

Guidelines on the Participation of Children in Political Campaigns

- Child Friendly Version -



Kummissarju għat-Tfal
Commissioner for Children



Introduction

The Commissioner for Children felt the need for a set of guidelines in order to protect children during political campaigns. These guidelines were drawn up by a group of people, including political parties themselves, who worked together in the best interest of children.



Guidelines

- These guidelines are aimed at the producers of political communication in order to make sure that children are protected from the very beginning of the process until the end.
- These guidelines are there to protect all children under the age of 16.
- The people creating the promotional material should draw up a plan of how the children involved will participate and be protected. Children should be protected in all ways to make sure that they do not hurt physically and/or emotionally.
- This plan should be explained to children and their parents/guardians at the very beginning.
- Children and their parents should have the right to speak up and be heard if they have any concerns.
- The children and their parents/guardians have the right to know why they are included in the production and where the images and other material will be used.
- The children involved need to know both the positive and the negative aspects of taking part in this production, keeping in mind that Malta is very politically divided.
- Children should be allowed to act their own age in the production and not made to act younger or older than they are.



- Children and their parents/guardians should be informed of any changes made to the original plan.
- The adults involved in the production must make sure that children are safe and respected at all times as well as given adequate breaks during the production.
- Any personal information about the children taking part needs to be destroyed or returned to the children once the campaign is over.
- Children and their parents/guardians need to know what part of the story the child will be involved in, the place, how long it will take, where and how it will appear, as well as whether payment will be made.
- Children should be free to stop being involved at any time during the process.
- All children taking part should have a consent form signed by their parents/guardians allowing them to take part.
- The Parents/guardians and children chosen to take part are to allow professionals such as psychologists, social workers and counselors, to assess their children before the activities start. This is to ensure that children understand and feel good about taking part.

This assessment (depending on age) may include:

- The level of understanding of the consequences of taking part in such campaigns by the children and their parents/guardians. In particular, the effect of being seen in the media, TV, billboards, newspapers etc., needs to be fully understood.
- The assessment will also look at the family situation such as the possible effect on brothers and sisters as well as the medical situation of the child.
- The above mentioned examples and each situation will be dealt with individually.
- The assessment will inform parents/guardians and/or producers whether it is in the best interest of the child to take part in a specific campaign.
- The producer must make sure that the production goes according to plan and any changes need to be agreed upon.
- Children and their parents/guardians need to agree with the production before it is made public.

