IAAC Child Protection Policy

Title I – Introduction and Guiding Principles

The **Institute for Advanced Architecture of Catalonia (IAAC)** acknowledges its institutional responsibility to protect, assure, and promote the well-being of all children and young people involved in its scientific research, educational programs, and cultural outreach activities.

IAAC is committed to maintaining the highest legal, ethical, and moral standards to ensure a safe environment for those under the age of 18.

The Institute for Advanced Architecture of Catalonia (IAAC) is committed to creating a safe and protective environment for all children and young people (persons under 18 years of age) entrusted to our care. Their well-being is top priority in all our activities.

IAAC ensures the respect of children's rights as established in the following international and regional legal frameworks:

- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)**
- **European Convention on Human Rights (1950)** and the related case law of the European Court of Human Rights
- **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000)**

- **Organic Law 1/1996, of January 15, on the Legal Protection of Minors.**
- **Organic Law 8/2021, of June 4, on the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents against Violence.**

IAAC bases all its safeguarding actions on the fundamental guiding principles of:

- **Best Interests of the Child:** All decisions and actions concerning children, whether direct or indirect, prioritize their safety and welfare above all other institutional objectives.
- **Zero Tolerance:** IAAC maintains a zero-tolerance policy regarding child abuse, exploitation, negligence, or harassment in any form.
- **Non-Discrimination:** All children are treated with equal dignity regardless of gender, ethnic origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or any other status.
- **Participation and the Right to be Heard:** Children capable of discernment are encouraged to freely express their opinions, which must be taken into due consideration according to their maturity.
- **Promotion of Good Treatment:** IAAC promotes a culture of respectful, safe, and empowering relationships, fostering positive environments.

This policy aligns with the Institute's ethical standards and international regulations referring to the ethical aspects of research and education.

Title II – Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- **Child:** Every human being under the age of 18.
- **Adolescent:** A child between the ages of 14 and 18.
- **Wellbeing:** A condition of physical, mental, psychological, emotional, and social balance and fulfillment, accompanied by the child's perception of security.
- **Institute Community:** The collective recipients of this policy, as identified in Title III.
- **Consent:** A manifestation of free, specific, informed, and unequivocal will.
- **Informed Consent:** The principle that legitimizes the involvement of children in scientific research and activities, explicitly recognized in the **Declaration of Helsinki (1964)** and its subsequent amendments.
- **Personal Data:** Any information concerning an identified or identifiable natural person (as defined in GDPR Article 4), including identifiers such as names, ID numbers, location data, or factors specific to physical, genetic, mental, or social identity.
- **Discrimination:** Any treatment aimed at excluding or distinguishing children based on gender, ethnicity, national or social origin, language, religion, sexual orientation, health status, or any other characteristic of the child or their legal guardian.
- **Legal Guardian:** The person or persons representing the child in civil acts according to applicable legal codes.
- **Incidental Findings:** Results involving children not attributable to the primary or secondary objectives of a project (e.g., discoveries regarding health status, evidence of crimes, or family habits affecting development).
- **Principal Investigator:** The person responsible for the research activity or project.
- **Violence:** Any intentional or unintentional behavior by adults or children resulting in potential or actual harm to a child's health, development, or dignity, including physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, as well as neglect.

Title III – Scope of Application

This policy is binding for the **entire IAAC Community**. Child safeguarding is a shared responsibility among all members of the IAAC community, including staff, collaborators, and partners. All individuals identified below must comply with these provisions:

- Permanent and fixed-term teaching and research staff.
- Permanent and fixed-term management and technical-administrative staff.
- PhD students and researchers, including holders of research fellowships or scholarships.
- Students involved in research or educational activities as part of their study program.
- Collaborators, consultants, and volunteers with any type of assignment (including pro bono).
- Personnel from other public and private entities carrying out activities at IAAC.
- Members of IAAC Academic Bodies and collegial Bodies.
- All third parties must formally acknowledge and comply with this policy through contractual clauses or written agreement prior to engaging in activities involving minors.

IAAC ensures accountability through a clear reporting and governance structure:

- **Chief Executive Officer (CEO**): Holds ultimate accountability for the approval, periodic review, and organization-wide implementation of this policy.
- **Safeguarding Officer**: Serves as the primary Designated Focal Person. This role monitors safeguarding aspects, advises colleagues, and coordinates risk assessments and incident reports. The Safeguarding Officer maintains a direct reporting line to the Project Manager and the CEO.
- **Project Manager**: Responsible for ensuring this policy is systematically applied across the specific architecture program, research labs, and events.
- **Staff and Volunteers**: Obligated to maintain compliance, remain alert to child protection indicators, and execute immediate reporting of concerns to the Safeguarding Officer.

Title IV – General Provisions for Participation and Consent

Right to Be Heard

IAAC ensures that children capable of discernment have the right to freely express their opinions regarding their participation. These opinions must be taken into consideration in light of the child's age and maturity. In accordance with the highest ethical standards, the manifestly contrary will of the child (refusal to participate) shall prevail over the positive will of the child's **parents or legal guardian(s).**

Informed Consent

The explicit, free, and informed consent of the legal guardian(s) must be obtained for any child to participate in IAAC activities.

- **Adolescents (14-18):** If the child is 14 years or older, their own explicit informed consent must be obtained **in addition** to that of their legal guardian.
- **Revocation:** Children and guardians retain the right to freely revoke consent at any time
- **Conflict of Will:** In cases of conflict regarding participation, the adolescent's will shall prevail. Crucially, the **manifestly contrary will of the child** (negative consent) overrides the positive will of the parent or legal guardian.
- **Participation:** Children shall be given the opportunity to be heard in any process concerning them, with their opinions weighted according to their age and maturity.

Informed Consent - Specific Dissemination Requirements

Participation in IAAC activities requires prior written consent from legal representatives. This consent must explicitly authorize:

1. Participation in the specific project or activity.
2. The use of images, recordings, or related materials for communication and dissemination.

3. Acknowledgment of applicable insurance coverage and assumption of legal responsibility associated with the minor's participation.

Title V – Risk Identification and Incidental Findings

Risk Assessment and Minimization

Prior to the commencement of any activity involving children, a **preliminary assessment** of potential risks to their well-being must be conducted. **Activities must be monitored constantly.**
If required by the complexity of the project, the Principal Investigator should seek the advice of a child psychologist to ensure protection against exposure to harmful situations.

Strategy for Incidental Findings

The management of incidental findings is a mandatory component of the informed consent process. Researchers must follow this multi-step strategy:

1. **Advance Planning:** Establish a formal strategy for managing incidental findings before research begins.
2. **Designated Management:** Identify the Principal Investigator or a specific contact person within the research group responsible for managing findings.
3. **Mandatory Disclosure:** Inform guardians and children during the consent phase about the possibility of incidental findings, their nature, and the legal limits of confidentiality.
4. **Legal Compliance:** Ensure the strategy aligns with the legal requirements and reporting duties of the jurisdiction where the activity takes place.
5. **Coordination with Third Parties:** If activities occur at external sites (e.g., schools), the strategy must be agreed upon with the third party's legal and administrative heads.

Title VI – Protection of Personal Data and Images

Privacy Notice

IAAC processes all child-related data in strict accordance with GDPR Article 5 (minimization)and applicable national legislation (such as **Organic Law 3/2018, of December 5, on the Protection of Personal Data and Guarantee of Digital Rights (LOPDGDD)** context).

Data collection is limited to what is strictly necessary for the activity.

- **Legal Basis:** Consent of the legal guardian is the primary legal basis for processing, which must be preceded by a clear transparency policy.
- **Special Categories of Data:** Processing data revealing health, ethnicity, or other sensitive traits requires heightened security measures and a specific ethical justification.

Image Rights

The use and publication of a child's image must comply with the *Organic Law 3/2018 (LOPDGDD)* for data protection and *Organic Law 1/1982* for the right to one's own image, ensuring full compliance while maintaining the highest safeguarding standards for minors.

- Explicit guardian consent is required for any form of publication.
- For adolescents (14+), their own consent is mandatory in addition to the guardian's.
- Data and images must be stored in pseudonymized form and anonymized as soon as the scientific or educational purpose allows.

Title VII – Mandatory Code of Conduct

All individuals working directly with children at IAAC must sign and adhere to the following **Code of Conduct**.

- **Responsibility and Protection:** I take responsibility for the well-being of children and protect them from neglect, abuse, and any form of violence.
- **Respect for Rights and Boundaries:** I respect each child's physical integrity, personal boundaries, and their right to refuse participation.
- **Professional Distance:** I maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid inappropriate contact or communication.
  Direct communication with minors through personal digital channels (e.g., social media or messaging applications) is strictly prohibited. Only official institutional channels may be used.
- **The 'Two-Person Rule':** I avoid being alone with a child to ensure a transparent, safe environment.
- **Active Intervention:** I remain vigilant and report concerns, suspicions, or policy breaches immediately to the IAAC Safeguarding Officer.ç
- **Self-Declaration:** I confirm I have no relevant criminal convictions and will inform IAAC immediately if my status changes.

Name: _____
Place/Date: _____
Signature: _____

Title VIII – Verification of Suitability (Criminal Records)

IAAC maintains a rigorous vetting process for **all staff and collaborators in direct contact with minors** to ensure institutional suitability.

Procedure:

- **Request:** IAAC (HR) issues a formal request for a criminal record certificate prior to commencement of activities.
- **Provision:** Individual provides a valid, original criminal record certificate at commencement (the certificate will be considered valid for 24 months from the issue date)
- **Recording:** Verification is recorded in a secure log by HR and is available for consultation by the Safeguarding Officer.

Title IX – Good Practices and Research Ethics

Conduct of Research

- **Do:** Establish an environment of trust and respect the child's different adaptation times and emotional needs.
- **Do:** Disclose all funding sources, potential conflicts of interest, and whether the project has direct commercial purposes.
- **Don't:** Exercise power, psychological pressure, or significant conditioning that may cause emotional discomfort.
- **Don't:** Use manipulation or undue incentives (corruptive logics) to encourage participation.
- **Don't:** Continue activities if prejudice or discrimination is discovered; suspend and revise methodology immediately.

Research involving children must be designed to minimize risk and protect the dignity of participants:

1. **Transparency and Information:** Researchers must explain to children and guardians the funding sources, potential conflicts of interest, expected benefits for knowledge progress, and whether any direct commercial purposes exist.
2. **Conduct of Research:** Researchers must respect children's varying adaptation times and establish a trusting environment. Psychological tests, interviews, or games must not make children feel inadequate or uncomfortable.
3. **Anonymization of Data:** Personal data must be stored in pseudonymized form and, as soon as possible, proceed with full anonymization, unless scientifically motivated otherwise.
4. **Management of Incidental Findings:** The Principal Investigator must have a pre-defined strategy for results unrelated to the primary research (e.g., health status or evidence of crimes). These must be managed in accordance with the legal context and discussed with the research group contact person/IAAC Safeguarding Officer.

Publication of Results

- **Do:** Ensure results are pseudonymized (GDPR Art. 4(5)) and eventually anonymized to prevent direct or indirect identification.
- **Do:** Explicitly explain the strategy for incidental findings to all participants.
- **Don't:** Include details of family members or proximity identifiers that might reveal the child's identity.
- **Don't:** Allow identifiability unless there is a strictly scientifically motivated case that complies with the law and specific informed consent.

Title X – Intervention: Reporting and Procedures

The **IAAC Safeguarding Officer** is the primary institutional authority for child protection.
In the event of a suspected risk, disclosure, or incident, staff must execute the following 6-step chain:

1. **Ensure safety:** Immediately remove the child from any immediate danger.
2. **Report immediately:** Notify the IAAC Safeguarding Officer without delay.
3. **No independent investigation:** Do not attempt to investigate the matter privately; this is to protect the integrity of official procedures.
4. **Document facts:** Record observations, statements, and facts accurately, objectively, and immediately.
5. **Assess risk with experts:** The Safeguarding Officer will consult with child protection experts to determine the appropriate course of action.
6. **Report to authorities:** If a crime is suspected or a child is at risk, the Safeguarding Officer will report it to the police or the relevant child protection authorities.

Title XI – Key Emergency Contacts

IAAC Safeguarding Officer: **Areti Markopoulou - academic.secretary@iaac.net**
Police (Emergency): 112
Child Helpline (EU): 116 111

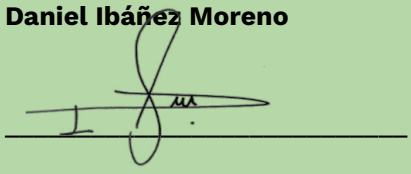
Local Child Protection Authority: DGAIA (Direcció General d'Atenció a la Infància i l'Adolescència), Catalonia +34 934 83 10 00

Title XII – Review and Training

- **Annual Review:** This policy is subject to a mandatory annual review by the CEO to ensure it remains current with evolving Spanish and EU legal requirements.

Last updated: Barcelona 1/10/2026

CEO
Daniel Ibáñez Moreno



IAAC Safeguarding Officer/Academic Director
Areti Markopoulou

