

STANDARDS FOR THE PROTECTION OF MINORS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF RZESZOW

I. Legal basis

The standards for the protection of minors at the University of Rzeszow were developed on the basis of:

- 1) Act of 13 May 2016 on counteracting threats of sexual crimes and the protection of minors (Journal of Laws of 2024, item 1802, as amended).
- 2) The Act of 25 February 1964, the Family and Guardianship Code (consolidated text: Journal of Laws of 2023, item 2809, as amended).
- 3) Act of 20 July 2018 – Law on Higher Education and Science (consolidated text: Journal of Laws of 2024, item 1571, as amended).
- 4) Act of 10 May 2018 on the Protection of Personal Data (consolidated text: Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1781).
- 5) Convention on the Rights of the Child (Journal of Laws of 1991, No. 120, item 526).

II. Basic Terms and Definitions

Whenever the Standards for the Protection of Minors at the University of Rzeszow refer to:

- 1) protected activities, this shall be understood as activities related to the upbringing, education, recreation, treatment, provision of psychological counselling, spiritual development, practising sports or pursuing other interests by minors, or to caring for them, as referred to in Article 21 of the Act of 13 May 2016 on Counteracting the Threat of Sexual Crime and the Protection of Minors;
- 2) child abuse, this shall be understood as committing a prohibited act or a punishable act to the detriment of a child, or a threat to the well-being of a child, including neglect;
- 3) a minor or a child, this shall be understood as a person who is under 18 years of age and has not entered into a marriage;
- 4) a guardian of a minor, this shall be understood as a parent of a minor or other legal representative of a minor;
- 5) Rector's Representative, this shall be understood as the Rector's Representative for Minors;
- 6) staff, this shall be understood as any employee of the University of Rzeszow regardless of the form of employment, intern or volunteer, as well as a student, doctoral student or other person who, due to their function or tasks, has contact with minors;
- 7) standards, this shall be understood as the Standards for the Protection of Minors at the University of Rzeszow;
- 8) UR or the University, this shall be understood as meaning the University of Rzeszow;
- 9) unit – an organisational unit of the University of Rzeszow which, within the scope of its tasks, carries out an activity that constitutes an activity covered by protection.

III. Introduction

1. The University of Rzeszow acts for the benefit of minors and in their best interests by ensuring their safety, respect and dignity.
2. The UR, as the organiser of the activities referred to in art. 22b point 2 of the Act of 13 May 2016 on counteracting the threat of sexual crime and the protection of minors (i.e. Journal of Laws of 2024, item 1802, as amended), is obliged to protect minors against all forms of abuse, including: physical, sexual, emotional and neglect.
3. At the UR, the activities covered by protection include:
 - a) conducting teaching classes as part of first-cycle studies and uniform master's studies,
 - b) conducting further education courses, training and summer schools,
 - c) organising events of an entertainment, science dissemination, integration, recreational, sports, tourist, etc. nature (including events organised by self-governments and student and doctoral student organisations),
 - d) providing psychological support by authorised UR units,
 - e) other activities of an educational, upbringing, recreational, etc. nature – provided that minors participate in them.
4. The standards for the protection of minors at the UR constitute an element of the University's operation and are aimed at:
 - 1) ensuring the safety of minors staying on the University premises;
 - 2) identifying situations posing a risk of harm to minors;
 - 3) undertaking preventive and intervention measures.
5. In its activities for the protection of minors, the UR is guided by the following standards:

1) Standard 1 – The University of Rzeszow has developed, implemented and adopted a Policy for the protection of minors from harm

- a) The policy of protecting minors from harm applies to all staff.
- b) The Rector appoints the Representative for Minors for the term of office of the University authorities, to perform the duties specified in the standards and supervise their implementation at the UR.
- c) *The policy on the protection of minors from harm* defines:
 - principles of safe recruitment of staff,
 - how to respond to cases of suspected child abuse and the principles of maintaining a register of interventions,
 - principles of safe relationships,
 - principles of safe use of the Internet and electronic media, principles of protection of children's image and personal data.
- d) The policy for protecting minors from harm is published and promoted to all staff, guardians of minors and the children themselves.
- e) The Representative for minors appointed by the Rector of the University of Rzeszow provides minors and their parents with the standards in force at the UR, including *the Policy on the protection of minors from harm*.
- f) Sharing standards, including the *Policy for the protection of minors from harm*, is done by:
 - informing minors and their guardians, before the start of classes at the UR, about the applicable standards, with particular emphasis on the description of prohibited behaviour towards minors by staff and other children;
 - making the content of the standards available on the UR website.

- 2) **Standard 2 – The University of Rzeszow monitors, informs and engages its staff to prevent child abuse**
- a) The University obtained data on each staff member from the Sex Offender Register and information from the National Criminal Register and criminal records of third countries in the scope of specific crimes (or corresponding acts prohibited under foreign law) or, in cases specified by law, declarations of no criminal record.
 - b) Rules for safe relationships between all University staff and minors are established, indicating what behaviours are prohibited at the University and what are desirable in contact with a child.
 - c) The UR provides staff with access to basic information on protecting children from harm and helping children in dangerous situations, including:
 - recognising the symptoms of child abuse,
 - intervention procedures in the event of suspected abuse,
 - legal liability of facility employees obliged to intervene, – the “Blue Cards” procedure.
 - d) The person responsible for preparing staff to apply the standards is the Rector’s Representative for Minors.
 - e) The Rector’s Representative conducts periodic training covering in particular the following issues:
 - recognising symptoms of child abuse,
 - intervention procedures in the event of suspected abuse of minors,
 - legal liability of staff obliged to intervene in the event of suspected or confirmed abuse of minors.
 - f) The training schedule referred to in point e) is established by the Rector’s Representative.
 - g) The Rector’s Representative familiarises staff with the standards and collects a declaration of familiarisation from each staff member. A template for the declaration is attached as Appendix 1 to these standards.
- 3) **Standard 3 – The University of Rzeszow has procedures for reporting suspicions and taking interventions in situations where a child's safety is at risk.**
- a) The UR has developed procedures that specify what action should be taken in the event of a child being harmed or threatened by staff, family members, peers or strangers.
 - b) The UR has contact details of local institutions and organisations that provide intervention and assistance in situations of child abuse (police, family court, crisis intervention centre, social welfare centre, health care facilities) and provides access to them to all staff.
 - c) The UR provides prominent information for minors on how to obtain help in difficult situations, including free helpline numbers for children and adolescents.
- 4) **Standard 4 – The University of Rzeszow monitors and periodically verifies the compliance of its activities with the adopted standards.**
- a) *The Policy for the protection of minors from harm* adopted by the UR is reviewed at least once a year, with particular emphasis on the analysis of situations involving the occurrence of a threat to minors, and the conclusions of the assessment are documented.

IV. Policy for the protection of minors from harm

Introduction

The Policy for the protection of minors from harm is a document prepared to ensure that minors staying at the UR during various activities or in contact with the UR staff develop harmoniously in an atmosphere of safety, acceptance, and respect. The guiding principle of all actions undertaken by the UR staff is to act for the well-being of minors and in their best interests. Guided by the well-being of minors, the UR staff strives for their comprehensive development while respecting their rights. Staff treat minors with respect and consider their needs. Any form of violence against minors by guardians or University staff is unacceptable. Staff are obligated to implement these standards in accordance with their competencies, applicable law, and the UR internal regulations.

Chapter 1. Recognising and responding to risk factors for child abuse

1. Staff are knowledgeable about the risk factors and symptoms of child abuse and are mindful of them as part of their duties. If risk factors are identified, staff engage in conversations with the minor's guardians, providing information about available support options and encouraging them to seek help.
2. Staff monitor the child's situation and well-being.
3. Staff know and apply the principles of safe relationships established at the University, which constitute Appendix 2 to these standards.
4. Staff recruitment is carried out in accordance with the principles of safe staff recruitment, which constitute Appendix 3 to these standards.

Chapter 2. Intervention procedures in the event of a threat to the safety of a minor

1. Threats to children's safety can take many forms, using different methods of contact and communication.
2. The World Health Organisation defines child abuse as *any intentional or unintentional act or omission by an individual, institution, or society as a whole, as well as any result of such act or inaction, that violates the equal rights and freedoms of children and/or interferes with their optimal development*. There are four forms of child abuse:
 - 1) psychological violence,
 - 2) physical violence,
 - 3) neglect,
 - 4) sexual abuse.
3. The UR has contact details of local institutions and organisations that provide intervention and assistance in situations of child abuse (police, family court, crisis intervention centre, social welfare centre, health care facilities) and provides its staff with access to them.
4. The UR provides prominent information for minors on how to obtain help in difficult situations, including free helpline numbers for children and young people.
5. Staff pay particular attention to any signs of abuse in a minor's behaviour. The following behaviours should in particular draw the staff member's attention:
 - a) the minor has visible bodily injuries (bruises, burns, bites, broken bones, etc.) whose origin is difficult to explain,
 - b) the minor's explanations for the injuries seem implausible, impossible, inconsistent, etc.; the minor frequently changes them.
 - c) there is a reluctance to participate in tasks that involve physical activity,

- d) the minor covers the body excessively, inappropriately to the situation and weather,
 - e) a minor flinches when an adult approaches him/her,
 - f) the minor is afraid of a parent or guardian,
 - g) the minor is afraid of returning home,
 - h) the minor is passive, withdrawn, submissive, scared,
 - i) there was a sudden and noticeable change in the minor's behaviour.
6. The fact of disclosing a form of abuse of a minor is not subject to a credible assessment by a staff member and requires an immediate response.
 7. If a staff member suspects that a minor is being harmed, or if such a circumstance is reported by the minor or their guardian, the staff member is required to prepare a memorandum and forward the information to the Rector's Representative. The memorandum must be in writing, although it may be sent by email.
 8. If you suspect that a minor's life is in danger or that he or she is at risk of serious injury, you should immediately inform the appropriate authorities (police, Emergency Medical Services) by calling 112 or 999 (Emergency Medical Services). The first staff member to become aware of the threat will inform the authorities and prepare a memorandum.
 9. The memorandum referred to in points 7 and 8 contains a description of the forms and circumstances of abuse observed and suspected by the staff member, as well as information on the minor's behaviour and statements indicating that he or she has experienced abuse.
 10. After the abuse is disclosed, the minor is included in a support plan by the UR, the main aim of which is to:
 - 1) initiate intervention measures, if necessary;
 - 2) if possible – cooperate with guardians to stop the abuse of the minor and provide him/her with assistance;
 - 3) diagnose whether legal action is necessary;
 - 4) to provide the minor with assistance.
 11. The minor, his/her guardians and a representative of the UR unit should participate in establishing the support plan.
 12. The minor and his/her guardians receive oral information about the intervention procedure in force at the UR and implemented in an individual case.
 13. The intervention procedure is conducted by the Rector's Representative, and when an act of abuse committed by the Rector's Representative is reported, the intervention is conducted by the Rector.
 14. The intervention is conducted by the Rector's Representative personally, or in more complex cases requiring specialist assistance, with the Rector's consent, by an intervention team composed of the Rector's Representative as the team leader, the unit head, and specialists in psychology and pedagogy or other staff with knowledge of child abuse.
 15. All members of the UR academic community are obliged to cooperate, implement recommendations, provide support, respond and make documents available at the request of the Rector's Representative.
 16. An intervention record is prepared for each intervention, a template of which is provided in Appendix 4 to the standards. The record is attached to the University's intervention record.
 17. The UR has established procedures that specify, step by step, what action should be taken in the event of harm to a minor or a threat to his or her safety from University staff, family members, peers or strangers, constituting Appendix 5 to these standards.

Chapter 3. Principles of personal data protection and the image of children at the university

1. The UR, recognising the child's right to privacy and protection of personal rights, ensures the highest standards of personal data protection, including protection of the minor's image in accordance with applicable law.
2. In its activities, the UR is guided by responsibility and prudence towards recording, processing, using and publishing images of minors.
3. A minor has the right to decide whether his or her image will be registered and how it will be used by the UR.
4. The consent of guardians to the use of their child's image is only binding if the minors and their guardians have been informed about the use of the photos/recordings and the risks associated with the publication of the image.
5. UR ensures the safety of the images of the children in its care by:
 - 1) asking for the written consent of the guardians and the consent of the minor before taking and publishing a photo/recording;
 - 2) providing explanations as to what the photos/recordings will be used for and in what context, how the data will be stored and what potential risks are associated with publishing photos/recordings online;
 - 3) avoiding captioning photos/videos with information identifying the minor by name. If it is necessary to caption a photo of a minor, we use only his or her first name;
 - 4) reducing the risk of copying and inappropriate use of photos/recordings of minors by adopting the following rules:
 - a) all minors in the photo/recording must be dressed, and the situation of the photo/recording is not humiliating, ridiculing or shows them in a negative context,
 - b) photos/recordings of minors should focus on the activities performed by them and, whenever possible, present minors in a group and not individually,
 - c) all suspicions and problems regarding the inappropriate dissemination of images of minors should be recorded and reported to the Rector's Representative, as well as other disturbing signals regarding a threat to the safety of those in its care.
6. Publication by staff of an image of a child recorded in any form (photograph, audio-video recording) requires the written consent of the minor's guardian.
7. The written consent referred to in point 6 should include information on where the image will be placed and in what context it will be used.
8. The Unit collects and stores consents for the dissemination of minors' images before commencing protected activities, informing them that consent is voluntary and does not affect their participation in tasks carried out at the Unit or participation in organised events. The purpose and method of processing, as well as other information concerning the image as personal data, are indicated in the consent.
9. The university respects the decision of a minor or his/her guardian not to consent to having his/her image recorded. It will be determined in advance how the person recording the event will be able to identify the child to avoid recording his/her image in individual or group photos.
- 9a. It is prohibited to use the image of a minor in artificial intelligence systems in a way that allows for its public disclosure, identification, or the generation of inappropriate, offensive, discriminatory or commercial content, without the express consent of a parent or legal guardian.

10. The image of a minor captured using CCTV cameras used to record audio or video for the purpose of ensuring the safety of persons and property located in the UR is not subject to public disclosure and does not require the consent of the minor's guardian to record his/her image. The use of such recorded materials is limited solely to the purposes originally intended for their recording.
11. Detailed rules applicable to the recording of images of minors and the rules for storing photos and recordings are set out in Appendix 6 to the standards.

Chapter 4. Rules for using electronic devices with Internet access

1. As part of its statutory activities, the university provides access to the Internet via electronic devices.
2. Access to the University's IT network is monitored, enabling the identification of users and the nature of their activities.
3. The University's IT infrastructure provides users with access to the Internet in accordance with the principles of safe Internet use available on the University's website.
4. Technical and organisational cybersecurity solutions implemented at the University are based on current IT security standards.
5. On University premises, a minor may access the Internet:
 - 1) on University devices – under the supervision of a University staff member,
 - 2) on designated computers located on the University premises (free access) – without supervision,
 - 3) via a wireless Wi-Fi network – after logging in to an individual account.
6. Detailed procedures for protecting children from harmful content and threats on the Internet and recorded in other forms are set out in Appendix 7 to these standards.

Chapter 5. Monitoring *the Policy of protecting minors from harm*

1. The Rector's Representative is responsible for publishing, promoting and monitoring the implementation of standards, including *the Policy for the protection of minors from harm*, for responding to signals of its violation, as well as maintaining a register of reports and proposing changes thereto.
2. The Rector's Representative conducts a survey among the staff, once every 12 months, to monitor the level of implementation of the Policy, a template of which is attached as Appendix 8.
3. The Rector's Representative, based on the surveys referred to in point 2, prepares a monitoring report, which he then submits to the Rector.
4. Based on the submitted report, the Rector adapts the standards, including the *Policy on the Protection of minors from harm*, to current needs and compliance with applicable regulations.
5. Review reports are kept at the Equal Treatment Office.
6. All changes to the standards, including *the Policy on the protection of minors from harm*, should be effectively communicated to all stakeholders, including staff, minors and guardians, in particular through emails and updates to the UR website.

Chapter 6. Final provisions

The standards, including *the Policy on the protection of minors from harm*, are announced in a manner accessible to staff, minors and their guardians, in particular by placing them in the EOD system and by posting an abridged version for minors on the University's website.

V. Appendices

1. Appendix No. 1 – Template of the declaration provided by the user about having read and attached to the plug-in of the "Standards for the protection of minors at the University of Rzeszow".
2. Appendix No. 2 – Rules for safe relationships with minors.
3. Appendix No. 3 – Principles of safe recruitment of personnel before admitting them to protected activities.
4. Appendix No. 4 – Intervention card template.
5. Appendix No. 5 – Procedure for intervention in the event of suspected abuse or having information about abuse of a minor.
6. Appendix No. 6 – Detailed rules for recording images of children and rules for storing photos and recordings.
7. Appendix No. 7 – Procedures for protecting children from harmful content and threats on the Internet and recorded in other forms.
8. Appendix No. 8 – Survey monitoring the level of implementation of the Standards for the Protection of Minors at the University of Rzeszow.
9. Appendix No. 9 – Declaration of consent to the registration of the event and the use of the image of a minor.
10. Appendix No. 10 – Declaration of consent to the registration of the event and the use of the image of an adult person

Rector of the University of
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