

Declaration For Preventing Sexual Abuse written by the Netzwerk Berliner Kinderpatenschaften

Mentoring programmes are supposed to strengthen the self-confidence of children, to foster their development and their well being. At the same time, they should pave the way for grown-up volunteers to engage in voluntary and valuable activities. In so doing, there is always the risk that paedosexual orientated people abuse this caring role in order to establish a relation to a single child and then manipulate it for these purposes.

The membership organisation of the Netzwerk Berliner Kinderpatenschaften e.V. agreed upon the following measures in order to counteract sexual violence and violating borders by volunteers in a preventive manner:

Compulsory Measures before the Matching between Mentors and Mentees

- An extensive initial meeting with applicants
- The volunteers have to hand in a copy of some form of valid photographic identification
- The extended version of the certificate of good conduct needs to be handed in

In the case of an ongoing mentorship

- a regular supervision of both sides (Mentor + Mentee) by the project coordinators
- The development of a process plan of how to react in case of suspicion

Recommended Measures

- It should be possible to contact the coordinators within one workday
- Supervision of the Tandems by the means of 1:1 conversations, supervision, group activities and trainings
- If children stay overnight in the house of the mentor, it is necessary to show the certificate of conduct of each of the persons living in the same apartment/house.
- Volunteers have to agree that their name and birthday may be saved in a central file in order to enable further inquiry in the case of multiple applications.
- The topic should be discussed in one form or the other. For example on information evenings, during training or initial meetings – also parents should be involved
- A codex of conduct - adapted to the nature of the specific programme - should be developed. Moreover a protective document should be signed by the parents that identifies e.g. what kind of presents can be made, where tandems are allowed to go to, what rules should be taken into account when a Mentee stays overnight etc.
- To explicitly offer materials concerning the topic of prevention of sexual abuse and to emphasize that volunteers are selected carefully in order to protect the children
- Developing a systematic approach to managing complaints – it should be possible for children to reach female as well as male contact partners at any time.

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