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Concept of Prevention and Protection in CULTURAL EDUCATION

26th International Drama / Theatre in Education Conference 2026

Educational work with the arts, the media of cultural education, is associated with particular challenge when it comes to protection from abuse, violence or psychological injury. Similar to sport, in many artistic disciplines such as theater, dance or music, physical closeness, but also an emotional opening of the participants is essential. This can involve risk situations and boundary violations.

Another challenge lies in the open structures of cultural education for children and young people, with sometimes unverifiable profiles, for example of freelancers or volunteers. This can facilitate perpetrator strategies. On the other hand, the arts also offer opportunities to sensitize and empower children, young people and adults by approaching critical topics on a playful and artistic level.

IDEA - AUSTRIA endorses the content of the final paragraph regarding (young) adults; speakers and participants are selected with great care. All have many years of educational expertise, and participants are also expected to possess at least some of this expertise.

The 26th International Drama / Theatre in Education Conference 2026 is an event that focuses on the pedagogical dimension of drama and theater education. The organizers are committed to the UNESCO Sustainable Goals and also define a set of rules for encounters in this artistic space according to general rules for theatrical work (see also sdgs.un.org/goals).

Against this background, the *Bundesvereinigung Kulturelle Kinder- und Jugendbildung (BKJ)*, the umbrella organization for cultural child & youth education in Germany, has presented a protection concept that the nationwide specialist structures can use to develop their own participatory concepts. In the participatory development process, institutions, clubs and associations, among others, describe moments and situations in their active educational work in which special attention is required to protect children and young people from abuse and discomfort. [...]

IDEA - AUSTRIA does not take on any teaching activities for children and/or young people in this event. The association is committed to the network of theater and drama teachers. We believe that prevention is also necessary for adults; the concept is "in progress", recognizes the current situations and needs and responds to them.

It states that all participants in our events

- ✓ are adults (i.e. at least 18 years of age);*
- ✓ know what methods of theater and drama pedagogy are, how they can be used and what effects they can have;*
- ✓ have experienced sufficiently that playing the role is not the same as the person playing it;*
- ✓ are aware of the importance of the process and the personal development of the participants;*
- ✓ are mindful of opinions and attitudes of the other players/participants;*
- ✓ "act as if";*
- ✓ reflect personally, in confidential conversations and/or in the group on what they have experienced;*
- ✓ feel physically, mentally and cognitively able to take responsibility for themselves and their actions in playing with drama/theatre situations;*

- ✓ *avoid situations that may be too demanding for them or are able to remove themselves from them in time;*
- ✓ *seek support in time, if needed;*
- ✓ *know the contact persons (the persons are introduced at the beginning of the event);*
- ✓ *get to know the speakers' working methods and thematic approach in advance as part of a presentation and be aware of any personal limitations;*
- ✓ *use the open discussion atmosphere and the given communication structures to clarify unclear situations, premises and structures;*
- ✓ *recognize the special requirements for applying the methods learned when working with young people in terms of youth protection;*

It is a fundamental task to firmly anchor prevention measures in all cultural education programs for children and young people and in the modules of cultural education training and further education. It should become a matter of course for all organizations to create, apply and continuously develop their own protection concepts. In doing so, the specialist structures of cultural education should take the special features and potential of their very different fields of activity and sector-specific conditions. [...]

IDEA - AUSTRIA is taking on this task and would like to make the concept visible and develop it further. The association would like to thank bkj for the initiative and the initial ideas on which the association is building. The focus of attention is the prevention of discrimination, misogynistic and xenophobic behavior, bullying and related topics, all forms of violence - and the monitoring of digital media and social networks.

IDEA - AUSTRIA is committed to the humanistic world view and its values and lives out this attitude in the internal structures of the organization (number of women on the board, equal rights, respectful treatment, etc.). All events organized by IDEA are based on the principle that they do not offer a platform for defamation against gender, affiliation, religion, origin and social status.

Accordingly, the concepts for organizations and institutions must be further developed, prevention measures must be defined in the modules of further education and training, and multipliers, educators and artists must be made aware of how to implement them.

IDEA AUSTRIA thanks the BKJ for the preparatory work!

The text is taken from the BJK website, the passages in between (starting with “IDEA AUSTRIA”) are the adaptations of the board of IDEA AUSTRIA to the circumstances of a specific event. However, they basically represent the prevention and communication culture of the association even beyond that.

Source: kulturellebildung.de/schutzkonzepte-in-der-kulturellen-bildung/