



GOODWILL AGREEMENT FOR A CHILD-FRIENDLY VÕRU

For years now, Võru has been known as a friendly place for children of all ages. The town has recognised institutions, organisations and individuals who have stood out for boosting the well-being of youngsters and their families. Our hope is that Võru continues to stand out as a town where:

- happy children are raised in families where there are contented adults – parents, grandparents, teachers and a caring community;
- child-friendliness is reflected first and foremost in the everyday lives of the people of Võru and in its idyllic environment, which values both its language and culture; and
- active youngsters are able to fulfil their potential and realise their dreams with the help of 21st-century technology.

Discussions with stakeholders reached the conclusion that Võru's child-friendliness is expressed in four key areas. Our hope is that Võru continues to offer:

- an urban space that is both mentally and physically safe for its users;
- modern learning opportunities and competitive education;
- support for families with children; and
- opportunities for families to spend their free time together.

Stakeholders have suggested that it would be a greater incentive for everyone to contribute to child-friendliness if it was known and agreed that the chosen course will bring people from different walks of life together throughout the life cycle. As such, we have drawn up a goodwill agreement for the community which confirms the willingness of stakeholders to make Võru a more child-friendly place and describes the actions they will take to achieve this through their core activities and on the basis of goodwill.

COMPANIES and EMPLOYERS can contribute more to the well-being of their workers and their families in their core activities by:

- expanding opportunities for recreation, family time and diversified sport and cultural activities (rethinking flexible working hours and schedules to this end);
- introducing the company to children through family days and community events;
- contributing to the Võru community through charity and sponsorship (jobs for youngsters and educational activities in cooperation with kindergartens, schools, after-school clubs and the local youth centre); and
- valuing families with children as loyal customers by contributing to a safe urban environment.

The opportunities for providers of NON-FORMAL EDUCATION (hobby schools and NGOs) are to:

- create affordable, high-quality recreational options for children;
- organise exciting, child-friendly public events in the town to help youngsters identify their strengths and discover new interests;
- create opportunities for parents to discover new hobbies, healthy lifestyles and family activities through their children's activities;
- contribute to a safe and caring atmosphere and urban environment in which there are places and attractions designed especially for young people; and
- look for ways to work with other hobby schools, organisations and institutions to widen the available choices.

PARENTS and FAMILIES can:

- dedicate time to their children on a daily basis and serve as role models through their actions and behaviour, showing respect for and highlighting the good that Võru has to offer;
- draw their children's attention to the safe, clean, well-lit and well-maintained urban environment of Võru and take care of their home and its surroundings together with their children;
- support their children in attending school and learning and ensure a home environment that ensures the children's development, working with kindergarten, schools and hobby schools and having the courage to ask for and accept help whenever needed;

- take advantage of the many and varied opportunities to spend time together at cultural and sports events;
- play an active role on school and kindergarten boards, noting situations and intervening in them (where appropriate) so as to support a healthy, caring and child-friendly atmosphere in the town; and
- maintain the intergenerational bond, taking responsibility for their children and their actions and for their own parenting skills.

STUDENTS and YOUNGSTERS can look after their hometown and their fellow citizens by:

- recognising, highlighting and preserving the good things Võru has to offer (children's festivals and other youth events, youth work and recreational activities for young people and a thriving urban space);
- noticing bullying and being intolerant of any expression of violence;
- contributing to the governing of the town on issues of interest to them via the Youth Council and student councils; and
- acknowledging bottlenecks and having the courage to express their views on what could be done differently or better.

With the support of the community, EDUCATION AND YOUTH INSTITUTIONS can provide an environment in which children and young people develop in accordance with their needs and abilities and which is safe, supportive and inclusive by:

- guaranteeing a child-friendly and developmentally supportive organisational culture in their institutions and good Estonian-language education;
- ensuring the professionalism, expertise and commitment of their staff and youth workers;
- working with families to support children's individual development; and
- taking advantage of opportunities to work with businesses, memory institutions and one another.

VÕRU TOWN GOVERNMENT encourages all parties to contribute to a child-friendly environment in their field or area by:

- monitoring and analysing changes in making both physical and cultural urban space child-friendly and the ways in which stakeholders can contribute to a safe environment;
- developing the conditions necessary for young people's development and continuously seeking ways to do this via the local budget, getting youth representatives involved in decision-making;
- recognising individuals and organisations that have contributed to shaping a child-friendly environment in Võru;
- agreeing on indicators to describe whether and how Võru is becoming more child-friendly and drawing up guidelines for the organisation of child-friendly events; and
- raising awareness among parents and the community by sharing information, mediating training opportunities and arranging public information events.

ALL PARTIES collectively agree that:

- child-friendliness is first and foremost the understanding that children are part of the families in which they grow up and important members of the community, and that child-friendliness permeates everything the town does;
- the best example that can be set for children is when adults (incl. newcomers) who come into direct or indirect contact with children feel safe and happy in Võru;
- there is a greater need to notice and highlight the most child- and family-friendly aspects of urban life and in urban space, the developments there have been in this respect and that possibilities that urban space offers; and
- every organisation and institution can contribute to the child-friendliness of their hometown through its core activities, and the child-friendliness of the town can have a positive impact on every organisation and institution.