



Institutional protection concept of the Studierendengemeinde Edith Stein in Berlin (KSG)

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Content

1. Function of an institutional protection concept	1
2. Definition of sexualised violence.....	2
3. Definition spiritual abuse	2
4. The situation of the KSG.....	3
5. Regulation of prevention of sexualised violence on the level of the archdiocese of Berlin	3
6. Further measures	4
7. Invasive behaviour of visitors or members of the KSG	4
8. Complaints and suspected cases.....	4
9. Contact persons for invasive behaviour and sexualised abuse:.....	5

1

1. Function of an institutional protection concept

In catholic parishes and organisations the protection of children and youths is part of the pastoral work. Institutions working with children and youths have to provide regulations that lower the risk of becoming a victim of sexual violence. KSG Edith Stein Berlin provides its protection concept in this document. "Sexualised violence" as defined by the bishops conference (see p. 2), also against adults is explicitly included in KSG Berlin's protection concept.

KSG Berlin recognises, with reference to the episcopal "intervention rules", their protection duty also concerning adults who find themselves in special states of dependence. This dependence can happen or form in the pastoral context and is usually referred to as spiritual abuse (see point 3).



2. Definition of sexualised violence

Sexual violence means any kind of sexual act on or before a person – either against their will or due to the fact that the person cannot consent knowingly because of physical, psychological or oral inferiority.¹

The term sexualised violence is used within the field of prevention.

„The term makes clear, that sexualised violence is not a form of violent sexuality but a sexualised form of violence. This enables to see that aspects of power and aggressiveness – besides sexuality – have to be considered in preventive concepts.

The term „sexualised violence“ includes physical as well as psychological violations that invade the private sphere of a person. It is almost always the abuse of a difference of power due to sex, age, physical superiority, origin or social status. The superior person holds the higher power or authority. The superior person is using this to influence the other person either via reward (emotional affection and / or presents) or punishment (threatening or using physical or psychological violence). The motivation is usually to satisfy their hunger for power by e.g. by enhancing their status at the expense of others. Sexual acts are used more as a method than to satisfy a primarily sexual urge.“²

3. Definition spiritual abuse

The term „Spiritual abuse“ usually refers to a kind of abuse of power in the realm of religion or ideology. Abusing their spiritual-religious role, stating „supernatural“ or supposedly “divine” reasons or using strong hierarchical structures, perpetrators seduce individuals or whole communities into neglecting or even giving up completely their own justified interests.

This religious abuse does not necessarily happen on purpose. Sometimes the inobservance of necessary standards or lack of reflection lead to abusive demands. Also psychological impairments and strong ideological convictions can feed the spiritual abuse of power.

Also spiritual neglect can lead people into severe distress, especially when they are highly dependent on the perpetrator.³

In short, it can be said that “spiritual abuse“ consists of measures against the spiritual self-determination, force and coercion and the abuse of power.⁴

¹ Aus: Bange, D.;Deegner, G. 1996 Sexueller Missbrauch an Kindern. Hintergründe, Ausmaß, Folgen. Weinheim 2006, S. 105.

² Handreichung vom Ständigen Rat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz vom 21.06.21 zur Rahmenordnung Prävention, S. 8-9.

https://www.dbk.de/fileadmin/redaktion/microsites/Sexualisierte_Gewalt_und_Praevention/Dokumente/Handreichung-Rahmenordnung-Praevention-2021.pdf

³ Vgl. <https://www.geistlicher-missbrauch.org/>

⁴ Vgl. Dr. Barbara Halsbeck <https://www.domradio.de/artikel/eine-art-gehirnwaesche-expertin-erlaeutert-den-begriff-geistlicher-missbrauch>



“Spiritual abuse“ can also contain or encourage sexual abuse.⁵

4. The situation of the KSG

The target group of the KSG are university students and staff members of Berlin’s universities. The KSG is visited mostly by mature students between 18 and 30 years of age. Older PhD students or university staff members attend in smaller numbers. Only exceptionally do university students who are underage visit the KSG. On the one hand, the protection concept of the KSG focuses on these minors.

On the other hand, KSG Berlin recognises that abuse (spiritual, sexual and sexualised) can happen not only between adults and minors. Also the relationship between staff members and adult visitors and members of the KSG can be vulnerable to abuse – even if not always in a criminal sense.

Dependencies can develop e.g. through counselling, coaching, spiritual counselling, confession and other pastoral acts. This holds especially true if visitors and members of the KSG find themselves in a psychological crisis and are therefore especially vulnerable. The role of the priest especially but not exclusively holds this risk.

5. Regulation of prevention of sexualised violence on the level of the archdiocese of Berlin

As a member of the pastoral branch of the archdiocese of Berlin, the following rules apply for the staff members of KSG:

5.1 Prevention trainings (§ 10 Präventionsordnung)

In order to enhance the knowledge and decision-making competence in the field of sexualised violence and in order to strengthen a culture of awareness, all staff members and volunteers working with children / youths or have a leading position partake in prevention trainings of the archdiocese. These trainings have to be regularly renewed and deepened.

5.2 Extended police clearance certificate (§ 5 Präventionsordnung)

Within catholic organisations working with children and / or youths within the archdiocese of Berlin, only those staff members are employed who can prove via an extended police clearance certificate, that they are not convicted of a crime against sexual self-determination according to §72a SGBVIII.

The obligation for an extended police clearance certificate applies also for full age volunteers who either regularly work with children/youths or who accompany these to over-night events.

⁵ Vgl. Dr. Barbara Halsbeck <https://www.katholisch.de/artikel/31947-theologin-geistlicher-missbrauch-wirkt-wie-eine-art-gehirnwaesche>



5.3 Employee selection and supervision (§ 4 Präventionsordnung)

In application processes, and first time meetings with volunteers as well as in the supervision of employees, the person in charge of the archdiocese will broach the issue of sexualised violence and its prevention.

5.4 Institutional protection concept (§ 6 Präventionsordnung)

All leaders, all staff members and volunteers commit themselves in a collective declaration, to take active measures for the protection of children, youths and adults against sexualised violence.

Staff members are obliged to sign this declaration and hand it to their employer.

6. Further measures

Staff members take care that – wherever possible – counselling, confession and other pastoral activities that take place in an one to one setting are not performed by the same person who is in charge of writing testimonials for study grants or who is in charge of allotting financial help to students. This holds especially true for testimonials for KAAD and Cusanuswerk as well as for the emergency fund or the Dominikus WG.

7. Invasive behaviour of visitors or members of the KSG

Members and visitors of the KSG are reminded that by working with under age people in the context of KSG, they have to abide to the law. For one time activities with children and youths, staff members will raise awareness concerning the topic in advance. For long term activities with children and youths or trips with this target group, the regulations of the archdiocese apply.

Within the KSG the rule “No means No” and the principles of respectful behaviour apply. If advances of people are not wished for, members and visitors of the KSG have to accept that and change their behaviour.

If staff members notice or are made aware of intrusive behaviour of visitors or members, they will professionally support the person who experienced that behaviour.

The topic of invasive behaviour will be regularly addressed within the KSG to raise awareness.

8. Complaints and suspected cases

a) Invasive sexual behaviour and sexualised violence

Volunteers and staff members of the KSG encourage visitors and members of the KSG to voice their complaints if they feel that staff members used invasive behaviour. They can voice their complaints either to other staff members, the community council (GR) or to the students of trust. Complaints are also possible anonymously via the KSG letter box which will be opened by staff members.

If there should be signs of sexual assaults, sexualised violence or sexual crimes through staff members or volunteers, members or visitors of the KSG do not have to inform other KSG staff



members, volunteers or students of trust. Instead they can directly contact the external contact person of the archdiocese.

Staff members and volunteers are obliged to report facts and signs to the external contact person of the archdiocese. This also applies to anonymous complaints or hints. The further procedure is regulated by the “Interventionsordnung” of the German Bishop’s Conference and the implementation rule of the archdiocese of Berlin.

b) Spiritual abuse

Complaints and suspected cases of “spiritual abuse” by staff members will be examined by involving another staff member or the students of trust. It is also possible to directly contact the contact person of the archdiocese.

The contact person of the archdiocese of Berlin for “spiritual abuse” is

Dr. Stefan Dybowski, stefan.dybowski@erzbistumberlin.de, Tel: 03032684-207.

9. Contact persons for invasive behaviour and sexualised abuse:

Contact persons within the KSG are:

- The students of trust: vertrauensstudent@ksg-berlin.de;
vertrauensstudentin@ksg-berlin.de
- Pastoral staff members:
 - P. Max Cappabianca: max.cappabianca@erzbistumberlin.de
 - Juliane Link: juliane.link@erzbistumberlin.de
 - Karen Siebert: karen.siebert@erzbistumberlin.de
- KSG council (GR): gemeinderat@ksg-berlin.de

5

Anonymous complaints can be put into the KSG letter box which will be opened by staff members.

Contact persons of the archdiocese of Berlin can be found here:

<https://www.erzbistumberlin.de/hilfe/sexualisierte-gewalt/ansprechpersonen-sexueller-missbrauch/>

There are furthermore the following church and non-church institutions that can be contacted: <https://praevention.erzbistumberlin.de/beratungsangebote/>

The form that has to be filled out in suspected cases of sexual abuse:

https://www.erzbistumberlin.de/fileadmin/user_mount/PDF-Dateien/Erzbistum/Intervention/21-06-08_Meldeformular_Einrichtungen_und_Dienste.pdf