



Colla Castellera de Berlín

Protocol for the Prevention and Handling of Discrimination and Harassment

Last updated: September 2026

1. Purpose and principles

This protocol sets out how the Colla Castellera de Berlin (“the Colla”) prevents and addresses discrimination, harassment and violence. It explains how to report a concern, how reports are handled, who is responsible for what, and how everyone involved is protected.

1.1 What this protocol does

- promotes a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for everyone;
- gives clear guidance on how to report discrimination and harassment;
- describes how reports are received, documented and handled;
- sets out roles and responsibilities;
- protects the dignity, privacy and safety of everyone involved.

1.2 Zero tolerance

The Colla does not tolerate discrimination, harassment or violence of any kind, including behaviour related to:

- sex, gender, gender identity or expression;
- sexual orientation;
- race, ethnic origin, nationality or language;
- religion or belief, or lack of belief;
- disability, chronic illness or mental health condition;
- age, family situation, social or economic status;
- body size or appearance.

1.3 Guiding principles

- **Objectivity and fairness:** everyone involved is treated respectfully and fairly.
- **Confidentiality:** identities, investigation details and measures are documented and shared only with those who need to know.

- **Victim-centred fairness:** what matters is the effect on the affected person, not the intent of the reported person. Perceptions and personal boundaries vary individually — what is experienced as discrimination, bullying, or harassment is assessed from the perspective of the affected person. This does not mean, however, that every perceived disadvantage is automatically classified as a violation — the assessment takes objective criteria into account.
- **Eased burden of proof:** the affected person only needs to make the facts credible, not prove them. The burden then shifts to the reported person, who must show that no violation of this protocol took place.
- **No time limit:** a concern can be raised at any time, including about past incidents.
- **Right to act:** affected people can, and are encouraged to, defend themselves and tell the other person the behaviour must stop. Keeping a written record (memory log) is recommended.
- **Non-retaliation:** no one may be treated worse for raising a concern, reporting, or helping with a case.
- **Right to support:** affected people may bring a person they trust to any conversation with an ombudsperson.
- **Anonymity:** the identity of the reporting person is shared only if strictly necessary; anonymous reports are followed up where possible.
- **Protection of the reported person:** until a case is fully clarified, their personal rights — including protection of identity — apply. If a complaint proves unfounded or knowingly false, the case is closed immediately and the person is exonerated.

2. Scope

2.1 Activities covered

This protocol applies to all activities organised by, or clearly connected to, the Colla, including:

- rehearsals and technical training;
- performances, trips and public events;
- meetings, assemblies and workshops;
- social activities, such as parties, meals, celebrations and informal gatherings;
- online spaces managed by the Colla (for example: chats, social media);
- communication between members when clearly linked to the Colla.

2.2 People covered

- all members of the Colla, including the Junta (Board/Vorstand), technical team and volunteers;
- guest participants, visiting castelleris and invited trainers;

- friends, family members and other people present at Colla activities, when interacting with the group.

2.3 Relation to other rules

This protocol does not replace applicable German law or the rules of partner organisations (for example, sports bodies or venues). Where an external rule is stricter, the stricter rule applies.

2.4 Children and young people

Situations involving children and young people are also covered by child and youth protection law. In these cases, the child protection representative¹ in Vereinigung Adler 1912 e.V. must be contacted, as well as the parents or legal guardians of the child. Where appropriate, Junta must also be informed.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Junta

The Junta is responsible for:

- approving and updating this protocol;
- appointing and supporting ombudspersons;
- making sure all members know about the protocol;
- making sure reports are handled according to this protocol;
- deciding on measures or sanctions after an investigation, where needed;
- ensuring safe record-keeping and data protection.

3.2 Equity Commission (ombudspersons)

The Colla appoints at least two, ideally three ombudspersons, ideally of different genders, who together form the Equity Commission. They must be easy to recognise in the rehearsal space, with their names and contact details available on internal communication channels.

They:

- receive and listen to concerns and reports;
- support the affected person;
- explain the available options and next steps;
- document reports in a secure and factual way;
- carry out internal investigations;
- propose preventive, punitive and restorative measures to the Junta;
- ideally receive regular training relevant to their role.

¹ The child protection representative (Kinderschutzbeauftragte:r in German) is a designated specialist responsible for ensuring the safety, well-being, and protection of children within an organization, institution, or community.

They must:

- respect confidentiality within the limits of safety and law;
- act with neutrality and care;
- declare any conflict of interest² and withdraw from a case if needed.

Equity Commission members volunteer for the role; their appointment is proposed, endorsed and potentially renewed by the Colla at the annual General Assembly.

If fewer than two ombudspersons can handle a case impartially, a member of the Junta steps in and takes the role of a Commission member for that case.

3.3 Awareness Team

Awareness Team members act as contact persons at specific Colla events and must be clearly identifiable, for example by wearing a visible symbol. Their aims are to:

- make sure there is always a direct point of contact present at events;
- share the Equity Commission's responsibility, in order to promote the sustainable participation of other members over time.

They must:

- be ready to give a first response if a situation arises;
- handle that first response according to this protocol;
- respect confidentiality within the limits of safety and law;
- report to the Equity Commission as soon as possible.

Awareness Team members volunteer as part of the task distribution prepared for a specific social event. The number of volunteers is determined case by case based on event size and characteristics.

3.4 Technical leadership (Cap de Colla and technical team)

The technical leadership is responsible for:

- supporting a safe and respectful environment in rehearsals and performances;
- intervening immediately when witnessing or hearing about a serious problem (for example, stopping a situation, separating people, contacting an ombudsperson);
- cooperating with the Equity Commission and members of the Junta when a case affects training or castells organisation.

3.5 All members and participants

Everyone shares responsibility for prevention and early intervention. Each person must:

² A conflict of interest arises whenever the Equity Commission cannot guarantee impartiality — for example, if a Commission member is involved in a case, or recognises they cannot stay impartial for any reason. This must be declared, and that person takes no part in handling the case; the rest of the Commission handles it instead.

- treat others with respect;
- respect personal and physical boundaries
- support other people in making their boundaries known to all relevant parties;
- avoid comments or behaviour that may be discriminatory or harassing;
- speak up or seek help if they witness discrimination or harassment;
- cooperate with the Equity Commission and the Junta in good faith.

4. Prevention and awareness

4.1 General conduct rules

To reduce risks and misunderstandings, the Colla adopts the following basic rules:

- Respect each person's limits regarding physical and verbal contact.
- Explain the level of physical contact required for each position in the castell.
- Avoid sexualised comments, jokes or gestures in all Colla spaces.
- Avoid comments about people's bodies that are not strictly necessary for safety or technical reasons; when such comments are needed, keep them factual and respectful.
- Use inclusive and non-offensive language.

4.2 Information for new members

When a new person joins the Colla, they receive clear information on:

- the nature of physical contact in castells and the importance of consent;
- the fact that physical characteristics are openly discussed as part of the activity;
- this protocol and the Colla's zero-tolerance approach to discrimination and harassment;
- who the ombudspersons are and how to reach them.

4.3 Social events

- The rejection of discrimination and harassment is stated explicitly at social events organised by the Colla.
- The presence of the Awareness Team is clearly communicated and its members are easy to recognise.

4.4 Training and communication

The Colla commits to provide:

- a readily accessible, up to date protocol on the website and WhatsApp group;
- at least one information session per year, which may include an anonymous questionnaire to monitor the situation over time and help improve the protocol and awareness measures;
- periodic training or discussion sessions on discrimination, harassment, consent and bystander intervention, when possible.

5. Reporting a concern

5.1 Who can report

Anyone taking part in Colla activities, or affected by behaviour connected to the Colla, can raise a concern or make a report. This includes the affected person, witnesses or friends who observe a situation (third persons), and parents or legal guardians of minors.

5.2 Who to report to

The reporting person chooses which ombudsperson to approach, and can ask for the case not to be handled by specific ombudspersons.

5.3 What can be reported

- discrimination or harassment experienced or witnessed;
- repeated conflict or behaviour that may become harassment;
- concerns about the behaviour of someone in a responsibility role;
- breaches of this protocol.

5.4 How to report

- in person to an ombudsperson, at rehearsal or another agreed time;
- by email or message to an ombudsperson;
- via a Junta member, who will forward it to the Equity Commission;
- by phone, in urgent cases, to a published contact number;
- by proxy (via another member), to increase anonymity if desired.

If someone is more comfortable reporting in a particular language, the Equity Commission will try to find a suitable person to receive the report in that language.

5.5 Anonymous reports

Anonymous reports (without name) can provide useful information but may limit what action is possible. The Colla takes anonymous reports seriously, assesses any risk to safety, and acts where possible while respecting the rights of everyone involved. Complete anonymity cannot always be guaranteed — for example, if the reported person must be informed to respond — and this is explained clearly to the affected person.

5.6 When to report

It helps to report as early as possible — but there is no fixed time limit. Past situations can also be raised, especially where there is a risk of repetition.

6. Handling reports: procedure

6.1 Overview

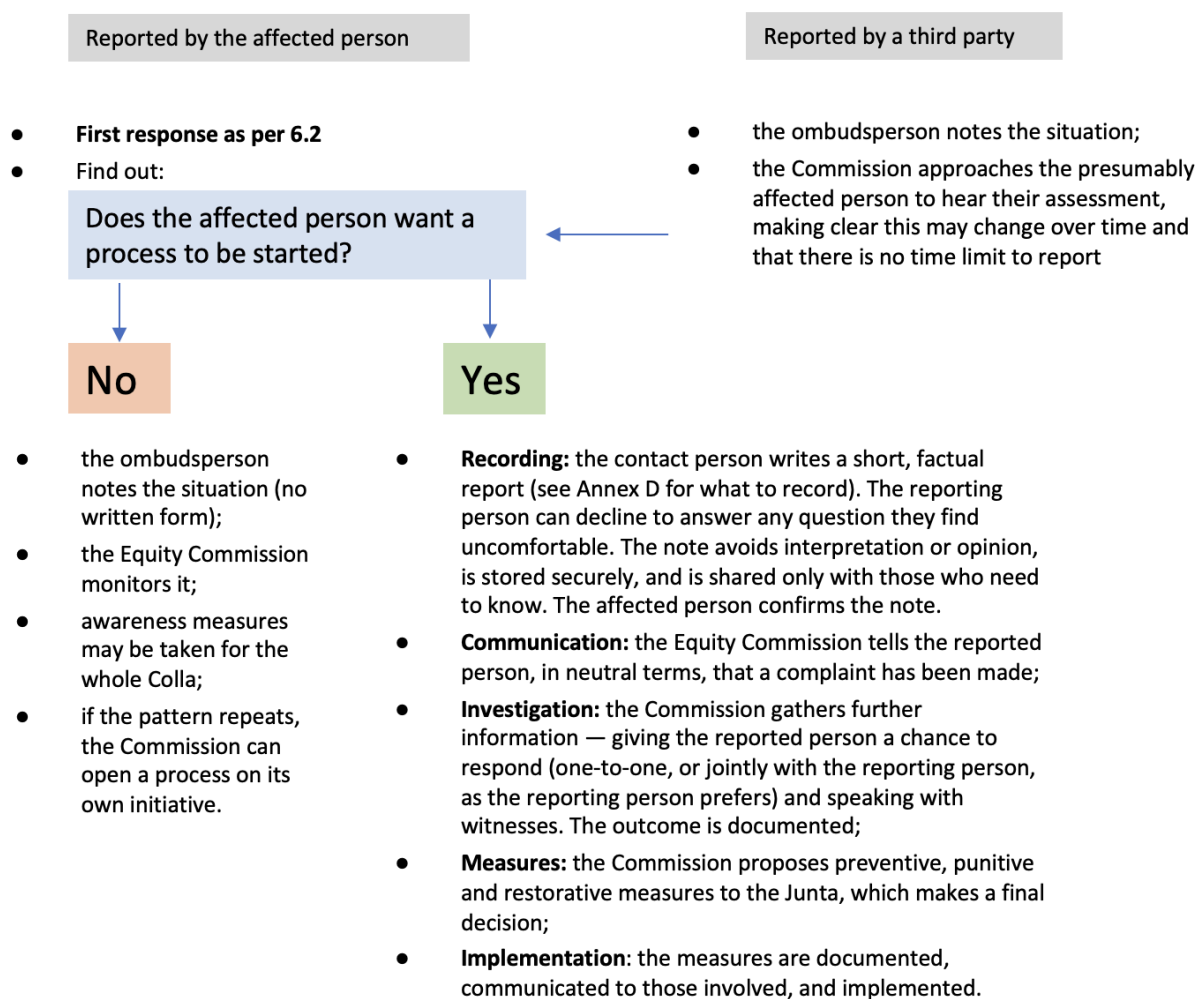
How a report is handled depends on three things: when it is reported (during the event or afterwards), who reports it (the affected person or someone else), and whether the affected person wants a formal process started. It does not depend on the “severity” of the behaviour.

6.2 First response

Whoever receives a report, on-site or off-site, should:

- listen calmly and without judgment;
- thank the person for trusting them;
- avoid questioning the person's feelings or experience;
- avoid promising outcomes that cannot be guaranteed;
- try to understand the affected person's current needs, including changes in rehearsals or performances that should be enforced immediately by the technical team;
- explain the support available, and the possible next steps and their consequences;
- agree with the person on what happens next.

6.3 Reported after the event (off-site)



6.4 Reported during the event (on-site)

Reported by the affected person

Reported by a third party

The ombudsperson or awareness volunteer notes the situation;

- the affected person is taken to a safe, calm place and given the **first response described in 6.2**;
 - **immediate measures are taken** to manage the situation — for example: warning the reported person and observing their behaviour; asking or requiring them to leave; suspending the activity; or contacting authorities and/or support services.
- the ombudsperson or awareness volunteer tries to speak directly with the presumably affected person for their assessment, making clear this may change over time and that there is no time limit to report;
 - if the affected person is not present or approachable, the ombudspersons and/or awareness volunteers decide immediate measures at its discretion, weighing whether the affected person seems in danger or uncomfortable, and whether the situation risks repeating or escalating;

afterwards the **case follows 6.3**.

6.5 Follow-up support

The Equity Commission stays in touch with the affected person to offer support, and can recommend external services better suited to accompany them.

6.6 Closing a case

A case is closed once the agreed measures are defined and under way, and the Commission judges that no further internal steps are needed. Everyone directly involved is informed when a case is closed.

6.7 Duration

The process from report to implementation should take no more than 60 days — but should be carried out as quickly as reasonably possible, leaving enough time for everyone involved to prepare and respond.

7. Measures and consequences

7.1 Proportionality and fairness

Sanctions must be proportionate to the behaviour and its impact, clearly explained to the person concerned, and documented in writing. In the interest of the whole Colla, the measures the Commission proposes and applies may differ from what the affected person wanted — this is communicated clearly during the case.

7.2 Assessing severity

The Commission assesses the severity of reported behaviour together with the affected person, considering:

- the affected person's own perception (feelings of violence, discomfort, unease, insecurity);
- their ability to act, and any violation of the conditions for consent (pressure, blackmail, intimidation);
- patterns of repetition;
- whether the act was intentional, whether recognised or not;
- the affected person's own sense of risk — not only physical, but psychological, social and other risks across areas of their life;
- the impact on the group as a whole — what the incident implicitly signals about whose place is accepted, and what behaviour is tolerated;
- aggravating factors, such as multiple discrimination, hierarchy, the affected person's vulnerability, retaliation, or obstruction of the investigation.

7.3 Supportive and protective measures

Regardless of any sanctions, the Colla can:

- adjust training positions or groups to avoid contact;
- agree communication rules between those involved;
- offer to accompany the affected person to external services (for example, counseling or legal advice);
- appoint a trusted person to give ongoing support.

7.4 Punitive measures

If discrimination or harassment is confirmed, the Junta may apply one or more of the following measures, depending on severity, frequency and context. At every level, the reported person is expected to accept and acknowledge what happened, and commit not to repeat it.

Level I

- verbal or written warning;
- requirement to attend external training (for example, on discrimination or consent);
- reconciliation steps, such as a mediated conversation between those involved.

Level II

- being blocked from the Colla's social media or WhatsApp groups;
- temporary exclusion from the Colla's social, leisure and recreational events;
- temporary exclusion from the Colla's activity spaces (rehearsals, performances, diades);
- if the person holds a position of responsibility, they are relieved of it for a set period;

- temporary ban from standing for positions of responsibility;
- temporary loss of the right to vote or speak at the assembly;
- suspension of active member rights.

Level III

- permanent expulsion from the Colla;
- permanent prohibition to participate in Colla events;
- seeking legal advice or informing the relevant authorities.

In very serious cases (for example, physical or sexual assault, serious threats, or situations involving minors), the Junta must consider immediate suspension during the investigation, and seek legal advice or inform the authorities if required by law.

Except for permanent expulsion, the Junta decides all timeframes for measures, and may review or adjust them as the case develops, taking into account the reported person's attitude and the affected person's wishes.

The reported person must keep the case confidential at all times. Failing to do so may be treated as an aggravating factor when the sanctions are reviewed.

8. Records and data protection

The Junta ensures that all written records:

- are stored in a secure place (a protected digital folder);
- are accessible only to authorised persons (Junta members and ombudspersons);
- are kept only as long as necessary for the purpose for which they were collected.

Access to records is restricted. A person directly affected may request the information held about their own case, unless this would seriously affect the rights of others or an ongoing process.

Records are not automatically deleted when someone leaves the Colla, in case they are still needed for an ongoing or future case. The Equity Commission reviews old records regularly and deletes them, usually, 5 years after closing the case.

9. Communication and review of the protocol

9.1 Accessibility

This protocol is easily accessible to all members: available in written form (digital, and printed at the rehearsal space where possible) and summarised in a short, clear overview.

9.2 Review

This protocol reflects what the Colla currently needs to be a safe space for everyone. The Junta and Equity Commission review it at least annually to see if there are:

- relevant laws change;

- the Colla's structure or activities change significantly;
- experience from handled cases suggests changes are needed.

9.3 Changes

Proposed changes are discussed with members — for example, at a general assembly or a dedicated meeting — before formal approval.

Annexes

Annex A — Key definitions

These are practical working definitions used in this protocol, not full legal definitions.

Discrimination

Unfair or unequal treatment of a person because of a characteristic such as gender, race, origin, disability, age, religion, or sexual orientation. Discrimination can be direct (open and targeted) or indirect (through rules or practices that disadvantage certain groups).

Harassment

Unwanted behaviour that is linked to a protected characteristic or personal identity, or is otherwise degrading or hostile, and that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It can be:

- verbal (for example, insults, comments, threats);
- non-verbal (for example, gestures, displaying offensive images);
- physical (for example, unwanted touching, blocking someone's way);
- online (for example, repeated unwanted messages, sharing private content).

Sexual harassment

Any unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, especially when it creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Examples include:

- sexual comments, jokes or “teasing” about a person's body or private life;
- unwanted touching or physical contact with a sexual meaning;
- showing sexual images or messages without consent;
- pressure to take part in sexual conversations or activities.

Bullying

Repeated behaviour that humiliates, isolates or harms a person, such as constant criticism or belittling, spreading rumours, or deliberately excluding someone from activities. Bullying can be a form of harassment or discrimination, especially when it targets a protected characteristic.

Retaliation

Any negative treatment of a person because they raised a concern, made a report, supported someone else in reporting, or took part in an investigation — for example, threats, exclusion, negative remarks, or any other disadvantage in the Colla. Retaliation is not allowed.

Consent (for physical and sexual contact)

Clear, free and informed agreement to a specific act. Consent must be voluntary (no pressure, threat or manipulation), informed (the person understands what they agree to), specific (agreeing to one act is not agreeing to everything), and reversible (it can be withdrawn at any time). Silence or lack of resistance is not consent.

Persons involved

- **Reporting person:** the person who reports a situation, whether or not they are directly affected.
- **Affected person:** the person who is allegedly discriminated against, harassed or harmed.
- **Reported person:** the person whose behaviour is the subject of a concern or complaint.

Annex B — Recognising discrimination and harassment

Examples in the Colla context

The following are examples that may indicate discrimination or harassment. This list is not exhaustive.

- **Sexist behaviour:** repeated comments that people of a particular gender should not take certain positions; jokes about “women being weaker”.
- **Racist or xenophobic behaviour:** jokes about a person's accent or origin; using slurs; excluding people based on nationality; repeatedly speaking about someone in a language they do not understand, in a hostile way.
- **LGBTIQ+-phobic behaviour:** mocking a person's partner or identity; using “gay” or similar words as insults; pressuring someone to hide their identity.
- **Body shaming:** repeated negative comments about weight, body shape, height or other physical characteristics that are not relevant for safety or technical reasons.
- **Sexual harassment:** unwanted touching in the pinya that goes beyond what is technically necessary; sexual jokes about a person's role in the castell; sending unwanted sexual messages to another member.
- **Bullying:** repeatedly excluding a person from social activities; constant criticism or mocking of one member during or after rehearsals.

Risk situations

Problems may be more likely in situations such as:

- crowded spaces with a lot of physical contact (pinya, crowded parties);
- late-night social events with alcohol and/or other psychoactive substances;
- travel and overnight stays;
- online chats with an informal tone and images.

In these situations, all members should be extra attentive to their own behaviour and to the wellbeing of others.

Annex C — Example of how a case could be handled

This example is for illustration only. Real cases may differ and need careful assessment.

During a party after a performance, a member repeatedly makes sexual jokes about another member's body and puts their arm around them, even after being asked to stop. The affected person feels uncomfortable and leaves early. The next day, they message an ombudsperson.

Possible steps:

- The ombudsperson arranges a private conversation. They listen, try to understand the affected person's needs, and inform them about the possible next steps and consequences. These may include informing the Junta on necessary changes in the training position. In this case, the affected person wants their position in the pinya to be changed.
- The affected person decides that they want a process to be started.
- The ombudsperson tells the Equity Commission that a case has opened. The Equity Commission tells Junta that the affected person wants their position in the pinya to be changed.
- The reported person is informed of the complaint and invited to give their view of what happened.
- The Equity Commission speak with one or two witnesses who were nearby.
- The investigation concludes that sexual harassment took place.
- The Junta decides on: a written warning; a required training session on consent and harassment; a temporary restriction from social events.

Both people are informed of the outcome, and the ombudsperson checks in with the affected person after a few weeks.

Annex D — What to record in a report and reporting form

When documenting a report, the ombudsperson or awareness volunteer collects only the information needed to understand the case:

- who is raising the concern, and how to contact them;
- who is affected;
- who is reported;
- what happened, in simple factual terms (what, where, when, how often);
- whether there were witnesses;
- whether the affected person feels safe at the moment;
- what they would like to happen next.

The following structure can be used as a template:

Internal complaint form

Case number:	
Receiving person:	

Reporting person:

Full name:	
Sex/gender:	
Phone:	
Email address:	
Colla castellera:	

..... is filing this complaint as a person with knowledge of the harassment. *(Fill in only if the reporting person is different from the affected person.)*

Reported person:

Full name:	
Sex/gender:	
Phone:	
Colla castellera:	

Account of events in simple factual terms (what, where, when, how often):

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Witnesses (if there are witnesses to the events, please provide their full name and contact):

The reporting person requests that this complaint be processed and that the events described above be investigated, in accordance with the protocol for the prevention and handling of discrimination and harassment.

Date:

Place:

Signature *(full name suffices)*:

Annex E — External counselling, support services, and training courses

The services below are independent of the Colla. They can provide professional counselling, crisis support, medical or legal advice, or help identify a more specialised service.

The Equity Commission can help an affected person contact an external service if requested. Seeking external support does not require making an internal complaint to the Colla.

Immediate danger or emergency

Police: 110 — for immediate danger or serious threats.

Emergency medical/fire services: 112 — for medical emergencies or situations requiring immediate emergency assistance.

Berlin Crisis Service (Berliner Krisendienst)

For **acute psychological or emotional crises**, including situations where someone feels unsafe, overwhelmed or unable to cope. Counselling can be anonymous. The service provides immediate crisis support and can refer people to further services.

- Tel.: +49 30 390 63 00
- Available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by telephone
- Website: <https://www.berliner-krisendienst.de/>

LARA — Centre against sexualised violence

For **sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual violence and unwanted sexual contact**. LARA offers confidential counselling, crisis support, information about legal options and help finding further support. Counselling is available in German, English, French, Turkish and Polish; interpretation can be arranged for other languages. LARA supports women, trans*, inter* and non-binary people aged 14 and above.

- Hotline: +49 30 216 88 88
- Monday - Friday, 9:00 - 18:00
- Email: beratung@lara-berlin.de
- Website: <https://lara-berlin.de/home>

Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes

For **discrimination**, including discrimination based on gender, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. The service provides free counselling and information about possible next steps and legal options.

- Tel.: +49 800 546 546 5
- Email: beratung@ads.bund.de
- Website: <https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.gov.de/DE/startseite/startseite-node.html>

WEISSER RING

For **people affected by a crime or violence**, including physical assault, threats, stalking and sexual offences. WEISSER RING provides free, confidential support and can help find appropriate local services, including outside Berlin. Nationwide, free and anonymous. Anonymous online counselling is also available.

- Victim helpline: 116 006
- Daily, 7:00 - 22:00
- Website: [weisser-ring.de](https://www.weisser-ring.de)

Gewaltschutzambulanz der Charité

For **medical examination and documentation after violence**. A police report is not required for confidential documentation. German and English are available, and language mediation can be arranged.

- Tel.: +49 30 450 570 270
- Website: <https://gewaltschutzambulanz.charite.de/>

Berlin Kinderschutz-Hotline

For **concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person**, advice can be obtained from the Berlin Kinderschutz-Hotline:

- Tel.: +49 30 610 066

Child protection for Berlin sports

The child protection coordination offices of the Landes Sport Bund Berlin offer **training courses**, as well as support in shaping **preventive measures and counselling** regarding child protection.

- Website: <https://www.lsb-berlin.de/themenwelten/kinderschutz/schnelle-hilfe>

Counselling in other languages

For people who prefer to receive support in Catalan, the Catalan Government's **Servei d'Informació i Orientació Telemàtica a les Víctimes del Delicte (SIOTVD)** provides free information and guidance to people who consider themselves victims of a crime. Counselling is available in **Catalan, Spanish, English, French, German and Arabic**. The service can provide information about available medical, psychological and legal support and refer people to appropriate services.

- Tel.: +34 900 121 884
- Monday - Friday, 8:00 - 22:00
- Email: infovictimesdelicte.justicia@gencat.cat
- Website:
<https://seujudicial.gencat.cat/ca/que-cal-fer-si/soc-victima-de/soc-victima-dun-delicte/servei-dinformacio-i-orientacio-telematica-a-la-victima-del-delicte>

Diversity Trainings

The Berlin State Office for Equal Treatment and against Discrimination (LADS) Academy offers **diversity training courses focussing on awareness**, stimulating reflections on our assumptions and prejudices.

- Tel.: 030 – 259 259 29
- Email: ladsakademie@ariadne-an-der-spree.de
- Website: <https://www.berlin.de/sen/lads/sensibilisierung/lads-akademie/>