

Guide for the protection and proper treatment of minors in the Itaka-Escolapios Network





I. Introduction

1. Itaka-Escolapios, in accordance with its identity and foundational aims, assists, educates and accompanies numerous children and adolescents through various projects. The Calasanz Movement, school reinforcement programmes, homes, socio-educational activities in free time etc. are examples of projects through which we develop the mission of Itaka-Escolapios with children and adolescents. We assume this task with total responsibility and, as is proper to our foundational identity and our charisma, we place the child or adolescent at the centre of our social and educational action.
2. Therefore, in compliance with our mission, Itaka-Escolapios fully and unequivocally assumes the rights of children and the commitment to ensure at all times the care, well-being and integral development of the minors in our care, which implies promoting and building protective, healthy and educationally stimulating spaces for them. This commitment includes, of course, preventing and stopping any form of sexual abuse or mistreatment of children and adolescents.
3. From this commitment arises the present Guide, which aims to be a basic and common tool for our actions with minors, useful for the prevention and detection of evidence or suspicious situations of sexual abuse or any other form of mistreatment of children and adolescents. Likewise, the inspiring principles and general criteria of this Guide will also inform the guidelines for action in the organisation with other people who, not being minors, are especially vulnerable due to personal or social circumstances.
4. The content of this document must be known and accepted by all those people who, whether as volunteers or professionals, participate in Itaka-Escolapios projects with minors and other especially vulnerable people. It will also be available to all interested parties and, in particular, to the parents or legal guardians of minors who participate in our projects.

II. Inspiring principles

5. The general principles that inspire the actions of Itaka-Escolapios in all matters relating to the protection and good treatment of minors are the following:

5.1. **Zero tolerance** for any form of sexual abuse or mistreatment of children and adolescents.

5.2. **Commitment to minors**, creating safe environments in which to develop a protective, healthy and stimulating educational activity.

5.3. **Commitment to the victims**, giving priority to listening attentively to what they say about their experiences and situations.

5.4. **Commitment to truth, justice and reparation**, which involves seeking the truth, promoting the realisation of justice, as well as redressing as far as possible any wrong done in the scope of our activities.

5.5. **Commitment to the families of the minors**, corresponding with responsibility and transparency towards them to the trust they place in our organisation.

5.6. **Commitment to society and the authorities**, collaborating fully with the competent public institutions for the protection of minors and with the legal system.



III. Key concepts

6. In order to help identify matters, situations and conduct related to the application of this Guide, some relevant terminology is explained below.

6.1. **Sexual abuse of minors:** The criminal typology to which this term refers is broad and covers very different conducts. Thus, for example, sexual relations (consensual or non-consensual), sexual proposals (by any means, including digital media) or insinuations related to sexual conduct, physical contact with sexual intent, exhibitionism, autoeroticism, production, acquisition, retention and dissemination of pornographic material involving minors, as well as deliberate exposure of minors to this material, inducement to prostitution, harassment or intimidation of a sexual nature by any means, conversations, grooming... In no case is it relevant to verify whether or not the assaulted minor has given his/her consent.

6.2. **Adult:** Any person of legal age with full capacity to act.

6.3. **Concealment:** Conduct carried out by any person who, knowing that facts which could be considered sexual abuse of minors have occurred, fails to bring such facts to the attention of the competent authorities, or performs actions or omissions with the intention of interfering in or evading their investigation.

6.4. **Child pornographic material:** Any representation of a minor, regardless of the means used, involved in real or simulated explicit sexual activities, and any representation of sexual organs of minors for predominantly sexual purposes.

6.5. **Minor:** Any person under the age of 18 years.

6.6. **Crime report:** Any information about a possible punishable act that reaches in any way the persons in charge of the entity or group in which the event(s) occurred. It does not need to be a formal report.

6.7. **Disclosure:** A communication by which a minor makes known, directly or indirectly, an alleged situation of sexual abuse.

6.8. **Suspicion:** on the basis of various indicators or clues, it is inferred that a child has been or is being sexually abused.

6.9. **Witness:** Someone outside the abusive situation who witnesses the facts and brings them to the attention of a third party.

IV. Preventive system

7. In order to create suitable conditions to prevent the abuse of minors in our activities, the volunteers and professionals of Itaka-Escolapios must observe the following guidelines, both in the training and selection of people and in the organisation of the activities.

a) Training

8. The training processes, both initial and ongoing, of volunteers and professionals who participate in Itaka-Escolapios projects with minors must necessarily include the affective-sexual dimension, as well as the good treatment and protection of minors.

9. Such training shall specifically include content on child abuse and its prevention, the identification of symptoms that may point to its existence, as well as the process to be followed to report possible facts or inappropriate behaviour that may come to their attention. Specific training on these issues shall take into account and adapt its contents to the situation and ages, according to the people to whom it is addressed in each case.

b) Selection

10. Volunteers or professionals participating in Itaka-Escolapios projects with minors must comply in their selection process, and maintain afterwards, with all the requirements established by the applicable legislation regarding to people who, due to their functions and tasks, have regular contact with minors.

11. In particular, the obligation to require and submit a negative criminal record certificate where required by law shall be fulfilled diligently.

12. Likewise, in the process of incorporation, the person responsible for the project will inform of the principles and action guidelines established in this Guide, which must be expressly accepted.

c) Preventive measures in activities

13. In order for Itaka-Escolapios activities to generate and develop in safe environments for minors, the following guidelines will be followed with regard to the socio-educational relationship and the spaces and times in which it is carried out.

14. The socio-educational relationship will always maintain a respectful treatment of our minors. Language and behaviour towards them must be proper and uplifting, never insinuating, offensive or insulting.

15. Educational distance must be ensured, differentiating the levels of relationship. Our accompaniment, closeness and possible reference must be exercised with the utmost respect, without jeopardising our model of attention and accompaniment to people, in which the affective and emotional aspects are important to build healthy and educationally stimulating relationships. In this sense, any manifestation of affection that may disturb the minor or surpass a healthy educational relationship shall be avoided.





16. Behaviours with minors in our care that make them feel uncomfortable or worried about the way adults relate will be avoided. They must have the implicit and explicit certainty that their parents or guardians can be informed of what is happening in the activity area.

17. All individualised training, socio-educational and pastoral action must respond to the objectives of the entity and will be informed and shared with the legal and institutional managers and the rest of the teams and people who attend the activity.

18. Those who carry out an activity which, by the nature of their duties, involves personal interviews or conversations with minors, shall ensure that:

18.1. Meetings and conversations are held during regular business hours. If for any reason it is necessary to carry them out outside these hours, parents or legal guardians will be informed of this circumstance.

18.2. Open spaces or rooms with visual communication from the outside to the inside are used.

18.3. When the previous indications to this point could not be carried out, interviews, tutorials or other individualised actions are executed in the presence of another partner of the activity, or under the supervision of the team or person in charge.

18.4. Both professionals and volunteers always respect the operating rules of the project or the centre in which they work, in order to guarantee the individual's right to privacy and intimacy.

19. During periods of rest or non-directed leisure, it is appropriate to enable the presence or reference of at least one responsible person.

20. Care shall be taken to ensure that the facilities and spaces, in general where the activities take place, are appropriate, preferably open or glazed areas. Exceptions are obviously those areas in which intimacy and privacy must prevail, such as toilets, bedrooms, changing rooms or first-aid rooms.

21. Particular attention will be paid to preventing inappropriate behaviour in activities such as camps or labour camps. Special care shall be taken to ensure compliance with these guidelines, adapting them where necessary to the circumstances of the type of activity from the point of view of its educational aims.

The principles that set the guidelines for face-to-face activities are equally applied in all communications through social networks and messaging systems that could be used depending on the characteristics of each project.

V. Response to possible abuse or mistreatment.

22. Please note that abuse may occur inside or outside of our activities, by one or more adults and even among one or more minors. It is therefore our duty to pay attention and learn how to recognise the signs of possible abuse or neglect and, in this sense, to bear in mind that the news of it can get through direct or indirect disclosure from the victim, from witnesses or from well-founded suspicions.

23. If evidence of possible sexually abusive behaviour is detected in these ways:

23.1. The Itaka-Escolapios person responsible for the project or activity will be informed immediately, so that he/she can in turn inform the parents or legal guardians.

23.2. Immediate action shall be taken to stop the behaviour detected and to protect the minor, including the removal from the activity of anyone involved while they are under investigation.

23.3. The facts shall be brought to the attention of the management of Itaka-Escolapios so that he/she may act in the appropriate manner in accordance with the law, taking the befitting measures on behalf of the entity and, in particular, reporting of the facts to the competent public authority.

24. Duty to reserve. Persons who, by reason of their functions or tasks, become aware of facts constituting a possible abuse or mistreatment, once fulfilled the aforementioned obligations of communication, must maintain proper confidentiality during the investigation processes, respecting in all cases, the right to privacy and the good name of the people affected and involved, the presumption of innocence and the confidential nature of the investigative proceedings. This is without prejudice to due cooperation with the competent authorities.

VI. Regulations and references

25. This Guide is based on and inspired by the numerous civil and ecclesiastical regulations aimed at regulating and guaranteeing the rights of children and adolescents. We make general mention to the most relevant sources which, where appropriate, will serve to interpret, specify and complement the guidelines in this document.

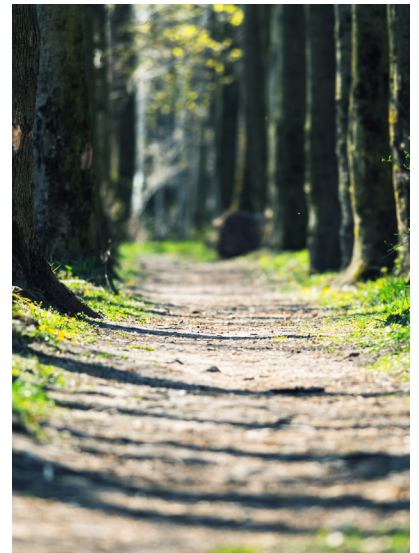
25.1. **United Nations:** [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20th November 1989).

25.2. **Civil legislation** regarding the protection of minors applicable in the places where our activities are developed.

25.3. **Holy See:** documents concerning minor abuse and the Church's response (http://www.vatican.va/resources/index_sp.htm). In particular, the Apostolic letter of Pope Francis motu proprio "[Vos estis lux mundi](#)" (May 7th of 2019).

25.4. Regulations, guidelines and other documents of the **local church** in the dioceses where we carry out our activities.

25.5. **Pious Schools:** Norms, protocols, and codes of conduct approved by the Order, as well as those of its demarcations and specific works.





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www.itakaescolapios.org