

# **Child Protection Policy**

**February 2025**

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## **Definitions**

**Child:** anyone under 18.

**Adolescent:** a child aged 14 to 18.

**Wellbeing:** a balance of physical, mental, emotional, and social health, accompanied by a sense of security.

**University community:** includes all individuals formally affiliated with the university, such as faculty, staff, students, researchers, visiting scholars, and external collaborators involved in university activities, whether on-campus, off-campus, or online.

**Consent:** a clear, affirmative action that demonstrates a freely given, specific, informed, and unambiguous agreement to the collection, use, or processing of a child's personal data or participation in activities affecting their well-being.

**Informed Consent:** the principle requiring that a parent, guardian, or an age-appropriate child receives comprehensive, understandable information before agreeing to the child's participation in research, services, or interventions, as recognized in the Declaration of Helsinki.

**Personal data:** any information identifying a person, as per GDPR regulations.

**Discrimination:** exclusion or unequal treatment based on personal characteristics like gender, race, or health status.

**Legal guardian:** a person appointed by a will or by order of a Court of competent jurisdiction to be guardian of a child according to the Child Act (sections 352).

**Incidental findings:** unintended results during research, such as health or personal information;

**Research Coordinator:** the person responsible for the research.

**Violations:** harmful behaviors, intentional or unintentional, affecting a child's health or dignity.

## **1. Scope and Basic Principles**

The Child Protection Policy (hereinafter, the '**Policy**') applies to all members of the University community, including staff, students, researchers, and collaborators. It governs conduct within all university settings, including academic, research, administrative, and digital environments.

The Cyprus University of Technology (referred to as the "University") acknowledges its duty to protect and promote the well-being of children involved in its scientific research. To uphold this, the University commits to maintaining the highest ethical, legal, and moral standards. Additionally, it recognizes the need to integrate child well-being into its teaching and outreach activities.

## **2. Recognition of Childhood**

A child is defined as any person under 18, in line with international standards. The University upholds children's rights as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the European Convention on Human Rights. It prioritizes children's best interests, non-discrimination, and their right to be heard, ensuring compliance with ethical codes and relevant research regulations.

This policy establishes clear standards for safeguarding children involved in research and other university activities. It promotes ethical and responsible conduct across academic, research, administrative, and digital settings while raising awareness of child protection principles within the University community.

## **3. Scope of child care and protection**

According to this policy, the care and protection of children includes a wide range of considerations:

- Preventing children from any violations of their human rights.
- Responding effectively to complaints from children regarding rights violations in their interactions with the University.
- Addressing and effectively responding to any complaints from children regarding violations of their rights when in contact with the University.
- Establish a proactive approach to safeguarding, ensuring that all University activities consider the safety and rights of children.
- Ensuring that staff, students, and affiliates receive appropriate training on child protection.
- Promoting collaboration with relevant authorities and organizations to enhance child protection efforts.

#### **4. Risk Areas**

The University carries out, undertakes or facilitates a range of activities that bring children into contact with it. Key risk areas include, but are not limited to:

- Children attending University premises for events, athletic, recreational or social purposes.
- Children are the subject of study and/or research.
- Children enrolled as students at the University.

#### **5. Implementation and Supervision**

The University promotes disseminating this policy and offers training to the community as needed. In addition, the University invest in training and awareness programs for its faculty and its staff to ensure that they are well versed in data protection principles and understand their personal data protection responsibilities. The ultimate goal of these data protection practices is to safeguard people's privacy and integrity, thereby creating an environment of security and trust.

#### **6. Ethical Standards and Protection of Personal Data**

The University ensures children's personal data is processed in accordance with GDPR and relevant data protection regulations. The University strictly complies with all applicable data protection laws, directives and regulations. This includes compliance with national legislation and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which sets the benchmark for data protection and privacy in Europe.

The University implements appropriate data protection measures designed to protect personal data from unauthorized access, disclosure, destruction and alteration. Research involving children requires explicit, informed consent from their parents and/or legal guardians. Adolescents must also give consent, which takes precedence in case of conflict with their guardians.

Clear, accurate communication with children and parents/ guardians is prioritized, and research results must be published without directly or indirectly identifying children unless justified by scientific reasons and permitted by law.

Using children's images in research requires consent from the child parents and/or legal guardians. The consent form will be given to parents and/or guardians prior to the child's participation in the

study. The consent form must be signed by parents and/or guardians and returned to Research Coordinator.

The University upholds ethical standards in research, ensuring children's rights, interests, and well-being are considered at all stages. Data collection is minimized, and research involving children undergoes review by the Cyprus National Bioethics Committee. The policy further establishes safeguards to prevent discrimination and exploitation, protecting children's dignity and privacy.

If incidental findings arise during research—such as personal, health, or developmental concerns- the University follows a structured protocol to assess, report, and address them ethically and legally. Any findings relevant to a child's well-being are communicated to the appropriate authorities or parents or guardians, ensuring that necessary support or interventions are provided while maintaining confidentiality and the child's best interests.

## **7. Protection against Abuse**

This policy establishes clear and strong protections against various forms of abuse and exploitation to ensure the well-being of children engaged in any capacity with the Cyprus University of Technology.

The Cyprus University of Technology has drafted an Employment Policy against Modern Slavery, which outlines the University's commitment to operating as an ethically and socially responsible organization.

Modern slavery is a crime and a violation of fundamental human rights. It takes various forms, such as slavery, coercion, forced and compulsory labour, human trafficking and child labour, which have as a common characteristic the deprivation of the liberty of one person by another, with the aim of exploiting them for personal or commercial gain.

The Cyprus University of Technology adopts a zero-tolerance approach to practices of modern slavery, human trafficking or child labor and is committed to acting ethically and with integrity in all its activities, transactions and relationships.

The University expects the same high standards from all of our associates, contractors, suppliers and other partners with whom it collaborates. They must respect and treat University employees in an

ethically and morally appropriate manner, while ensuring that their own work and activities are free from any form of modern slavery or human trafficking.

The prevention, detection and reporting of modern slavery in any department or part of the University's activities or its partners. Every employee is obliged to avoid any activity that could lead to a violation of this Policy.

All employees must immediately report suspected, actual incidents or attempts of all forms of modern slavery to their immediate supervisor or to the Head of Human Resources or to the Director of Finance or to the Rector (depending on the person(s) involved in the incident).

The University encourages employees to raise their concerns regarding any issue or suspicion of modern slavery that has occurred or may occur in the near future, to any department of the University or its partners, as soon as possible.

## **10. Conclusion**

Through the position of this Child Protection Policy, the Cyprus University of Technology reaffirms its commitment to protecting the rights and well-being of children. The University maintains clear policies and procedures that help prevent human exploitation and trafficking, both within the organization and among our colleagues, and which protect our workforce and reputation.

This commitment is deeply embedded in the university's mission and values. By implementing this policy, the university not only adheres to international and local legal standards, but also demonstrates how important the safety and protection of children within the academic community is. This policy serves as a foundation for creating a safe environment that fosters the healthy development of all children who interact with the university's diverse programs and activities.

Whether children participate in research programs and/or university activities, this policy ensures that their rights are consistently supported and vigorously promoted.

## **11. Changes in the Child Protection Policy**

The Cyprus University of Technology reserves the right to review the present Child Protection Policy as it deems necessary.

***This Policy was approved at the 250<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Senate, dated 04/03/2025.***