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Haaga-Helia Child Protection Policy

1. Purpose of the policy

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences Ltd. (hereafter HHUAS) is committed to promoting the well-being, safety, and participation of children and young people who take part in, encounter, or may be affected by its teaching, research, development and innovation (RDI), events, projects, communications and other activities.

HHUAS respects and promotes the rights of children and young people in all its activities, following legal and ethical obligations related to protection of children and young people.

This policy establishes HHUAS's institutional framework for safeguarding children and young people.

2. Scope and applicability

As a university of applied sciences focused on higher education and work-life-oriented RDI activities, Haaga-Helia does not typically work directly with children or young people.

This policy applies to all HHUAS staff when their duties involve children and young people (anyone under the age of 18). It also applies to, where relevant, people acting on behalf of or representing HHUAS, including project personnel, trainees, interns, volunteers, and students acting in an organised representative role.

HHUAS's Child Protection Policy is grounded in the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It ensures equal protection and rights for all children and young people regardless of their background and that they are treated equally with respect and dignity and without any discrimination.

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3. Code of Conduct

All staff and representatives covered by this policy must maintain professional boundaries and behave in a manner that provides a safe and inclusive learning and working environment for all. The principles of safe environment and intervention practices are outlined in Haaga-Helia Safer Space.

Staff and representatives must:

- Treat everyone fairly, respectfully, and with dignity and promote accessibility.
- Use inclusive, cultural-sensitive, and gender-sensitive language.
- Follow agreed consent, recording, data-protection, research-ethics procedures, and photography.
- Respect personal boundaries and use physical contact only where appropriate, necessary and non-intrusive.
- Report unsafe or inappropriate behaviour and seek advice when needed.

Staff and representatives must always

- comply with the Finnish law
- comply with the Haaga-Helia Rules and Regulations
- comply with the Haaga-Helia Code of Conduct for Safer Space
- comply with the Haaga-Helia Gender and Non-Discrimination Plan

4. Safe recruitment and vetting

HHUAS complies with the Finnish law regarding integrating safeguarding and vetting into recruitment and assignment processes. HHUAS complies with the guidelines of the Finnish National Agency for Education on the procedures related to the suitability of degree students, the cancellation of study rights, and the verification of criminal records, where these procedures are applicable.

5. Responsibilities

All staff and representatives

- Know and comply with this policy and Haaga-Helia Code of Conduct.
- Identify whether activities under their responsibility involve people under 18.
- Apply preventive safeguards and follow agreed arrangements for activities involving people under the age of 18.
- Report safeguarding concerns without delay and cooperate with legitimate safeguarding processes.

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In RDI projects, Project managers and/or Principal Investigators together with their respective Research Area Directors

- Ensure that all relevant staff comply with the ethical principles of and guidelines for research on human subjects, including ethical principles in involving children and young people in RDI activities and collecting data from children and young people;
- Ensure that research participation and informed consent/assent procedures are in place;
- Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the GDPR, Finnish data-protection legislation and Haaga-Helia's applicable data-management procedures;
- Photographs, recordings and identifying information concerning children shall be collected, used, stored and published only on an appropriate legal and ethical basis and in accordance with applicable consent/assent procedures;
- Comply with the Haaga-Helia Research data policy;
- Comply with the Haaga-Helia Research security policy;
- Comply with the Haaga-Helia data protection guidelines Data protection at Haaga-Helia.pdf .

6. Reporting and response procedure

HHUAS has established channels and processes in place for reporting a safeguarding concern.

Immediate emergency	112
Institutional safeguarding reporting channel	Safe Haaga-Helia | Haaga-Helia Safety observation notification: Make a safety observation notification Safety observation report: Safer space | Haaga-Helia
Child Protection Point of Contact	Security Manager Mia Kivelä, mia.kivela@haaga-helia.fi, tel. +358 50 911 1644
Senior escalation	President and CEO Susanna Niinistö-Sivuranta, susanna.niinisto-sivuranta@haaga-helia.fi

7. Monitoring, accountability and review

The policy owner at HHUAS is Security Manager. The policy and significant changes to it are to be approved by the HHUAS Management Team.

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This policy shall be reviewed at least every two years and earlier following a serious safeguarding incident, material change in Finnish or EU requirements, significant organisational change, or evidence that procedures are not operating effectively.

8. Legal and standards framework

This policy shall be interpreted and implemented in accordance with applicable Finnish and EU law and relevant international standards. The principal framework includes:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), including the best-interests principle and the child's right to be heard
- Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, particularly Article 24 on the rights of the child.
- EU General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and the Finnish Data Protection Act (1050/2018).
- Finnish Child Welfare Act (417/2007), including applicable duties to notify child-welfare authorities and, in specified circumstances, the police.
- Finnish Act on Checking the Criminal Background of Persons Working with Children (504/2002), as amended.
- Non-discrimination Act (1325/2014) and other applicable equality and non-discrimination legislation.
- Keeping Children Safe – International Child Safeguarding Standards
- Haaga-Helia Rules and Regulations
- Haaga-Helia Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan

Where national law imposes a stronger or more specific duty than this policy, the legal duty prevails.

7. Approval and entry into force

This policy enters into force on the date approved by the authorised President and CEO of Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences Ltd.

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Appendix A.

Definitions and glossary

Term	Definition
Child or young person	Any person under 18 years of age.
Child safeguarding	The responsibility and measures taken by an organisation to prevent and respond to harm caused to children through its staff, representatives, activities, operations, partners or digital environments.
Child protection	Actions taken to protect an individual child where there is a concern or reasonable suspicion that the child is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, exploitation, neglect or other harm.
Abuse	Physical, emotional or psychological, or sexual maltreatment of a child. Abuse may occur in person or through digital channels and may involve an adult or another child.
Sexual exploitation / sexual abuse	Any actual or attempted sexual act, contact, exploitation, grooming, sexualised communication, or use of a child for sexual purposes.
Neglect	Persistent or serious failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, or failure to take reasonable steps to protect the child from foreseeable harm.
Bullying / cyberbullying	Repeated or serious behaviour intended to intimidate, humiliate, isolate or harm a child, including through digital services.
Grooming	Behaviour intended to establish trust, secrecy, dependency or access to a child for abusive or exploitative purposes, whether offline or online.
Disclosure	Information shared by a child or another person indicating that a child may have experienced or may be at risk of harm.
Safeguarding concern	Any observation, disclosure, allegation, incident or information that suggests a child may have been harmed, may be at risk of harm, or that this policy or the Code of Conduct may have been breached.