

STANDARDS FOR THE PROTECTION OF MINORS at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń

Chapter 1 General provisions

§ 1

Standards for the Protection of Minors at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, hereinafter referred to as “Standards”, were introduced in connection with the obligations imposed by:

- 1) the Act of 13 May 2016 on counteracting the threat of sexual offences and the protection of minors (Journal of Laws 2024, item 560);
- 2) the Act of 28 July 2023 amending the Act - Family and Guardianship Code and certain other acts (Journal of Laws of 2023, item 1606).

§ 2

Whenever the Standards refer to:

- 1) **rector** – it shall mean the Rector of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń or the Vice-Chancellor or Chancellor appointed by the Rector, who supervises the implementation of the Standards;
- 2) **coordinator** – it shall mean the person appointed by the Rector to implement and monitor the implementation of the Standards among members of staff, students, doctoral students and persons cooperating with the University;
- 3) **University** – it shall mean Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń;
- 4) **staff member** – it shall mean a member of staff of the University who is an academic staff member or a non-academic staff member employed at the University under a contract of employment or a civil law contract and who may have contact with minors through their involvement in the activities of the University;
- 5) **person co-operating with the University** – it shall mean an instructor, volunteer or other person carrying out activities with minors on University premises with the permission of the relevant authority;
- 6) **member of the University community** – means a staff member, student, doctoral student or a person co-operating with the University;
- 7) **minor** – shall mean a person under 18 years of age who participates in activities organised or co-organised by the University;
- 8) **harm to a minor** – it shall mean the commission of a criminal act to the detriment of a minor by any person, including threats to the minor's well-being and neglect of the minor;
- 9) **parents of a minor** – it shall mean the mother and father of the minor or one of the parents under whose permanent custody the minor actually remains;
- 10) **guardian of the minor** – it shall mean the person authorised to represent and decide for the minor, in particular the legal guardian;
- 11) **student** – it shall mean the student of the University;
- 12) **doctoral student** – it shall mean the doctoral student of the University;

- 13) **the personal data of a minor** – it shall mean any information which allows the identification of a minor or any information on the person of an identified minor.

§ 3

The standards for the protection of minors specify in particular:

- 1) principles for the safe recruitment of staff;
- 2) principles ensuring safe relations between minors and staff members, students, doctoral students and persons working with the University, in particular the identification of unacceptable behaviour towards minors;
- 3) principles and procedures for intervening when there is suspicion of, or knowledge of, abuse of a minor;
- 4) designation of a person responsible for receiving reports of incidents endangering a minor and providing the minor with support;
- 5) procedures and persons responsible for reporting a suspected offence against a minor;
- 6) the principles for preparing staff members, students, doctoral students and persons co-operating with the University to apply the standards and the manner of documenting this activity;
- 7) principles for the protection of the image and personal data of the minor;
- 8) principles for using electronic devices with Internet access and responding in the event of detection or suspicion of sexual abuse or cyberbullying;
- 9) principles of reviewing and updating standards;
- 10) method of documenting and principles of storing disclosed or reported incidents or events that threaten individual assets or the welfare of a minor.

Chapter 2

Principles of the safe recruitment of staff members

§ 4

1. As part of the recruitment of staff members working with minors, an assessment of the candidates' preparation for working with minors is carried out..
2. Before establishing an employment relationship with a given person or before admitting a given person to other activities related to upbringing, education, recreation, treatment of minors or care for them, the Rector obtains:
 - 1) data from the Register of Sexual Offenders, both from the Limited Access Register and Public Register, as well as the Register of persons in respect of whom the State Commission for Counteracting Sexual Abuse of Minors under 15 years of age has issued a decision to enter the Register;
 - 2) data from the National Crime Register;
 - 3) data from criminal records of foreign countries in the scope of specific crimes (or corresponding acts prohibited by foreign law) or in cases specified by law - in the form of a declaration.
3. The procedure for verifying persons in the Register of Sexual Offenders is specified in a separate order of the Rector.
4. Detailed principles for the recruitment and employment of academic teachers and non-academic staff are specified in separate order of the Rector.

Chapter 3

Principles for ensuring safe relationships between minors and members of the University community and prohibited behaviours towards minors

§ 5

1. The basic principle of actions taken by members of the University community in contacts with minors is to act for their good..
2. Members of the University community are obliged to act in an open and transparent manner for others in order to minimize the risk of misinterpretation of their conduct..
3. Members of the University community are obliged to maintain a professional relationship with minors and to always consider whether the reaction, message or action towards a minor is appropriate to the situation, legitimate and safe..
4. In the event of observing situations of violence between minors themselves, each member of the University community is obliged to react immediately and intervene appropriately, consisting in stopping the escalation of the conflict and prohibited behaviour. Reactions and interventions concerning a specific minor should also take into account the safety of other minors.
5. Employees who have contact with minors through their involvement in the University's activities monitor the situation and well-being of minors and pay attention to the appropriateness and correctness of the relationships between minors..
6. In the event of receiving information about the initiation of criminal proceedings against a member of the University community for a crime directed against sexual freedom or other personal rights of a minor, the Rector shall immediately remove them from all forms of contact with minors..

§ 6

1. In contact with minor, members of the University:
 - 1) treat minors with respect, listen to them and try to give them an answer that is appropriate to the situation and their age, and when giving any instructions they formulate them factually, clearly and specifically;
 - 2) do not embarrass minors, do not disrespect or offend them;
 - 3) 3) they do not shout unless a dangerous situation requires it (e.g. warning in case of danger, announcing an evacuation alarm);
 - 4) treat every minor equally regardless of their origin, appearance, beliefs, religion, or skin colour;
 - 5) respect their faith, views, beliefs, experiences and other perspectives resulting from being a minor;
 - 6) use language that is free from judgments and labels and is adapted to the minor's level of development;
 - 7) create a culture of openness and mutual responsibility that encourages reporting and discussing all issues and problems related to the need to protect minors.
2. It is unacceptable to use violence against minors in any form..
3. A minor has the right to physical integrity, intimacy and privacy. Physical contact with a minor may never be secret or hidden, involve any form of gratification or result from the exploitation of a relationship of dependency or subordination.
4. In justified cases, physical contact between a staff member and a minor is allowed. Such situations include in particular:
 - 1) threat to the health or life of a minor;

- 2) assistance to a disabled minor in medical and hygienic activities, eating meals, and moving around, if the type of disability requires it and the minor or their guardian consents to the offered assistance;
 - 3) participation in legally permitted activities where such contact is common, e.g. greetings, sports competitions.
5. Minors have the right to privacy. This right should be respected in particular in places such as changing rooms, swimming pools, bathrooms and toilets.

Chapter 4

Principles and procedures for intervening when there is suspicion of abuse or knowledge of abuse of a minor

§ 7

1. If a member of the University community suspects that a minor is being abused, they are required to inform the co-ordinator of such suspicions.
2. The co-ordinator, upon identifying a risk of harm or abuse to a minor, immediately intervenes and takes steps to stop the abuse..
3. In the event of suspected abuse of a minor, the co-ordinator shall immediately isolate the minor from the potential perpetrator, notify the Rector, the police and take other necessary action, including notifying the minor's parents or guardian of the incident and informing them of the minor's status.
4. In any case of suspected abuse, the minor is immediately provided with the care and support of a psychologist and, if necessary, other specialists.
5. If it is established that the abuse problem does not require legal intervention and that there is no risk to the minor's health or life, the co-ordinator arranges a meeting with the minor's parents or guardian in the presence of the psychologist and the staff member who reported the incident. During the meeting, ways of support and possible response according to the minor's situation are identified. A note is taken of the meeting.

§ 8

1. An intervention card shall be drawn up for each intervention.
2. Members of the University community in possession of information about the abuse of a minor or information related to this are obliged to keep this information confidential, excluding information provided to the co-ordinator and to authorised institutions as part of intervention activities.
3. In case of a suspected threat to the safety of a minor reported by the minor's parents or guardian but without confirmation of this suspicion, the parents or guardian shall be informed in writing and an intervention card shall be drawn up.

§ 9

1. In cases where it is reported that a minor has been abused by a member of the University community, that person shall be immediately removed from all forms of contact with minors until the matter is clarified.
2. The co-ordinator interviews the minor and persons having or likely to have knowledge of the incident and establishes the course of the incident and its impact on the minor's mental and physical health. The findings are recorded in the intervention card.

3. The co-ordinator arranges a meeting with the minor's parents or guardian, to whom the minor's need for specialist support is communicated.
4. In cases where a member of the University community has committed a form of harm to a minor other than the commission of a criminal offence to the minor's detriment, the Rector shall investigate all the circumstances of the case, and in particular shall hear the member of staff suspected of harming the minor and other persons with knowledge of the incident in question.
5. In cases where there has been a significant breach of the minor's welfare, in particular where there has been discrimination or a violation of the minor's dignity, the Rector shall consider the appropriateness of taking disciplinary measures against the staff member.

§ 10

1. In cases where the source of abuse or suspected abuse is the parents or guardian of a minor or a person from the home environment, the co-ordinator, after assessing the situation, initiates the Blue Card procedure (A card) and notifies the relevant institutions and organisations without delay.
2. If the parents or guardian of the minor refuse to co-operate or refuse to take the measures proposed by the co-ordinator, the co-ordinator shall immediately submit a notice of suspected offence to the police, the public prosecutor's office or an application for inspection of the minor's situation to the family court, establish co-operation with the social assistance unit and cover the minor with psychological assistance.

§ 11

1. In cases where abuse of a minor by a person co-operating with the University has been reported, the co-ordinator shall interview the minor and other persons who have or may have knowledge of the incident and of the personal (family, health) situation of the minor, including in particular the minor's parents or guardian. The co-ordinator establishes the course of the incident and its impact on the minor's mental and physical health. The findings are recorded in the intervention card.
2. The co-ordinator arranges a meeting with the minor's parents or guardian, to whom the information about the incident and the need for specialist support is communicated.

§ 12

1. In cases of suspected abuse of a minor by another minor, the co-ordinator shall interview the minor suspected of abuse and their parents or guardian, and interview the abused minor and their parents or guardian separately. During the interviews, the course of the incident and its impact on the mental and physical health of the abused minor is established. The findings are recorded in the intervention card.
2. The co-ordinator, together with the parents or guardian of the abused minor, develops a plan of action to eliminate unwanted behaviour and ensure the minor's safety, including ways of isolating the minor from sources of danger.
3. In cases of peer violence, other risk behaviour by minors, psychological assistance and support shall also be provided to minors who are the instigators of the violence, taking into account the need to co-operate in this respect with external institutions, as well as to minors who may have witnessed the event.

§ 13

1. In cases where a minor has been subjected to a criminal offence, the co-ordinator shall draw up a notice of possible offence and forward it to the police or the public prosecutor's office with territorial jurisdiction.
2. In cases where it emerges from an interview with the parents or guardian that they are not interested in assisting the minor, are ignoring the incident or are not otherwise supporting the minor who has experienced abuse, the co-ordinator shall draw up a request to the family court for an insight into the situation of the family of that minor.
3. The subsequent course of action shall depend on the actions of the competent institutions referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2.

Chapter 5

Persons responsible for receiving reports of incidents threatening a minor and providing support to the minor

§ 14

1. The person responsible for receiving reports of incidents threatening the welfare of a minor is the co-ordinator..
2. The person responsible for providing support to a minor in the event of abuse in urgent situations is each staff member..
3. If a staff member becomes aware or perceives that a minor is being abused, the staff member is required to assist the minor and then make a note of the abuse and report it to the co-ordinator and immediate supervisor..
4. In special situations, the Rector may appoint an intervention team composed of persons who may have knowledge of the minor's situation and who are in a position to support and ensure the minor's safety. The team may also include persons from outside the University.

Chapter 6

Procedures and persons responsible for reporting suspected offences against a minor, notifying the guardianship court

§ 15

1. If the person suspected of harming a minor is a minor between the ages of 13 and 17, and this behaviour constitutes a criminal act, the co-ordinator, on behalf of the Rector, shall inform the locally competent family court or the police by written notification.
2. If the person suspected of harming a minor is a person over 17 years of age and their behaviour constitutes a criminal offence, the co-ordinator, on behalf of the Rector, shall inform the locally competent police or prosecuting authority by written notification.

§ 16

In cases where the welfare of a minor is at risk - the person responsible for notifying the guardianship court through a request for family insight is the co-ordinator acting on behalf of the rector.

Chapter 7

Principles for preparing staff, students, doctoral students and collaborators of the University to apply the standards and the manner of documenting this activity

§ 17

1. The draft of the Standards for the Protection of Minors in the complete version and the abridged version for minors shall be prepared by the rector..
2. The rector is responsible for preparing staff to apply the Standards, including organising training meetings on their application.
3. A note shall be made of the training meetings referred to in paragraph 2, together with a list of the participants in the meeting, which shall be kept in the University's records kept in the relevant department of human resources.
4. The rector, when necessary and possible, organises staff training meetings with representatives of the police, family court, family probation officers, staff of social welfare units, as well as organisations and associations dealing with the protection of minors.

Chapter 8

Principles of protection of the image and personal data of a minor

§ 18

1. Staff members, recognising the minor's right to privacy and protection of personal rights, shall ensure the protection of the minor's image and personal data..
2. The publication by an staff member of an image of a minor recorded in any form shall require the written consent of the minor's parents or guardian.
3. If the image of a minor is only a detail of a whole, such as a gathering, a landscape, a public event, the consent of the parents or guardian is not required to record the image of a minor.
4. In cases of suspected inappropriate dissemination of the image, personal data of a minor, including in particular sensitive data, rector or coordinator shall immediately report the incident to the Data Protection Officer.

Chapter 9

Principles for the use of Internet-enabled electronic devices and how to respond if sexual abuse or cyberbullying is identified or suspected

§ 19

1. The University, by providing access to the Internet, takes measures to protect minors from accessing content that may pose a risk to their proper development; in particular, malware protection and content filtering software is installed and updated on University computers.
2. The University provides, where possible, ongoing access to educational material on safe use of the Internet.
3. Members of the University's community respond immediately if they detect instances of pornographic content, sexual exploitation or cyberbullying being made available to minors, including, in particular, hate speech, blackmail and intimidation and the dissemination of

- offensive content online.
4. If members of the University community identify or become aware of cyberbullying or sexual abuse occurring, they shall immediately report the problem to the co-ordinator who, in consultation with the Director of the University Centre for IT Services , shall take the necessary action in this regard.

Chapter 10

Principles for reviewing and updating standards

§ 20

1. The adopted Standards are reviewed once every 2 years, with a particular focus on the analysis of situations involving threats to the safety of minors and the information resulting from the surveys carried out, and the conclusions of the assessment are documented.
2. Members of the University community may provide comments, propose changes to the regulations contained in the Standards and report incidents of violation of the Standards to the coordinator, who keeps a record of reports and proposed changes.
3. Any comments, proposed changes and incidents of violations of the Standards are forwarded by the coordinator to the Rector, who adapts the Standards to current needs and verifies their compliance with current legislation.

Chapter 11

Method of documenting and retention principles for disclosed or reported incidents or events endangering the welfare of a minor

§ 21

1. Documentation of disclosed or reported incidents or events endangering the welfare of a minor shall consist of:
 - 1) an intervention card relating to the incident in question;
 - 2) official notes made by staff members on the circumstances of the incident in question;
 - 3) a copy of the application to the family court for an insight into the family's situation;
 - 4) a copy of the report of the commission of an offence against a minor;
 - 5) records of interventions carried out;
 - 6) surveys monitoring the level of implementation of the Standards;
 - 7) monitoring reports on the Standards.
2. The rules for the storage of disclosed or reported incidents or events endangering the welfare of a minor and for intervention in cases of suspected minor abuse are laid down in the Office Instructions.
3. Records of disclosed or reported incidents or events threatening the welfare of a minor, records of interventions in cases of suspected minor abuse shall be kept in the administrative unit supporting the coordinator and shall be made available in any manner or form only with the permission of the rector.
4. It is the responsibility of the co-ordinator to ensure that records of disclosed or reported incidents or events threatening the welfare of a minor and of interventions in cases of suspected abuse of a minor are properly kept and made available.

Chapter 12

Final provisions

§ 22

Templates of applications, declarations, forms and other documents for the implementation of the Standards are posted on the University's website under Protection of Minors Coordinator.