



## **Wunderbar Protocol for Collaborating with Children**

*This document outlines a protocol to which Wunderbar will adhere in our collaboration with children and young people.*

*Wunderbar has developed this approach inspired by and, where appropriate, utilising language directly taken from, the **Mammalian Protocol for Collaborating with Children**, an award-winning document created by Mammalian Diving Reflex in 2011, which takes the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child as a principle guide.*

*The MPCC outlines a way of working with children that is unrestrictive and explodes some of the prevailing attitudes to working with children and young people that can be unnecessarily restrictive or potentially infringes upon their human rights. Full copy can be downloaded [here](#).*

At Wunderbar, we do not view children as immature humans who must be socialised into mature adults, nor do we see our role as that of correcting children towards higher levels of “maturity”. Instead, we see everyone who takes part in our projects – age, experience or abilities aside – as equal participants on our collective journeys of intrigue and wonder.

Wunderbar is dedicated to working with collaborators irrespective of age and promises to work with children and young people as equals. Wunderbar promises a commitment to treat all participants – including staff, volunteers, and children – in a non discriminatory way.

The protocols address the following issues:

- **Expression and opinion**
- **Equality**
- **Education**
- **Play**
- **Safety**
- **Exploitation**
- **Parents, guardians and teachers**

### **Expression and opinion**

In our collaboration with children, we believe it is important to observe the child’s right to freedom of expression and opinion: children may hold whatever view they like in so far as it does not infringe on the rights of any other person, child or otherwise.

### **Equality**

Our opportunities are open to all regardless of age, race, gender, sexuality, ability, class or any other possible discriminating factors. Wunderbar aims for there to be no restriction in participation for financial reasons and promises equality in any resources that we provide. When working with us outside of school, children will not be required to abide by any dress code or any other criteria that limits their self-expression.

As with any person or organisation with whom we collaborate, children will be treated as equals within the organisation. Wunderbar sees importance in the delegation of roles, not the construction of a hierarchy. Wunderbar staff do not seek authority over participating children and will not dictate their actions or behaviour insofar as their behaviour doesn't cause harm to, or infringe on, the rights of themselves or others. Should a situation occur in which a child or adult's behaviour is potentially harmful, we will inform them how their behaviour is making us feel and allow them the opportunity to take responsibility for their actions.

### **Education**

Wunderbar's projects in collaboration with children are intended to fortify and educate all involved, staff and children alike, in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child Committee's aim towards long term changes in "political, social, institutional and cultural structures." Our aim, therefore, is not to improve particular skills amongst the children who participate but that they, along with us and all other collaborators, are engaged in developing something new.

Of particular importance are the rights of the child in the context of schools or other institutions. We are in agreement with the Committee's statement that "Children do not lose their human rights by virtue of passing through the school gates" and will at all times support children's human rights while working with Wunderbar, both inside and outside school or other educational or cultural institutions.

### **Play**

Wunderbar strongly believes that play is not a luxury but a necessity in life for people of all ages. The right to play is central to the ethos of Wunderbar, which encourages play at all levels as a way to develop new ideas, as well as a form of socialisation.

Wunderbar will not restrict the child's desire to play in any setting so far as it does not impede on the rights or safety of themselves or any other person. In the instance that play may distract from the activities within the Wunderbar group, we will not stop play but inform the children of our feelings and allow them the opportunity to take responsibility for their actions.

### **Safety**

The health and safety of staff, collaborators and children takes precedence above all else. Wunderbar has in place a safeguarding and health and safety policy to protect all staff, collaborators and children. Wunderbar will use health and safety policies to enhance the experience of the children but will not allow this policy to become a restrictive force that disallows certain activities or impedes on the child's right to play .

### **Exploitation**

Wunderbar is cautious about showcasing children and young people and will not exploit the talents or idiosyncrasies of collaborators. Instead, projects involve children "as they are" attempting to present to the world their exuberance in an unrehearsed and unmitigated way.

Many of our projects can be considered as research. Wunderbar has an awareness of, and will consider with care any research into the group of child collaborators as to whether it may be exploitative, understanding that exploitation is exploitation regardless of whether the exploited are having a good time.

### **Parents, guardians and teachers**

Wunderbar's aim is to work with parents, guardians and teachers to ensure that the children's best interests are at the foreground of any collaboration and therefore welcomes their input with regards to the collaborations with children. Wunderbar will be vigilant over the safety and wellbeing of any children in collaboration with us. However, as stated earlier, Wunderbar does not seek a position of authority over the child and asks other participating institutions to do the same.