

Child protection policy



Board approval January 2024

1. Purpose and commitments

African Media Association Malta (AMAM) usually works with adults. If children participate in an activity, interview, podcast, filming or partner event, or appear in AMAM's content, this policy applies. A child is anyone under 18. It covers Board members, staff, volunteers, interns, consultants and anyone acting for AMAM.

Children's safety, dignity and best interests come first. Every child has equal protection, regardless of background, migration status, sex, gender, disability, religion or language. AMAM will listen to children, respect their choices and act against abuse, neglect, exploitation, grooming, trafficking, bullying, discrimination and online harm, including harm by other children or exposure to domestic violence.

2. Responsibility and preparation

The Board oversees this policy. Before any planned child involvement, it appoints a suitably Board contact. These roles coordinate safeguards and referrals; they do not replace specialist services or anyone's reporting duties.

Before an activity, the Director and board contact must ensure:

- A written risk assessment covers age, access and language needs, supervision, venue, online contact, recording, publication and any risks linked to family or migration circumstances.
- An activity plan identifies responsible adults, first aid, emergency contacts, safe arrival and collection, and suitable content. At least two authorised adults are present; interactions remain visible or observable.
- The authorised parent or legal guardian gives written permission and the child gives informed agreement. Both receive understandable information, with interpretation if needed. For unaccompanied children, verify the recognised guardian; defer participation if authority is unclear.
- People involved have suitable experience, identity and reference checks, legally required suitability checks, a safeguarding briefing and a signed conduct acknowledgement. No unsupervised contact is permitted while checks are incomplete. Seek specialist support where needed.
- Partners agree in writing who handles supervision, consent, data, emergencies and reporting. Give children and guardians the reporting contacts and explain that participation is voluntary and may stop at any time.

If safeguards cannot be met, adapt, postpone or cancel the activity. If a child attends unexpectedly, check safety and locate the responsible adult. Do not include them in recordings or sensitive sessions until safeguards are in place. Parents retain childcare responsibility unless AMAM has expressly arranged otherwise.

3. Conduct and safe contact

Everyone acting for AMAM must maintain professional boundaries and report concerns.

- Treat children respectfully. Never humiliate, threaten, discriminate, use physical punishment or ignore bullying. Do not expose children to unsuitable material, alcohol or drugs.
- Never engage in sexual activity, sexualised communication, grooming or exploitation involving a child. Never solicit images or exchange gifts, money, assistance or opportunities for personal or sexual favours.
- Avoid isolated one-to-one contact. Use observable settings and another authorised adult. Do not arrange private meetings, home visits, private transport or shared sleeping arrangements.
- Physical contact must be necessary, appropriate and respectful of the child's wishes, or needed to prevent immediate injury. Explain assistance, seek another adult's support and record emergency departures from normal arrangements.
- Communicate through approved organisational accounts. No personal social media connections, private or disappearing messages, or requests for secrecy. Include a guardian or another authorised adult where safe and appropriate.

4. Interviews images and publication

The board member and responsible editor review safety before recording or publishing a child's identity, voice or story. Editorial or publicity aims never override the child's welfare.

- Obtain separate, specific written guardian permission and the child's agreement for recording and publication, explaining channels, editing, translation and reuse. A child may participate without publicity and may refuse even if a guardian agrees.
- Prefer non-identifying content. Check whether voice, location, uniforms, family details or migration history could reveal identity. Do not identify children involved in abuse, exploitation or similarly sensitive cases, or publish details that expose them or others to harm. Consent alone does not make publication safe.
- Portray children accurately and with dignity. Avoid sexualisation, pity, stigma and stereotypes. Never pressure a child to describe trauma for a story. Do not use children to interpret another child's sensitive disclosure.
- Avoid live broadcasts with minors; any exception requires a written risk assessment and board approval. Moderate comments, restrict contact features where possible and remove harmful responses promptly.
- Secure recordings and limit access, including partner access for translation or reuse. Do not upload identifiable child material to public generative AI tools, use it to train models or create synthetic portrayals. Act promptly on withdrawal requests and remove AMAM-controlled content where feasible and appropriate.

5. Complaints and concerns

Children and guardians may raise concerns verbally, in writing or through a trusted adult. Anonymous concerns will be considered. No child will lose access to activities for complaining; good-faith reporters must not face retaliation. Proof is not required to raise a concern, including about harm outside AMAM.

6. Responding to harm

Protect. Call 112 for immediate danger or urgent medical help. Stop unsafe contact, keep the child supported and do not return them to a person believed to pose a danger.

Listen. Stay calm, take the child seriously and reassure them. Do not promise secrecy, ask leading questions, repeatedly question them or confront the alleged abuser. Explain who must be told and why.

Record. Promptly note the date, context, observations, the child's own words and actions taken. Separate facts from assumptions. Do not photograph injuries or investigate yourself.

Report. Notify the board member immediately, normally the same day. Refer suspected significant harm promptly to FSWS Child Protection Services or the Police, following applicable mandatory reporting duties and current guidance. Internal reporting must never delay or replace an external report. Contact authorities directly if the board member is unavailable or fails to act.

Follow up. Record the referral, confirm receipt and follow up on continuing risk. Inform guardians only where safe and consistent with authority advice; never alert someone implicated or increase risk. Explain next steps to the child and offer specialist support information.

Conflicted people must not manage the case. Restrict the alleged person's contact with children while risk is assessed, cooperate with statutory investigations and preserve records. Any disciplinary or contractual action will follow a fair process.

7. Confidentiality and records

Share only what is necessary for protection or legal duties. A necessary protection referral does not depend on consent; document the reason for sharing. Store minimal records securely, restrict access and keep case files separate from routine project records. Set justified retention periods, review them annually and preserve records needed for investigations or legal requirements. Do not circulate case details in group chats or public reports.

Do not download, copy or forward suspected child sexual abuse material. Note its online location without recirculating it, report to the Police or to [Child Web Alert](#) and follow instructions.

8. Contacts adoption and review

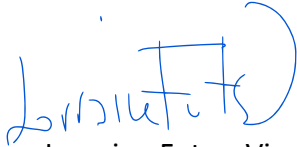
Emergency: 112. Foundation for Social welfare Services (FSWS) Support line 179: free, 24-hour support and referral advice. Use the current child protection referral procedure and submission details at fsws.gov.mt/child-protection/cps-referral-form/. Online abuse material: childwebalert.gov.mt.

Apply this policy alongside Maltese child protection law, required suitability checks and data protection duties. The Board will review it annually and after significant concerns or changes, check implementation and training, and publish the adopted policy on AMAM's website. Share it with everyone acting for AMAM and relevant partners.

Obo Board AMAM



Name and position: Regine Nguini President and Legal representative



Name and position: Lorraine Fotso, Vice President

Valletta, 15/01/2024

Acknowledgement for users:

I have read this policy and agree to its conduct and reporting duties.

Name:

Signature and date: