



## Child Protection Policy of Meyer Children's Hospital

### The purpose and scope of this policy statement

Meyer Children's Hospital is dedicated to the health and wellness of children and is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in its care. It recognizes its responsibility in promoting safe practices and protecting children from harm, abuse, and exploitation.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children and young people who receive Meyer Children's Hospital's services from harm
- to provide staff and volunteers, as well as children, young people, and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection

For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures, a child is recognized as someone under the age of 18 years.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Meyer Children's Hospital, including staff, volunteers, and students, who will work together to embrace difference and diversity, and respect and protect the rights of children and young people.

### Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up based on legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in Italy. A summary of the key legislation follows:

- Law 176 of 27 May 1991, *Convenzione dei diritti dell'infanzia*, the Italian adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- D. Lgs. 158/2012, *Disposizioni urgenti per promuovere lo sviluppo del Paese mediante un più alto livello di tutela della salute*
- D. Lgs. 208/2015, *Gestione del rischio sanitario e la sicurezza delle cure*
- D.M. 162/1997, *Recepimento delle linee guida dell'Unione europea di buona pratica clinica per la esecuzione delle sperimentazioni cliniche dei medicinali*

### Supporting procedures and documents

This policy statement should be considered alongside our organizational policies, initiatives, procedures, guidance, and other related documents, including:



### ***Employee vetting***

Each new employee of Meyer Children's Hospital is required to provide a self-declaration regarding the absence of previous or pending criminal convictions. The hospital subsequently verifies these declarations by requesting a Criminal Record Certificate.

### ***Management of Clinical Risk<sup>1</sup>***

Clinical risk management is the capacity to translate the critical issues that result from the analysis of possible adverse events into concrete actions for improvement. The prevention of clinical risk is implemented through hospital-wide, regional, and national initiatives that provide for work strategies that include the participation of all employees. Clinical risk is managed in the hospital by a team coordinated by a Clinical Risk Manager, while facilitators – employees who have received specific training – are present within each individual structure.

### ***Reporting and learning system (RLS)<sup>2</sup>***

The Reporting and Learning System (RLS) provides operational methods and tools for reporting, analyzing, and assessing risk by operators and the healthcare organization.

The RLS has the primary objective of developing a culture of safety and controlling the emergence and therefore the control of patient safety incidents through the systematic reporting, analysis and assessment of the risks present within the structure, starting from the specificities of local contexts.

### ***Sentinel Events Database<sup>3</sup>***

Meyer Children's Hospital has established procedures for the correct management of sentinel events, patient safety events that result in death, permanent harm, or severe temporary harm, in order to give adequate, unambiguous, and timely answers to patients/families (in compliance with the "Protocol for the Monitoring of Sentinel Events - March 2008" of the Italian Ministry of Health).

### ***Identification and management of actual and/or suspected child abuse and neglect<sup>4</sup>***

Meyer Children's Hospital defines procedures for managing patients who arrive at our facility with a history of suspected abuse and/or maltreatment, indicates criteria for diagnosing suspected abuse and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.meyer.it/cura-e-assistenza/attivita-sanitarie/2321-gestione-delrischio-clinico>

<sup>2</sup> Procedure AZI058 rev. 1  
DGR 267 del 16/04/2007

<sup>3</sup> Procedure AZI072 rev. 2  
DGRT 717/2016

<sup>4</sup> Procedure AZI202



maltreatment in patients, and indicates criteria and methods for the activation of the GAIA Service (see below), with the aim of improving the early detection of cases of mistreatment and abuse, standardizing procedures, and thus accelerating diagnosis and care.

### *Gaia Service<sup>5</sup>*

Gaia (Group for Child and Adolescent Abuse) is a service dedicated to the protection of children's rights through the prevention and identification of suspected cases of abuse and mistreatment.

The group is composed of a multidisciplinary team of specialists (pediatricians, psychologists, child psychiatrists, nurses, and social workers) who work to detect possible risk factors and quickly act with the goal of prevention. The specialists can also initiate, in the case of situations of abuse and maltreatment that have already taken place, the necessary assistance paths, also through interaction with the competent regional and judicial authorities.

### *Protection of Children Involved in Clinical Research<sup>6</sup>*

Meyer Children's Hospital is committed to the ethical conduct of clinical research on pediatric patients, in line with the Declaration of Helsinki, Good Clinical Practice (GCP), and all applicable national and international legislation.

The respect of these principles is guaranteed by organisms including the Pediatric Ethics Committee<sup>7</sup>, an independent body that, in compliance with the legislation in force, is responsible for the evaluation and approval of study protocols, and by research support offices such as the Office for Clinical Research and Study Design, the Clinical Trial Office<sup>8</sup>, and the Scientific Committee.

### *Privacy<sup>9</sup>*

Meyer Children's Hospital complies with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation) concerning the protection of individuals regarding the processing of personal data and the rules relating to the free circulation of personal data. The hospital has appointed a DPO (privacy.dpo@meyer.it) to protect the interested parties.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.meyer.it/cura-e-assistenza/attivita-sanitarie/590-sportello-gaia>

<sup>6</sup> Procedure AZI145

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.meyer.it/index.php/ricerca-e-innovazione/comitato-etico>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.meyer.it/index.php/ricerca-e-innovazione/clinical-trial-office>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.meyer.it/privacy>; Procedure AZI056



### *Public Relations Office<sup>10</sup>*

The Public Relations Office represents the meeting point between the hospital, patients, and families. It ensures services to provide information and guidance, as well as to promote protection and participation, in conjunction with the other administrative and health structures of the hospital and with volunteer associations, parent associations and foundations.

The Public Relations Office manages complaints, which are regularly monitored and reported to the Chief Executive Officer (monthly) and to the various hospital services and personnel involved (every three months); a final annual report is prepared each year. Complaints can be made in person, by telephone or by email and all the necessary information and procedures are detailed on the hospital website.

### *Volunteer and Parent Associations*

Meyer Children's Hospital supports the *family-centered care* approach through close collaboration with families and associations as a protective and awareness-raising factor within the childcare process. The role of associations is recognized by encouraging constant participation in formalized bodies, such as the Hospital Participation Committee. The collaborative relationship between the hospital and associations is governed by the joint signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, based on the indications contained in the national and regional legislation<sup>12</sup>.

### *Other supporting documents*

Additional documents relating to the child protection policies that constitute the principles and the foundation of every safeguarding activity at Meyer Children's Hospital include:

- *Statuto dell'Azienda Ospedaliero Universitaria Meyer* (Meyer Children's Hospital Statute)
- *Carta delle responsabilità e dei diritti* (The Charter of responsibilities and rights)
- *La Carta dei Valori degli operatori del Meyer* (The Charter of values for Meyer professionals)
- *La Carta dei diritti del bambino in ospedale* (The Charter of the Rights of the Child in Hospital)<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.meyer.it/ospedale/contatti-e-servizi/33-urp>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.meyer.it/index.php/ospedale/comitato-di-partecipazione>

<sup>12</sup> Legge regionale n.75/2017 "Disposizioni in materia di Partecipazione e di Tutela dell'utenza nell'ambito del servizio sanitario regionale. Modifiche alla Legge Regionale n.40/2005"



## **We believe that:**

- the welfare of children is our primary concern, and we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, keep them safe and practice in a way that protects them
- all children, regardless of their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse
- children have the right to express views on all matters which affect them, should they wish to do so
- child protection is everyone's responsibility, and that we must work together with children and parents/caregivers to promote the welfare, health, and development of children

## **We recognize that:**

- the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, caregivers, and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

## **We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:**

- valuing, listening to and respecting their rights, wishes and feelings
- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures, and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training, and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures, and behavior codes confidently and competently
- recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- recording, storing, and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
- sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions
- making sure that children, young people, and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern



- using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families, and caregivers appropriately
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff, and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people, and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns
- observing guidelines issued by local Child Protection Committees for the protection of children
- regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of this Policy

## Contact details

### *Public Relations Office*

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We are committed to reviewing our policy and practices annually.

This policy was last reviewed on: December 10, 2021