Child Protection Policy: Slow Tech Institute, z.s.

About this policy

Slow Tech Institute, z.s. (ID No. 228 26 653) adopts this policy as a binding framework for all activities in which it comes into contact with children. It applies to the Digitální zdraví dětí (Children's Digital Health) initiative and to all projects funded by the EU and other sources.

The policy is structured around the four areas of the Keeping Children Safe International Child Safeguarding Standards (Policy, People, Procedures, Accountability). This is a translation; in case of discrepancy, the Czech version prevails.

A. Policy: commitment and principles

STI has zero tolerance for any form of violence, abuse, exploitation or neglect of children. Protecting children is the responsibility of everyone who acts on behalf of STI.

A.1 Commitment

STI commits that its staff, trainers, volunteers, interns and partners will not harm children or expose them to risk. If they become aware that a child is at risk, they will act in line with this policy. This commitment is grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular Art. 3 (best interests of the child), Art. 12 (right to be heard), Art. 16 (privacy) and Art. 19 (protection from violence). It also respects General Comment No. 25 (2021) on children's rights in relation to the digital environment.

A.2 Principles

1. **Equal right to protection.** All children have an equal right to protection regardless of age, gender, origin, language, health, religion or social situation.
2. **Best interests of the child.** Every decision is guided by what is best for the child, not by the reputation of the organisation.
3. **Do no harm.** Programmes are designed so that they do not themselves cause distress, re-traumatisation or stigma.
4. **Participation.** Children are informed in an age-appropriate way and their views are taken seriously.

5. **Informed consent and voluntary participation.** Children and their legal guardians know what they are taking part in. Children may withdraw at any time without consequence.
6. **Confidentiality with limits.** We protect information about children, but confidentiality never takes precedence over a child's safety.
7. **Cooperation with the child protection system.** STI does not investigate. It refers concerns to the child protection authority (OSPOD), the Police of the Czech Republic and the school.

A.3 Scope

This policy protects all persons under the age of 18 and is binding for the staff, trainers, volunteers, interns and partners of STI, in face-to-face and online activities, in schools and kindergartens, at events for parents and in projects with partners abroad.

B. People: roles, team and training

Anyone working with children on behalf of STI must pass a background check, complete training and sign the Trainer Code of Ethics. Without all three, they may not work with children.

B.1 Roles and responsibilities

Role	Who	Responsibility
Statutory body	Board of the association	Approves the policy, provides resources, oversees implementation.
Designated Safeguarding Officer	Mgr. Michaela Slussareff, Ph.D.	Receives reports, decides on next steps, liaises with OSPOD and the Police, keeps records, organises training.
Deputy Safeguarding Officer	Mgr. Zdeňka Černá	Takes over when the Officer is absent or when a report concerns the Officer.
Programme coordinator	Per project	Completes the risk assessment for each activity, informs the school and parents, checks that trainers have signed declarations.
Trainers, volunteers, interns	All	Follow the Code of Ethics and report any concern immediately.

B.2 Safe team

1. During recruitment, references are checked with a previous employer or organisation where the candidate worked with children.
2. **Criminal record certificate** no older than 3 months before starting, renewed every 3 years. International associates provide an equivalent document from their country.
3. Signature of the Trainer Code of Ethics and the declaration of familiarity with this policy (Annex 2).

B.3 Training

Everyone working with children on behalf of STI receives training on this policy and the Code of Ethics before their first contact with children, and annually thereafter. The Safeguarding Officer and Deputy complete a specialist child safeguarding course.

C. Procedures

Every activity with children has a prior risk assessment. Every concern is reported to the Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours, and in case of immediate danger at once to emergency line 158 (Police).

C.1 Risk assessment

The coordinator completes a short risk assessment before each new type of programme. For recurring programmes an annual review is sufficient.

Typical STI risk	Mitigation
A child discloses during a prevention programme (e.g. about online grooming or sexting)	The trainer knows procedure C.4. The school designates in advance a teacher or school psychologist who is available.
The topic triggers anxiety or a memory of the child's own experience	Content notice at the start, option to leave, Linka bezpečí child helpline 116 111 shared at the end.
A trainer is left alone with a child	Programmes run in the presence of a teacher. Individual conversations only in a visible place with the door open.
Online programmes or communication with children	Only through institutional accounts, never privately.
Showing examples of risky content in class	Only anonymised, age-appropriate examples. Never explicit sexual or violent content.
Photos and recordings from programmes	Only with consent and without identification (see C.3).

C.2 Code of conduct

The binding rules of conduct towards children are set out in the Trainer Code of Ethics (separate document). A breach of the Code is a breach of this policy.

C.3 Photos, recordings and personal data

- STI processes children's personal data in line with the GDPR (Regulation (EU) 2016/679) and Czech Act No. 110/2019 Coll. It collects only data needed for the programme and for grant reporting.
- Photos of children are taken only with written consent from the legal guardian and age-appropriate consent from the child.
- Published photos preferably show children in a way that does not identify them. We never publish a name alongside a photo or a school's location in real time.
- Research and evaluation data are anonymised. Research with children requires approval by the ethics committee of a partner institution.

C.4 When a child discloses

1. Stay calm and listen; do not question the child.
2. Do not promise secrecy; explain that you must pass it on to someone who can help.
3. As soon as possible, write down what the child said in their own words (Annex 1) and follow C.5.

C.5 Reporting procedure

1. **Immediate danger** (the child is at risk of harm now): call 158 or 112, then inform the Safeguarding Officer.
2. **Concern or disclosure during a school programme:** inform the designated teacher or school counselling team immediately.
3. **Report to the Safeguarding Officer** within 24 hours, even if the school is already dealing with it.
4. **Officer's decision** within 48 hours: referral to OSPOD in the child's place of residence, to the Police, or documentation and monitoring without further action. The reason for the decision is recorded.
5. **Concern about an STI associate:** the Officer or Deputy removes the person from contact with children pending investigation. This is a protective measure, not a sanction.
6. **Records:** stored securely, accessible only to the Officer and Deputy.

Projects abroad: partners report under their national law and also inform the STI Safeguarding Officer, as project coordinator, within 48 hours.

D. Accountability: monitoring, review and partners

The policy is reviewed annually and after any serious incident. The outcome of the review is approved by the statutory body.

D.1 Monitoring and review

- The Safeguarding Officer keeps an anonymised log of reports (number, type, outcome) and presents it to the statutory body once a year.
- Each incident is closed with a short review: what worked, what to change.
- Reviews include feedback from trainers, schools and, where appropriate, children (e.g. an anonymous evaluation question: "Did you feel safe during the programme?").

D.2 Complaints and concerns

Anyone, including a child, parent or school, may raise a concern or complaint, also anonymously.

- E-mail: michaela@slowtechinstitute.org
- Safeguarding Officer phone: +420 724 577 668
- If the concern relates to the Safeguarding Officer: Deputy, +420 732 126 370.

No one who reports a concern in good faith will be disadvantaged, even if the concern is not confirmed.

D.3 Breaches

A breach of the policy or Code leads to immediate suspension from work with children and, depending on severity, termination of the contract. Suspected criminal offences are always referred to the Police of the Czech Republic.

D.4 Partners and EU projects

Every project partner working with children provides, before activities start, its own child protection policy of a comparable standard, or adopts this policy. Partners report incidents under their national law and also inform the STI Safeguarding Officer, as project coordinator, within 48 hours.

Annexes

Annex 1: Record of concern or disclosure

Field	Complete
Date and time of record	
Name and role of person recording	
Programme, school, location	
Child (name or code, age, class)	
What happened or what the child said (in the child's own words, without interpretation)	
What you observed (behaviour, injuries, content on a device)	

Field	Complete
Who else was informed (teacher, school counselling team) and when	
Immediate actions	
Safeguarding Officer's decision and reason	
Signature	

Annex 2: Declaration by associate

I, the undersigned _____, declare that I have read the Child Protection Policy of Slow Tech Institute, z.s. and the Trainer Code of Ethics, that I understand them and commit to following them. I acknowledge that a breach may result in termination of cooperation and referral to the relevant authorities. I declare that I am not aware of any circumstances that would disqualify me from working with children.

Date: _____ Signature: _____