

**Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth**  
(Saint Joseph University of Beirut)



# **CHILD PROTECTION Policy**

This policy was approved by the University Board on October 21, 2020  
This Policy was revised in April 2022



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## Preamble

Child maltreatment<sup>1</sup> is a major legal and public health issue. Information available in Lebanon and around the world reveal the magnitude of the problem and highlights the different types and manifestations of child maltreatment. Such information also sheds light on the impact this problem has on the health, educational and psychological development of children (National Public Health Institute of Quebec, 2018). According to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years.

Child maltreatment is described in Article 19 of the CRC, and in WHO's INSPIRE Strategies, as the physical and/or emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, commercial exploitation or other forms of exploitation. Maltreatment results in direct or potential, immediate or long-term harm to the child's health, survival, development and dignity, in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power (WHO, 2016).

## Presentation of USJ

Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth (Saint Joseph University of Beirut - USJ) is an institution of French language and culture. Founded and led by the Jesuits, the vision and mission of USJ are built on values that combine namely the Jesuit educational philosophy, autonomy, collaboration, participation, freedom of conscience, political independence and social commitment, all this around an academic, professional and ethical training of excellence, completed by an authentic culture that is founded on the issues of sense-making, at the service of the promotion of the persons. (<https://www.usj.edu.lb/universite/chartes.php>).

## USJ Commitment to Child Protection

In this spirit, USJ has pledged to preserve and protect children's safety<sup>2</sup> at all times, within the scope of its authority. The courses offered at various schools, the research conducted and the interventions planned by members of the USJ Community, use a language and a set of actions that respect and do not inflict any emotional, physical or psychological harm on children. This commitment has been also translated into the creation of the University Observatory for Children and Youth in Lebanon (OEIL) in 2006, whose mission is to carry out research, collect information, conduct studies and publish reports and documents on issues related to childhood and youth in Lebanon.

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1- **Physical abuse** involves the use of force or violence: hitting (with the hand, the fist, the foot, an object, etc.), biting, burning, poisoning, drugging or forcing someone to consume dangerous substances (alcohol, tobacco, narcotics, etc.), choking, shaking, shoving, etc.

**Psychological abuse** involves the use of humiliating, threatening, reprimanding, intimidating or frightening adjectives.

**Sexual abuse** consists of forcing or inciting an individual to take part in sexual activities, and includes touching the genitals, sexual intercourse, exhibitionism, pornography.

**Neglect** is the continued failure of the adult individual responsible for the child to appropriately care for the child and cater to their essential needs within their available capacity. This can be exhibited through a lack of hygiene, an inappropriate nutrition, a lack of medical care, school deprivation, etc.

**Child exploitation** refers to the use of children either to satisfy another individual's needs or to achieve economic or sexual gains for them, usually prompting an unfair, cruel and detrimental treatment of the child.

2- Child protection is the responsibility of the Institution, which shall make sure that its staff, operations and programs do not harm children, meaning they do not expose children to risks of harm and abuse, and that all of the Institution's children safety concerns within the communities in which it works are reported to the competent authorities.

USJ is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for children that take part in its programs and activities, who attend Saint Joseph's Daycare, or who benefit from the care offered at the University's Health Care Centers, such as the University Hospital Center, Hôtel-Dieu de France (HDF), or the Medical Genetics Unit (UGM), as well as any of the units under USJ's governance. Therefore, appropriate security measures are applied to staff and students involved with children in the context of their work or studies. Moreover, Child Abuse Identification and Reporting Procedures have been in place at HDF since 2009, managed by the Pediatrics Department, in collaboration with child protection services in Lebanon. Other procedures have also been developed to ensure unrestricted reporting of worrisome situations on campus.

## Policy Objective

This Policy confirms USJ's stance on child protection in carrying out its mission. It aims to inform and raise awareness among members of the USJ Community of the principles and guidelines they must adhere to when engaging with children. Members shall be aware of their obligations to identify and respond to child protection and welfare issues in accordance to the procedures that will be put in place.

The framework of this Policy is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (<https://www.humanium.org/en/convention/text/>), the Lebanese Law No. 422/2002 on the Protection of Children in Violation of the Law or Exposed to Danger, the WHO INSPIRE Strategies, the UN Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children (<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/inspire-seven-strategies-for-ending-violence-against-children>) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Indicators related to children (<https://data.unicef.org/children-sustainable-development-goals/>).

The Policy shall be disseminated to the entire USJ community by means of the communication tools and media it uses. It is available in French and Arabic and is publicly available on the University's website ([www.usj.edu.lb](http://www.usj.edu.lb)). Posters shall also be displayed in visited areas.

The Policy shall be reviewed annually and on an *ad hoc* basis by the OEIL Steering Committee.

## Concerned Individuals

This Policy applies to the entire USJ community and its partners.

The USJ community includes:

- Staff, students, full-time and part-time professors
- Volunteers and interns

Partners include:

- Entrepreneurs providing services within the University
- Consultants
- Field internship supervisors
- Guests and visitors

## Responsibility and Scope

The Rector is legally responsible before the Government for the implementation of the Child Protection Policy at the University. He shall be assisted by the First Vice-Rector, the Child Protection Committee and the University Board which oversees the implementation of the present Policy and the enforcement of the procedures stemming therefrom. The Rector shall be informed, by means of an annual report, of all matters arising from the implementation of the Policy.

It is the duty of all University members to abide with the Child Protection Policy. Deans, directors, heads of departments and administrators shall assume primary responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the Policy within their respective schools, campuses, departments, laboratories, daycare, hospital or health care centers.

## Child Protection Committee

The role of the Child Protection Committee is to develop the University's Child Protection Strategy, to validate all necessary procedures for the implementation of this Policy and to follow-up on it. The members of the Child Protection Committee have been appointed by the Rector and are as follows:

- Pr. Salim Daccache s.j., Rector: [recteur@usj.edu.lb](mailto:recteur@usj.edu.lb)
- Pr. Salah Abou Jaoude s.j., Vice-Rector, Dean of the Faculty of Religious Studies: [salah.aboujaoude@usj.edu.lb](mailto:salah.aboujaoude@usj.edu.lb)
- Pr. Michel Scheuer s.j., President of the USJ-HDF Ethics Board: [michel.scheuer@usj.edu.lb](mailto:michel.scheuer@usj.edu.lb)
- Myrna Gannage, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities: [myrna.gannage@usj.edu.lb](mailto:myrna.gannage@usj.edu.lb)
- Lena Gannage, Dean of the Faculty of Law and Political Science: [lena.gannage@usj.edu.lb](mailto:lena.gannage@usj.edu.lb)
- Michèle Kosremelli Asmar, Director of the Higher Institute of Public Health – Faculty of Medicine and Director of the Observatory for Children and Youth: [michele.asmar@usj.edu.lb](mailto:michele.asmar@usj.edu.lb)
- Rima Moawad, Director of the Lebanese School of Social Work: [rima.moawad@usj.edu.lb](mailto:rima.moawad@usj.edu.lb)
- Bernard Gerbaka, Ex-President of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN), Head of the Pediatrics Department at the Faculty of Medicine and Head of the Child Protection Unit at HDF: [pediatre@usj.edu.lb](mailto:pediatre@usj.edu.lb) & [child@usj.edu.lb](mailto:child@usj.edu.lb)
- Sarah Zahreddine, Child Protection Delegate, Administrative Coordinator in charge of staff records at the Department of Human Resources

## Child Protection Delegate

A Child Protection Delegate (CPD) shall be nominated by the University, and their duties shall include:

- Acting as a primary contact for internal and/or external child protection issues, concerns and referrals
- Developing, promoting and overseeing the Child Protection Policy and procedures
- Ensuring that staff, upon recruitment, have read the Child Protection Policy and have signed the Policy Acceptance and Compliance Form
- Coordinating child protection training and regular staff training
- Coordinating child protection self-audits
- Coordinating Policy enforcement audits (at least once every three years)
- Developing triennial child protection action plans
- Supporting the operational management in terms of child protection counseling

## Principles and Guidelines

- 1 The University adopts a zero-tolerance policy towards child abuse and maltreatment.
- 2 All children have the right to be protected from all forms of maltreatment and risk.
- 3 All individuals hired by USJ have a responsibility to support the protection of children.
- 4 The University owes a duty of care and good treatment to children with whom it works directly, with whom it is in contact or who are affected by its activities.
- 5 All child protection measures are taken in the best interest of the child.
- 6 The University shall not hire an individual who may pose a risk to children.
- 7 The University shall not support any academic activity that does not comply with this Policy.
- 8 Courses offered at the University must include information about child protection.
- 9 When research is conducted involving young people under the age of 18, specific ethical considerations shall be added to the standard ethical approval process for research projects.
- 10 When information and visual images (photos or videos) are used, the University shall ensure that respect and dignity are preserved in the portrayal of children, families and communities.
- 11 The University's partners and collaborators must be committed to child protection.
- 12 Businesses operating on the University's premises, using its facilities or receiving its support, are required to comply with this Policy.
- 13 The University shall organize regular training sessions on child protection for members of the USJ community and inform them of any updates to this Policy and its procedures.
- 14 The University is committed to raising the awareness of all those who collaborate with the University on child protection matters.
- 15 Members of the USJ community shall behave with the utmost respect towards children and ensure their safety in accordance with this Policy.
- 16 All members of the USJ Community shall sign the Policy Acceptance and Compliance Form and are required to abide by it.
- 17 The University shall be responsible for helping partners respond to the minimal protection requirements.
- 18 All contracts and Memoranda of Understanding must be in line with Université Saint Joseph de Beyrouth Child Protection Policy.

## Prevention

All USJ programs and activities shall be subjected to a maltreatment risk assessment. Appropriate measures shall be adopted and incorporated into all stages of these programs in order to minimize risks to children and promote their well-being.

USJ shall ensure the highest standards in its recruitment and auditing policies. Recommendation letters from the previous employer and a reference person, as well as a criminal record are all required to ensure the proper conduct of the candidate in relation to protection. A self-declaration letter shall be signed by the candidate attesting that they have never been convicted of any form of crime and child maltreatment. The Human Resources Department shall carry out the necessary checks and authentication of these documents.

All individuals shall sign the Child Protection Code of Conduct (Annex A).

USJ shall mention in its conventions with partners the following two clauses:

- 1- USJ has pledged to preserve and protect children's safety at all times in carrying out its missions. Therefore, USJ students/interns and professionals are committed to deploy all their efforts to prevent maltreatment and all different forms of abuse in their host organization. They are required to:
  - Respect the Child Protection Code of Conduct of the host organization if applicable, and that of the University, if need be;
  - Identify risk situations that endanger children, identified in the framework of activities held at the host organization;
  - Know and respect the identification, referral and reporting procedures established by the (host organization) and by the University if need be;

In case the event of abuse or maltreatment of a child by a USJ student/intern or professional, the host organization shall send a written notification to inform the internship supervisor appointed by USJ.

- 2- Agreements signed by USJ with partners shall include a declaration whereby partners who do not have a child protection policy shall abide by USJ's Policy or develop their own policy as a partnership condition.

## Raising University Community Awareness

Members of the USJ Community shall receive training on child protection to uphold the need to protect children and safeguard their rights. This training will hold them accountable for reporting any risk or danger of maltreatment in accordance with the University's procedures (Annex B).

Those involved in direct activities with children will receive in-depth training within 6 months of their recruitment. Partners shall be informed of their responsibilities under the Policy at the time of agreement with the University. The University shall sign with partners, and within the framework of the conventions, a Statement of Commitment to Child Protection.

Children and families shall be informed of the University's commitment to child protection, the person to contact and the procedure to follow, should they have any concerns about a child.

The University is committed to assess on an annual basis the training needs in child protection for all individuals working with children in various USJ bodies and to facilitate their access to training on this topic: CPD, staff, teachers and students working with children within the University.

All efforts shall be deployed to identify available resources to meet the needs.

With the support of the Child Protection Committee, the CPD is encouraged to actively seek trainers and/or training programs available at local, national or international level, that would be adapted to the Lebanese context and that of the University.

## Grievance Follow-Up

The University adopts the appropriate procedure to follow up on any allegation reported by an individual. This procedure consists of the following steps: collecting observed facts, informing the Dean/Director of the school or department concerned, convening the Expert Committee<sup>3</sup>, assessing the situation and taking the appropriate measures (Annex B).

USJ will take all declarations seriously and is committed to protecting, at all times, the confidentiality of information in the best interest of the child and their family. USJ will handle complaints in a manner that does not re-traumatize the child.

Should the complaint come directly from the child, the contact person is expected to accept what the child says, without insisting on obtaining additional information, and without investigating, questioning or confronting the alleged aggressor. The child shall be informed of the procedure to be followed. All reported facts shall be recorded in a report form.

The necessary allegation follow-up tools shall be annexed to this Policy.

## Control and Assessment

Child protection shall be integrated within the University's risk management process. The University Board shall ensure, through follow-up on reports prepared by the OEIL Steering Committee, that child protection measures are well implemented and effective.

This Policy shall be reviewed annually and on an *ad hoc* basis in order to identify and address other issues.

The present Policy has been approved by the University Board as of October 21, 2020.

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<sup>3</sup>- The Expert Committee is appointed by the Rector. It shall include a psychologist, a social assistant, a doctor, the CPD and the Head of the school or department concerned by the grievance.



## Annex A: Code of Conduct

Name: .....

Status: .....

<input type="checkbox"/> Administrative staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Part-time teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Full-time teacher
<input type="checkbox"/> Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Intern	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer
<input type="checkbox"/> Parents/guardian	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: specify	

I, the undersigned, acknowledge that I have read and understood USJ's Child Protection Policy, and commit, within the framework of my activities, to:

- 1- Adhere to USJ's Child Protection Policy and Procedure.
- 2- Behave in accordance with the rules dictated by my function.
- 3- Maintain a safe and secure environment for children.
- 4- Apply all necessary measures to protect children against maltreatment.
- 5- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with special needs.
- 6- Treat children with respect regardless of their race, sex, nationality, language and religion, and value their ideas and opinions.
- 7- Do not use language or behavior that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, humiliating or culturally inappropriate towards children.
- 8- Do not use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline a child.
- 9- Avoid any behavior that may cause emotional or psychological harm to a child.
- 10- Do not engage children under the age of 18 in any form of sexual intercourse or activities, including payment for sexual services or acts.
- 11- Do not hire children for work that is inappropriate for their age or stage of development, or that may expose them to a significant risk of injury.
- 12- Immediately report concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse or violations of the Policy in accordance with USJ's procedures.
- 13- Protect information about children who have been subjected to maltreatment, as this may put them or their families at risk of harm.
- 14- Use computers, cell phones, video cameras, cameras and social media networks appropriately, and never exploit or harass children or access child exploitation material by any means.
- 15- Obtain the informed consent of the child and their parent or legal guardian before photographing or filming a child and explain how the photograph or film will be used.
- 16- Make sure that photographs and films present the child in a dignified and respectful manner.
- 17- All photographs and films uploaded to social media networks must not include any information that could help identify the child.

I understand that it is my duty, as a person associated with USJ, to demonstrate common sense and to avoid actions or behavior that could be construed as child exploitation and maltreatment.

Name and Signature: .....

## Annex B: Abuse Declaration Procedure

### Child Abuse Referral Procedure

