service provision, they may consult with the child protection officer or deputy as needed.

2.3. Cooperation with Partner Organizations

When selecting partner organizations and service providers (hereafter: partners), the Foundation must consider their internal child protection policies, procedures, and past conduct regarding children.

Obligations of cooperating partners:

- Partners must certify that they have participated in their institution’s internal child protection training.
- Partners must have signed their institution’s own child protection policy.

If these requirements are not met, the partner must sign the **JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház Child Protection Policy** as a precondition for further cooperation.

Violation of child protection laws or internal rules by partner organizations will result in the **termination of cooperation** with the Foundation.

2.4. Ensuring the Physical Safety of Children

At all JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház programs, an **external contracted security company** is responsible for the safety of all participants, including children. Events may take place at three types of venues, each with specific safety requirements:

A) JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház Building

- The facility is guarded continuously by an external security provider contracted by the institution.
- The company ensures:
 - 24-hour on-site presence,
 - Entry control,

- Enforcement of access rules,
- Protection of both the property and its visitors.
- Security personnel monitor all entrances and designated areas to prevent unauthorized access and to ensure the safety of visitors and employees within the premises.

B) JDC Szarvas International Jewish Youth Camp

- The camp is guarded year-round by an on-site security team.
- The team ensures:
 - 24-hour presence during camp seasons,
 - Monitoring of entries,
 - Enforcing site access rules,
 - Full-area supervision to prevent unauthorized access and ensure the safety of visitors and staff.

C) Other External Venues

- At any external location, the contracted security team:
 - Establishes and enforces the required safety protocols.
 - Determines whether **security escorts** are needed, and specifies the **scale, duration,** and **number of personnel** involved.
 - Monitors the venue continuously and assesses **potential risks** to ensure the protection of all individuals present.

Security team decisions are made solely based on risk assessment and the need to protect participants and the venue, and must be followed accordingly.

2.5. Ensuring the Mental Well-being of Children

General Measures to Support Mental Safety:

- **Safe and supportive environment:**
All activities and programs strive to provide a welcoming, safe, and inclusive atmosphere. Special care is taken to ensure that every child can express concerns or feelings without fear or shame.
- **Training for employees and volunteers:**
All staff must regularly participate in mandatory mental health and child protection training. These trainings aim to:
 - Help staff recognize children's psychological needs,
 - Identify signs of emotional abuse,
 - Apply a supportive and empathetic attitude,
 - Learn about emotional well-being, conflict management techniques, and the importance of following mental health protection guidelines.

- **Prevention of violence, harassment, and bullying:**
All forms of abuse, harassment, and bullying are strictly prohibited. Staff and volunteers are required to report such incidents immediately. The child protection officer is responsible for taking appropriate measures.
- **Conflict resolution and mediation opportunities:**
Children are provided with tools to resolve conflicts independently and support one another in managing emotional burdens.
- **Education and awareness for children and parents:**
Programs and workshops are organized to promote:
 - Stress management,
 - Development of emotional intelligence,
 - Anxiety reduction,
 - Positive self-image.
 These sessions aim to expand knowledge of mental health and emotional well-being.
- **Access to psychological support and counseling:**
The community center provides access to psychological counseling when needed, ensuring early detection and treatment of mental health issues.

2.6. Procedures for Mental Protection in Specific Cases and Internal Reports

As a member of the child protection signaling system, **JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház** is obligated to take action when signs of abuse or risk are observed, to **prevent or eliminate further harm** to the child.

- If a **child is at risk**, a **report must be made** to the **child welfare service**.
- In cases of **serious abuse** or **life-threatening situations/injuries**, the **guardianship office and/or the police** must be notified, and **official procedures** initiated.

2.6.1. Procedures for Notification, Case Management, and Reporting

Under **Act XXXI of 1997 on the Protection of Children and Guardianship Administration**, Section 17:

If the Foundation becomes aware—through its services or other means—of **abuse, severe neglect, or other serious risk to a child**, or **self-endangering behavior**, it must initiate legal proceedings or file a report with the appropriate child welfare services.

Internal staff obligations:

- All JCC staff must **submit a written report** to the child protection officer and deputy using the **Child Protection Report Form (Annex 1)** if:
 - They suspect or learn of a violation of a child's rights, abuse, neglect, self-endangerment, or a harmful environment.

Required steps:

1. **Inform the child** (in an age-appropriate way) of their rights and why the report is necessary, if circumstances allow.

2. In **crisis situations** (e.g., threats to life or physical integrity), the staff member must **immediately involve the appropriate authorities** (e.g., police, ambulance, fire department).
3. The staff member must submit the **internal report immediately**—preferably both verbally and in writing (written form is mandatory).
4. The **child protection officer**:
 - Handles the report confidentially,
 - Logs it within 24 hours,
 - Submits it to the relevant child welfare services and guardianship office.
5. If necessary, the **Board of Trustees** evaluates whether disciplinary action is needed and initiates proceedings.

Bad-faith internal reports may result in disciplinary action.

2.6.2. Complaint Procedure

Submitting a Complaint or Report

External parties (e.g., parents, teachers, others) may submit child protection complaints as follows:

- **Verbal complaint:**
May be made to any JCC staff member, who must **record it in writing immediately** and forward it to the appropriate child protection officer.
- **Written complaint:**
Can be submitted by email or post to JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház. While the format is flexible, it should ideally include:
 - Complainant’s name and contact details
 - Relationship to the child
 - Detailed description of the complaint (what happened, why it’s a concern)
 - Date and relevant circumstances

Processing the Complaint

- A written **record** is created for every complaint.
- The **child protection officer registers the complaint**, including:
 - Complainant’s data,
 - Type of complaint,
 - Date and description.

Preliminary Review

- The relevant leader or child protection officer conducts a **preliminary investigation** to assess:
 - Whether the complaint is valid,
 - Whether it involves child protection concerns.

- The review may include:
 - Interviews with affected children, staff, parents, others,
 - Examination of relevant documents,
 - Clarification of circumstances.

If the Complaint is Justified:

- The process follows section **2.5** (on abuse, bullying, etc.),
- A full investigation and child protection report are launched.

Decision and Response

The complainant receives a **written decision** that includes:

- A summary of the complaint,
- Measures or recommendations made,
- Detailed description of steps taken (e.g., staff training, protection actions),
- Info about **further legal options** and next steps if needed.

Follow-up and Monitoring

- JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház is responsible for tracking implementation of measures to ensure long-term resolution and continued support for the affected children and families.

Legal Remedies

- If the complainant finds the internal resolution unsatisfactory, they may seek **legal remedy** by contacting child protection authorities, the local government, or the courts.

2.7. Staff Training at JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház

2.7.1. Purpose and Target Group of the Training

All staff at JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház are required to participate in **annual child protection training**. The goal is to ensure that every employee is familiar with the laws, procedures, and principles related to child protection, guaranteeing the highest level of care and safety in all child-related work.

2.7.2. Training Formats and Tools

The training is provided in **accessible formats for all staff**, including:

- **Online learning material** that can be revisited at any time.
- This **e-learning content** allows flexible scheduling and self-paced study while still meeting training obligations.

2.7.3. Completion, Examination, and Declaration

- At the end of the training, staff must pass a **final exam** that assesses both knowledge and ability to apply what was learned.
- Upon passing, each staff member must **sign a declaration** confirming that:

- They will act according to the training's principles,
- They respect children's rights and ensure their protection in all circumstances,
- They acknowledge the rules and responsibilities outlined in the Child Protection Policy,
- They commit to fully complying in their day-to-day work.

2.7.4. Responsibility and Oversight

- The **child protection officers** are responsible for ensuring all staff:
 - Participate in the mandatory training,
 - Complete the course and exam as required.
- Completion and exam results must be **recorded** and staff declarations **archived**.

2.7.5. Need for Repetition

- The training must be **renewed annually**.
- JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház ensures each year that:
 - Staff update their knowledge,
 - They stay informed about **new laws and procedures**.

Annual retraining is essential to maintain ongoing compliance with child protection regulations.

Data Protection

All data processing related to child protection at JCC Budapest – Bálint Ház is governed by the following policies:

- **GDPR Policy** – [link to be inserted]
- **Data Processing Policy for Camps** – [link to be inserted]
- **Data Processing at Events Where Photos May Be Taken** – [link to be inserted]