

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### Guiding principles

**All children have a right to feel safe and their welfare is a high priority. It is especially important for us that children will feel safe while sharing in the activities of the projects we support through volunteer placements and participation.**

***“Children have rights as human beings and also need special care and protection.”***  
**UNICEF**

*people and places* is in absolute agreement with this statement. We have developed our Child Protection Policy as part of our commitment to protect children and young people wherever we work. This Policy is based on information from our local partners, as well as information on the UNICEF and ECPAT websites.

UNICEF – <http://www.unicef.org/crc> - Convention on the Rights of the Child

ECPAT – <http://www.ecpat.net/EI/index.asp>  
End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes

Here are some of the key points in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- ***All children should be protected from violence, abuse and neglect, and governments should protect them.*** Article 19
- ***Children should not be allowed to do work that is dangerous or might make them ill, or stop them going to school.*** Article 32
- ***Children have the right to be protected from dangerous drugs, and from the business of making or selling them.*** Article 33
- ***Nobody can do anything to your body that you do not want them to do, and grown-ups should protect you.*** Article 34
- ***No child should be punished in a way that humiliates or hurts them.*** Article 37

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## We aim to achieve child safeguarding during all volunteer placements through:

**Prevention:** *people and places* exercises due diligence through our criteria for volunteer selection. All volunteers are required to provide references and criminal records checks before any project is asked to accept their placements.

**Awareness:** volunteers will be provided with destination-specific codes of conduct, including this Child Protection Policy and that of the relevant project where available. Through awareness and practice, volunteers will minimise the risks to children. *people and places*, through our partnerships with our local partners, provides support and supervision before, during and after volunteer placements. When volunteers are valued, respected and fairly treated they can enjoy their work and the children will benefit.

**Reporting:** volunteers will know what steps to take when concerns arise regarding child safety. A Reporting Procedure is attached to this policy so that it is clear what to do if there is a concern about a Child Protection matter. Named individuals within *people and places* and our local partner organisations are appointed as Child Protection Officers (CPOs) – the *people and places* CPO is Kate Stefanko (deputy Dianne Ashman). It is their responsibility to respond to any complaints made by volunteers, or relevant party.

**Responding:** volunteers can rest assured that our local partners will take heed of any such reports and will take action as appropriate.

We value and respect all children and, in partnership with local partners, encourage all volunteers to listen to children's views and suggestions on matters that directly affect them.

*people and places*, with our local partners, will review this policy annually to ensure that it is still relevant and meets all Child Protection requirements.

## Prevention: Criteria for volunteer selection & placement confirmation

***people and places* will apply due diligence by:**

- Identifying that a volunteer applicant has experience and / or qualifications relevant to the project
- Discussing in advance a volunteer applicant's motivation to work with children
- Requiring information about relevant life experience
- Requiring relevant criminal records screening
- Taking up at least two reference checks by email and / or by phone – direct contact will be made with at least one of these referees
- Sharing all relevant information about the volunteer with the local partner organisation
- Providing volunteers with as much information as possible about the project and local context, including the PMT's Code of Conduct for volunteers
- Providing a placement outline and agreeing the volunteer's role with them
- Requiring volunteers to abide by and sign the Child Protection Policy Code of Conduct

**Local Partners will:**

- Discuss a volunteer application with the relevant project
- Ensure that the project accepts the volunteer application
- Provide *people and places* with an outline placement for the volunteer
- Provide local orientation and project introductions
- Provide emergency contact names and contact details
- Discuss and give appropriate training on child protection issues to accommodation providers.
- Meet regularly with the project and volunteers and accommodation hosts
- Support the volunteers in their agreed role

**Awareness: Policy Code of Conduct**

This outlines appropriate standards of behaviour for all volunteers, whether long term or temporary. The Code serves to protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also serves to protect volunteers by avoiding allegations being made.

*people and places*, local partners and volunteers are required to comply with this Code of Conduct.

***people and places* commits to provide full support for volunteers to:**

- treat children and young people with respect, listen to and value their ideas and opinions
- listen to children and take relevant and appropriate action to protect their well-being
- report any violations of these standards of behaviour
- be aware of situations which may present risks and manage them effectively
- be visible and not work alone with the children, unless in a safe environment and specifically directed to do so by the person responsible for them

***people and places* requires that volunteers will not:**

- hit or otherwise physically assault or abuse children
- interact with any child in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- seek to use children in any way to meet adult needs
- use prejudicial or oppressive behaviour and/or language with children
- discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, religion, culture, vulnerability, disability, sexuality, civil or family status or position in society
- develop 'special' relationships or physical/sexual relationships with children
- give gifts or show favouritism

- take a child on or in any form of transport, without prior agreement by the named CPO / local partner
- have a child/children to stay overnight without prior agreement by the child's parent or guardian
- be alone with a child in a room with the door closed, or spend excessive time alone with children away from others – including any children who may be members at their homestay/guesthouse, host's family or community.

This is not a complete list. The basic understanding is that we will all avoid actions or behaviour which may constitute bad practice or potentially abusive behaviour.

## **Photography and Video Code of Conduct**

***“All children have the right to privacy”*** Article 16 - UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Children love having their photograph taken, and volunteers enjoy capturing such photographic memories, but we ask volunteers to respect children's right to privacy. Volunteers are expected to ask the children and the adults responsible for them if they can take photographs and always to maintain respect for the dignity of the person being photographed - they should consider whether, if the roles were reversed, they would be happy for someone to take a photograph of them or of their child in that situation. If photographs are to be published on social media volunteers should consider carefully who will see the image, what message it portrays and how it might be interpreted. If photographs or videos are intended for fund-raising or awareness-raising purposes, we ask that volunteers discuss this with the local partner, project manager or *people and places* before publishing.

### ***People and places* requires that volunteers will agree:**

- to seek informed consent from the child and/or his/her parents or guardian or responsible adult at the project prior to a recording, photograph or image being taken
- to explain how and where this material will be used
- not to use a child's name on any social networking sites, webpage or printed materials. This is for the child's protection. Names may be changed and this change indicated.
- not to post or publish photographs or videos of individual children in such a manner that might lead to that child being identified or put at risk
- not to take images that could be perceived as inappropriate, sexually provocative or degrading

**Reporting procedure: what to do if you suspect any form of child welfare / safeguarding issue**

<b>Who can make a report?</b>	Parent, Child, Staff, Volunteer or any concerned person.
<b>What can be reported?</b>	Any child safety concerns including a child telling you of - abuse/harm; an accusation; a suspicion or observation of inappropriate behaviour; a break of Code of Conduct; environmental safety issues
<b>How do you make a report?</b>	Verbal report, letter, email, telephone <b>or</b> meeting.
<b>Who do you report to?</b>	The designated volunteer coordinator on the project – AND – <i>people and places</i> local partner  (Local partner will inform <i>people and places</i> named CPO by email within 48 hours of report)
<b>What happens after you have made your report?</b>	Internal Process with project to investigate complaint (for more detail see below). Local partner to follow up with project and <i>people and places</i> Due to privacy issues we may not be able to report back to the volunteer for some time If applicable, Police or Child Support Network notified. Support offered to child, parent, person who reports and accused staff member/volunteer where required.
<b>Outcome</b>	Investigation; solution decided; relevant staff, volunteers, parents and child notified of outcome. Policies, procedures updated where necessary to avoid the same thing happening again.

## **Internal Process for Investigating Child Safeguarding Issues**

**At all times the rights and welfare of the child are of the highest importance. Any investigation will aim to respect the privacy and safety of the child, ensuring that he / she is contacted in a child friendly manner.**

1. Any person who has knowledge of, suspects, or has witnessed a potential child safeguarding issue should immediately contact the local partner designated Child Protection Officer, followed by local co-worker if appropriate, project principal or manager, *people and places*.
2. A verbal and / or written report should be made within 24 hours to allow early intervention and prompt investigation.
3. On receipt of the report the local partner's designated CPO will begin an internal investigation.
4. The person causing concern will be informed that an allegation has been made against him / her and they will be given the opportunity to respond.
5. The local partner CPO will decide on the appropriate action to be taken to be taken. Where appropriate, a complaint will be filed with the relevant Police and / or authorities. Full co-operation will be given to the authorities during any external investigation.
6. Where the person causing concern is an expatriate, the relevant law enforcement authorities will be informed with due regard given to the potential for extraterritorial proceedings by the expatriate's country of origin.

## **Response to Investigation**

1. At the conclusion of the investigation, the person causing concern, the child and his / her family/guardian and the person who made the initial report should be informed of concerns or allegation, the results of the investigation and what corrective action, if any, will be taken.
2. In the event that an allegation is proven to be untrue, or even fabricated, appropriate steps will be taken for follow-up with the person who has been accused, the child, and the person who reported the incident. Distinction should be made in follow-up procedures between someone who made an honest mistake in reporting an incident and deliberate slander. Efforts will be made to provide assistance to an associate accused of any form of abuse with children, including counselling or other appropriate forms of support.
3. If abuse is proven by the investigation, reasonable efforts will be made to assist the child in coping with any physical or emotional trauma he or she may be experiencing. This may include medical treatment, psychological counselling or any other form of assistance deemed necessary and appropriate. Any such support will be put in place by the local partner, who may organise support themselves or refer the incident to local support agencies.
4. If the investigation concludes that abuse has occurred which is subject to criminal prosecution according to national laws, all findings will be reported to the relevant national police authorities and full co-operation afforded them during an external investigation. If the accused is an expatriate, the relevant law enforcement authorities will also be informed with due regard given to the potential for extraterritorial proceedings by the expatriate's country of origin. In the event an associate is discharged for proven child abuse, such information will be disclosed as requested by police, etc. Such disclosures will be made in accordance with applicable law and/or customs.

## VOLUNTEER COMPLIANCE AGREEMENT FORM

I have read this Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct and Photography Code of Conduct and agree to abide by all terms of it at all times.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_