

## **RULES FOR SAFE RELATIONSHIPS WITH MINORS**

### **I. Relationships between university staff and minors**

The fundamental principle of all activities undertaken by the UR staff is to act for the minor's well-being and in his/her best interests. Staff are obligated to maintain a professional relationship with the minor and to always consider whether their response, communication, or action towards the minor is appropriate, safe, justified, and fair to other minors. Staff are obligated to act openly and transparently with others to minimise the risk of misinterpretation of their behaviour.

#### **Rules for staff communication with minors**

1. Staff should communicate with minors with respect and patience, taking into account their dignity, needs, age, developmental level and their situation.
2. Staff are obliged to keep confidential any information obtained in connection with the function or task performed and concerning a minor.
3. Staff should inform the minor that if he or she feels uncomfortable in a given situation, with regard to specific behaviour or words, he or she can inform the designated person and expect an appropriate response and/or assistance.
4. If staff notices disturbing behaviour or a situation, they are obliged to provide support to the minor and follow the adopted rules of conduct in the event of abuse of a minor.
5. When communicating with minors, staff are prohibited from:
  - behaving in an inappropriate manner, including using vulgar words, gestures and jokes, making offensive remarks, establishing sexual relations with a minor or making sexual and pornographic propositions to him or her, including sharing such content;
  - offering minors alcohol, tobacco products, or other stimulants (drugs, psychoactive substances, etc.);
  - using violence against minors in any form, including exploiting a power relationship or physical advantage over minors (intimidation, coercion, threats, embarrassment, disrespect, humiliation);
  - disclosing sensitive information about the minor to unauthorised persons, including other minors; this includes in particular the minor's image, information about his or her family, economic, religious, medical, care and legal situation.

#### **Staff activities with minors**

1. Minors should be treated equally and supported in their actions and in overcoming difficulties, and the support should take into account the minor's skill level and be adapted to the minor's level of disability or special educational needs.

2. Minors should not be discriminated against on the basis of sex, age, language, health, disability, skin colour, ethnic origin, nationality, political beliefs, worldview, religion, belief or lack thereof, psychosexual orientation, gender identity, social origin, economic status, migration or refugee experience.
3. Staff are not allowed to enter into any relationship of dependence towards a minor or the minor's parents/guardians that could lead to accusations of unequal treatment or the taking of financial or other benefits.
4. Staff are required to always exercise their professional judgment, listening to and observing the minor's reactions, asking for his/her consent to physical contact (e.g. hugging), and being aware that even with good intentions, such contact may be misinterpreted by the minor or third parties, and are always prepared to explain their actions.
5. Contact with a minor should only take place during working hours or when carrying out tasks resulting from the conduct of protected activities.
6. Physical contact with a child must be open, not hidden, and cannot involve any form of gratification or result from a power relationship.
7. When organising trips involving minors, staff are prohibited from staying overnight in the same rooms as minors.
8. Staff are prohibited from:
  - hitting, poking, pushing or otherwise violating the physical integrity of a minor;
  - touching a minor in a way that may be considered indecent or inappropriate;
  - using any other forms of violence.

#### **Staff contact with children outside of working hours or when carrying out tasks arising from other protected activities**

1. Maintaining social or family relationships (if minors and their guardians are close to staff) requires maintaining the confidentiality of all information relating to other minors, their guardians and staff.
2. Staff do not maintain contact with children via private means of communication such as telephone, email or social media.
3. If it is necessary to communicate with children and their guardians outside standard working hours, staff use only official means of communication.
4. If it is necessary to contact a minor outside of working hours, the immediate supervisor and his/her guardians must be informed.

#### **II. Relationships between minors**

1. It is the minor's obligation to comply with the rules and norms of conduct in force at the UR.
2. A minor is obliged to respect the personal rights and freedoms of other minors, their right to their own opinion, to make mistakes, to their own views, appearance and behaviour – within the framework of socially accepted norms and values.

3. A minor does not violate the rights of other minors – he/she recognises the right to be different and maintain their identity based on gender, age, language, health, disability, skin colour, ethnic origin, nationality, political beliefs, worldview, religion, belief or lack thereof, psychosexual orientation, gender identity, social origin, economic status, migration or refugee experience.
4. A minor maintains high culture in contacts with other minors.
5. A minor is obliged to control his or her behaviour and emotions in terms of expressing judgments and opinions and is kind to other minors and staff.
6. Minors respect other minors. They build relationships by eliminating competitiveness between minors in various areas of life, fostering mutual understanding, and constructively resolving problems and conflicts between them without the use of force.
7. The minor shows understanding for the difficulties and problems of others and offers them help.
8. Prohibited behaviours in relationships between minors include behaviours intended to cause pain and suffering, both physical and mental, to another person. These include, among others:
  - 1) physical aggression, which includes fighting between minors, hitting, kicking, slapping, spitting, and any other actions that cause physical pain;
  - 2) verbal aggression, which includes the use of vulgar words, gestures, and jokes; making offensive remarks; referring to sexual activity or attractiveness; and taking physical advantage of another minor (intimidation, coercion, threats);
  - 3) cyberbullying, which includes posting degrading videos or photos online, posting ridiculing or vulgar comments or posts, impersonating other people, hacking into someone's social media account, stalking, intimidation, and harassment via the internet, phone, text messages, and more.
9. If a minor witnesses another minor using any form of aggression or violence, he or she is obliged to respond to it, e.g. by helping the victim by seeking help from staff.