

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Skill Catalyst Ltd. (СКИЛ КАТАЛИСТ ООД) | EIC 207322187 | Plovdiv, Bulgaria

Website: <https://skillcatalyst.co/>

Approved by Ivan Draganov, CEO and Co-founder

Approval and effective date 12.01.2024

Safeguarding lead Ivan Draganov, CEO and Co-founder

Deputy safeguarding lead Peyo Staribratov, Co-founder

1 Purpose and scope

Skill Catalyst is committed to protecting children from harm arising through its people, activities, partners, communications and digital systems. Every child has the right to be safe, respected and heard. The best interests of the child guide our decisions.

A child is any person under 18. This policy applies to employees, founders, managers, freelance trainers, consultants, volunteers, interns, contractors and anyone acting on Skill Catalyst's behalf. It covers workshops, lectures, seminars, school visits, project activities, online contact and the use of images or information about children. It also applies to indirect impacts of our work.

Safeguarding includes preventing and responding to physical, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation, grooming, bullying, harassment, discrimination and online harm. Concerns may relate to adults, other children, an activity or circumstances outside our organisation.

2 Principles and framework

We apply this policy in accordance with applicable Bulgarian law, including the Child Protection Act, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and applicable data-protection requirements, including GDPR. It is organised around the Keeping Children Safe standards of Policy, People, Procedures and Accountability. Adoption does not constitute external certification.

Protection is equal regardless of ethnicity, Roma identity, gender, disability, religion, nationality, migration status or social circumstances. Activities must not stereotype or stigmatise children. We use accessible explanations and accommodate language, literacy and disability needs. Children may raise concerns without proof and without retaliation. Confidentiality is respected, but secrecy cannot be promised where protection or legal reporting requires information to be shared.

3 People and responsibilities

CEO and safeguarding lead Ivan Draganov approves and oversees implementation, provides resources, receives concerns, coordinates protective action and referrals, controls safeguarding records and monitors compliance.

Deputy safeguarding lead Peyo Staribratov acts when Ivan is unavailable or is the subject of a concern. Concerns about Peyo go to Ivan. Neither person manages an allegation about themselves.

Activity organisers Name a lead and school contact for each activity; confirm consent, supervision, risk controls and local reporting routes; brief the team and review concerns afterwards.

All personnel and associates Follow the conduct rules, complete required induction and training, and report concerns immediately. Internal reporting never delays statutory reporting.

School partners Provide school staff supervision and obtain applicable parental permissions. Skill Catalyst confirms these arrangements before activities and retains responsibility for its own personnel and conduct.

4 Recruitment and training

For all child-facing roles, Skill Catalyst verifies identity, interviews applicants and checks references with people who have worked with them. Interviews and references address suitability to work with children and professional boundaries. Qualifications and relevant work history are reviewed. Additional lawful vetting, including criminal-record checks where required or appropriate and legally permitted, is determined and documented according to the role and risk. Criminal-record information is handled only where a lawful basis exists.

Before child-facing duties, personnel receive safeguarding induction and sign the conduct acknowledgement. Regularly child-facing personnel receive an annual refresher; activity-specific briefings occur before significant child-facing phases. The lead and deputy receive additional training on disclosures, referrals and confidential records. Completion records are maintained. A person whose required checks or induction are incomplete must not undertake child-facing duties.

5 Code of conduct

- Treat children fairly, respectfully and with age-appropriate, non-discriminatory language. Address peer bullying or unsafe behaviour safely and report concerns.
- Keep school staff present during school activities. Do not arrange private or unsupervised one-to-one meetings. Any necessary individual support must be visible and appropriately supervised.
- Use approved organisational or school channels. Do not use personal social-media accounts or private messaging to establish personal relationships with pupils.
- Never hit, threaten, humiliate, sexually harass, exploit or groom a child. Sexual activity or sexualised communication with anyone under 18 is prohibited.
- Do not use favouritism, gifts, money or a position of trust to create dependency or obtain personal benefit. Do not request intimate or traumatic disclosures for learning activities.
- Do not photograph, record or share information without the required authorisation. Do not conceal concerns or conduct private investigations.

6 Safe activities and partnerships

Before each child-facing activity, the organiser records a proportionate risk assessment and agrees responsibilities with the school or partner. It covers supervision, participant needs, safe spaces, peer behaviour, disclosures, photographs, technology and referral routes. Controls have named owners. Risks are reviewed when circumstances change; activities are altered, postponed or stopped if safety cannot be assured.

School staff remain present during school workshops, lectures and seminars. Private unsupervised contact is not permitted. Transport, overnight stays or other arrangements beyond supervised school activities require separate assessment and approval before they are offered; this policy does not itself authorise them.

Partners and contractors receive written safeguarding expectations relevant to their work. Responsibilities are agreed before access to children. A partner's policy or school supervision does not remove Skill Catalyst's duty to report or prevent harm.

7 Participation and consent

Schools obtain required parental or legal-guardian permissions. Skill Catalyst confirms the scope of permission before participation or photography; general school permission must not be assumed to cover external publication. Children receive a clear explanation of the activity and are asked for age-appropriate agreement. They may decline optional photographs or sharing personal experiences without disadvantage.

At the start of activities, children are told whom to approach if worried. They may speak to a teacher, counsellor, Skill Catalyst safeguarding contact or an external authority. Information is explained orally in a language children understand, with appropriate assistance. The English public policy is not a substitute for accessible local-language safeguarding information.

8 Photographs and information

Skill Catalyst does not routinely retain student educational records. Authorised photographs and necessary safeguarding records are separate categories of information and are protected accordingly. Photographs are taken only where the required permission has been confirmed and the child agrees. Permission must identify the intended use, including any website or social-media publication.

Images must preserve dignity and avoid stereotypes, unnecessary identifying details or disclosure of sensitive experiences. A refusal is respected. Requests to withdraw image permission are addressed promptly, including removing material under our control where applicable and explaining any limits on recovery of copies already distributed.

Only necessary information is collected. Images and safeguarding records are stored in approved access-controlled systems, not personal devices, open shared folders or ordinary group-message chains. Safeguarding records are kept separately from routine project files. The lead documents a lawful retention and deletion schedule for each category, reviews continued need at least annually and preserves records needed for ongoing investigations or legal obligations. Disclosure is limited to a lawful, necessary purpose; safeguarding reporting is not made conditional on parental consent.

9 Digital tools

Online activities follow the same conduct and reporting rules. Before launching any child-facing AI or digital tool, Skill Catalyst completes a specific safeguarding and data-protection assessment and defines human oversight, safe content, provider data handling and reporting routes. Tools must not invite unnecessary sensitive disclosures or replace human safeguarding support. No automated decision determines a child's access to protection. Detailed controls will be set before deployment, not assumed during design.

10 Reporting and responding

Any concern, disclosure, allegation or suspected breach must be acted on immediately. Proof is not required. A child may report verbally, in writing or through a trusted adult. Anonymous concerns are considered where sufficient information permits action.

1. Protect immediate safety. In an emergency or immediate danger, call 112 and seek appropriate medical or police assistance. Do not leave a child at risk while waiting for internal approval.
2. Listen calmly and take the child seriously. Explain that information may need to be shared to keep them safe. Do not interrogate, ask leading questions, blame, promise secrecy or confront the alleged person.
3. Notify the safeguarding lead without delay, or the deputy if the lead is unavailable or implicated. If both are implicated, contact competent child-protection authorities directly. Anyone may use an external route at any time.
4. Comply with statutory reporting immediately. Under Article 7 of the Bulgarian Child Protection Act, a person who learns that a child needs protection must notify the Social Assistance Directorate, State Agency for Child Protection or Ministry of Interior. Internal reporting, school procedures, professional confidentiality or referral to a counsellor or local commission must not delay this duty.
5. Record necessary facts promptly: time, place, what was observed or said, the child's own words where relevant, immediate action and who was notified. Distinguish fact from opinion. Do not investigate or circulate records widely.
6. The lead or unimplicated deputy records protective decisions, referrals and follow-up, coordinating with competent authorities and appropriate school contacts. Inform the child of next steps accessibly. Involve parents only where safe and consistent with authority guidance; do not notify an alleged perpetrator or a person where doing so could increase risk.

11 Allegations and protection from retaliation

Allegations about staff, associates or managers are taken seriously. Protective action may include removal from child-facing duties or supervised reassignment pending assessment. Such measures do not presume guilt. Employment or contractual action follows applicable law and must not interfere with authority investigations. Internal action never replaces external reporting.

Skill Catalyst prohibits retaliation against children or anyone raising a concern in good faith. The person implicated does not control the complaint, records or response. Where both safeguarding contacts are implicated, external reporting remains available and Skill Catalyst arranges unconflicted oversight of its internal response.

12 Safeguarding contacts

Ivan Draganov CEO and safeguarding lead | Email: ivandraganovbg@gmail.com | Telephone: +359885402541

Peyo Staribratov Co-founder and deputy | Email: p.staribratov@uni-plovdiv.bg | Telephone: +359887377691

Emergency 112

National child helpline 116 111 | Free, 24 hours a day in Bulgaria | <https://www.116111.bg/>

External reporting Local Child Protection Department within the Social Assistance Directorate; State Agency for Child Protection; Ministry of Interior / police. School counsellors and local commissions support, but do not replace, these routes.

Before each activity, the organiser verifies local authority contacts and the school's designated safeguarding contact. Public and activity-specific contact information must be completed and kept current.

13 Accountability and review

The CEO monitors implementation through induction and refresher records, signed conduct acknowledgements, recruitment checks, activity risk assessments, partner arrangements and feedback from children and schools. The lead records incidents and near misses securely and assigns corrective actions with owners and deadlines. Learning is shared without identifying children or compromising confidentiality.

This policy is reviewed at least annually and after a serious incident, material weakness, significant organisational change or relevant legal change. The review checks whether children understand reporting routes and can use them, whether contacts remain current and whether supervision and data safeguards work in practice. Skill Catalyst arranges an external or independent evaluation of its safeguarding arrangements at least every three years, following the Keeping Children Safe accountability standard.

Breaches may result in further training, restrictions on child contact, contractual or disciplinary action, termination of engagement and referral to competent authorities, as appropriate and in accordance with applicable law.

14 Publication and implementation

After formal adoption, Skill Catalyst publishes the completed policy and the short help text on its website and shares them with personnel and school partners. Children receive accessible explanations before activities. Public contact details are checked regularly. The policy applies across Skill Catalyst's activities, including CHARTER4ALL, rather than only to one project.

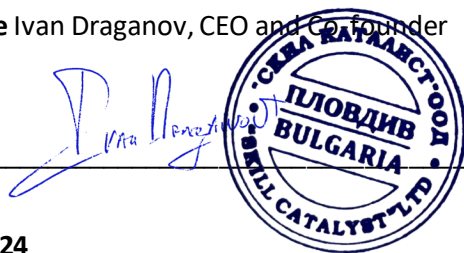
Implementation requires named reporting contacts, documented safe recruitment, signed conduct rules, induction and annual refreshers, risk assessment before activities and secure handling of necessary records. These requirements apply from the effective date. Activities must not proceed where essential safeguarding arrangements are missing.

15 Approval

Approved on behalf of Skill Catalyst Ltd. by:

Name and role Ivan Draganov, CEO and Co-founder

Signature _____



Date: 12.01.2024