



## **Child Protection Policy**

**Associação Portuguesa Conversas de Psicologia - Divisão M**

**(Hereinafter “Division M”)**

Whereas the Division M is a Non-Profit, Humanitarian and Research organization with Headquarters in Coimbra - Portugal,

And,

Whereas the Division M is entirely dedicated to the promotion, and Advocacy of the Human Rights, with special focus on the rights of the child,

And,

Whereas the Division M bases its vision and mission on the principle of ensuring the effective access to Human Rights, with special focus on the rights of the child,

And,

Whereas the Division M fully endorses the principle of no discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth, sexual orientation or other status,

The Division M adopts the following policy on child protection,

## **Preamble:**

On 26 January 1990 is signed, in New York, the Child's Rights Convention (ratified by Portugal in September 12th, 1990), that recognizes the child as a subject of rights and that makes the States legally responsible for the implementation of children's rights and the measures (legislative, administrative, social and educational) to protect them. The Convention elects the family as affective, emotional and socializing support of the child. The Protection Law for children and youth in risk (LPCJP), approved by Law nº 147/99, of 1/09, entered into action on 1 January 2001 and defines the legal framework of the social intervention of the State and of the community, in the situations of children in danger and/or lack of protection. Aims the promotion and protection of individual rights, social, economic and cultural rights of children and youth, so as to ensure their well-being and full development (art. 1º). With the guiding principle of the whole system of protecting based upon the best interests of the child and youth, the intervention should: (i) Respect the intimacy; (ii) Take place as soon as danger is signaled; (iii) Be developed by legitimized authorities; (iv) Be appropriate and not go beyond what is necessary; (v) Have a pedagogical aspect and accountability in relation to the attitude of parents; (vi) Give prevalence to integrative measures in the family; (vii) Be preceded by a hearing of the child and who has their guard. The Division M of APCDP (Associação Portuguesa Conversas de Psicologia) fully expects that all professionals, volunteers that collaborate with the DivisionM, act in accordance to the national law in Portugal, and we aim to protect, and promote the well-being, of children and youth.

## **Part 1 – Division M will ensure that:**

**Article 1:** The welfare of the child and/ or vulnerable adult is of vital concern. This policy can also be used to cover vulnerable adult(s), namely victims of crime / violence, homeless/rooflessness and/or cognitively vulnerable adults.

**Article 2:** All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial or religious beliefs and/or sexual orientation have the right to be protected from harm and all adults involved in the work done by Division M must fully respect, protect and promote this right. If any irregularity or suspicion of wrongdoing by any adult that works in M Division and/or in collaboration with M division is detected, reporting to the M division supervisor is mandatory. The reporting system requires written communication to M division coordinator, by email or letter, explaining in detail the events and people involved and including contacts for further inquiring. M Division coordinator is responsible for child protection, including the procedure of in depth enquiring of alleged irregularities and ensuring full compliance of the Portuguese legislation, namely through the compliance with formal referral system to police, Commission for the Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents or any other public formal organization which is responsible for fulfilment of children and adolescents rights.

**Article 3:** All suspicious and/or allegation of abuse will be taken seriously and answered according to the (inter)national law. Division M ensure that every voice is heard, and the guidelines are followed at all times.

**Article 4:** All professionals that collaborate with Division M are supervised, accordingly with (inter)national ethical and deontological guidelines. Every suspicion of allegation of abuse/crime against children or vulnerable adults should be reported immediately to the supervisor.

**Article 5:** All suspicious behaviours, from Professionals and Volunteers, must be immediately reported to or by the supervisors, and the children and/or vulnerable adult at risk/ harm should be protected, heard, and supported. **If a** children and/or vulnerable adult at risk/ harm reports problem(s), and/or discloses that he/she is being abused all people involved in the organization is requires to: 1) attentively listen and react calmly, 2) reassure the child/adult that he/she is right to tell and that he/she is not to blame, 3) explain clearly and ensure that everything that the child/adults say is taken seriously; 4) be careful not to be deemed as putting words into the child's mouth, the easiest way of doing this is by asking questions, 5) explain clearly and adjusted to child/adult developmental/comprehension level their rights and the limits to your confidentiality (accordingly to Portuguese legislation), 6) inform the child/ adult on all procedures required and what is expected to be done next, 7) make a full and written record of what has been said as soon as possible and do not delay in passing on the information.

## Part II – Division M Values and Principles

**Article 6:** Division M values children's and vulnerable adult's rights and is fully committed to ensure their protection. Division M fully complies with EU and Portuguese regulations and legislation on data protection, taking special care with the rights of children and vulnerable adults. All data (e.g., photos, personal information, pictures) compilation, analysis and/or dissemination require informed consent, in written, from legal tutor/responsible and also explicit authorization from the children/vulnerable adult. At all times, children/vulnerable adults and their legal tutor/responsible can ask for removal/elimination of data, accordingly to EU and Portuguese legislation.

**Article 7:** Division M is committed to protecting the rights of the children, namely but not excusably, personal data protection, non-discrimination and access to health, social, educational and cultural services.

**Article 8:** Division M aims to Advocate for the Rights of the children and vulnerable adults.

**Article 9:** Division M aims to bear witness and record all injustices, discrimination and all shortcomings perpetrated to children and vulnerable adults in the access to Human Rights.

### **Part III – Division M understands and reiterate that:**

**Article 10:** The majority of Professionals and Volunteers of Division will come in contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

**Article 11:** As part of the contact, the Division M staff might be confronted with privileged information regarding abuse/harm to children or vulnerable adults.

**Article 12:** Every situation of possible abuse/harm should be immediately reported for best care.

**Article 13:** Every Professional and Volunteer should provide a criminal record prior to initiating the work with children and/or vulnerable adults. Newly recruited staff and/or volunteers that initiate collaboration with M Division will participate in an initial internal policy briefing, that includes an information session concerning human rights, and specifically children and vulnerable adults' rights. They will also have access to documentation on EU regulations and Portuguese legislation on data protection that they have to carefully read and that will have to take in consideration throughout all tasks they plan and develop while working/collaborating in M Division.

**Article 14:** Every Professional and Volunteer will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to initiating work with Division M.



**Article 15:** Every Professional and Volunteer must follow this policy and act accordingly to its principles and values.

**Article 16:** Every Professional and Volunteer will be given a copy of this policy, and this policy should be available to everyone working with Division M.

**Article 17:** This policy is an official document of Division M, and all Professionals and Volunteers must adhere to it.