

Child Safeguarding

Objective

Child safeguarding encompasses protecting children all forms of harm including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, online abuse, neglect, negligent treatment, and commercial exploitation. Our Child Safeguarding policy is in place to ensure we are conscious of the risks to children, to raise awareness to our customers and partners, and to implement safeguarding measures across all the areas of our operation.

Overview

We strive to have a positive social and environmental impact at home and in the regions that we operate. The objective of our child safeguarding policy is:

- To protect children and young people in the destinations in which we operate. This includes the children of families who use our services.
- To educate our staff, suppliers and clients on the principles of child safeguarding and child protection.

Our Child Safeguarding policy applies to anyone travelling with or working for (or on behalf of) Journey Latin America and any associated brands, such as Journeyscape. We encourage our staff, clients and local partners to monitor child safeguarding standards in the areas we work in and report any concerns back to us so they can be acted upon.

The guiding principles are that:

- Children and young people should never experience any kind of abuse.
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, and of their right to be safe and protected from harm.

Our Pledge

As a responsible tour operator, we commit ourselves to implement the following six criteria:

1. To establish an ethical policy regarding child safeguarding
2. To educate staff and provide guidance to our local representatives in travel destinations.
3. To introduce a Supplier Code of Conduct and the inclusion of Child Welfare requirements in our Service Level Agreement with suppliers which reiterates a common repudiation of the exploitation of children and good practice guidelines highlighting the standards we expect on the ground.
4. To provide information on Child Safeguarding to our clients through our pre-departure information. The information will echo our commitment to socially responsible tourism and include contact details travellers can use to raise any concerns.
5. Our business has signed up to “The Code”, a set of rules designed to prevent the sexual exploitation of children in tourism.
6. To review our policy annually with the aim of continuous improvement on its implementation

Interactions Review

We have reviewed all our products and services which may include potential interactions with children. These fall under the following travel experiences:

Community visits

On many of our trips particularly to more remote areas we feel visiting and interacting with local people can be (when done properly) a valuable and rewarding experience for all involved, as well as bringing the financial benefits directly into the hands of local communities. However, we realise not all communities will be familiar in receiving foreign tourists, and if the interactions are not planned effectively, they can have a negative effect. We will therefore ensure guides and service providers are aware of potential risks and to report any concerns with regards to child welfare they come across.

Homestays

Homestays are a popular way to experience community-based tourism, given their unique character and the insight they offer into ordinary life. However, we are not complacent in assuming that there is no risk, however unlikely.

Potential risks to host families include, the risk of abuse from travellers who sleep and wander freely through a household and a risk of inappropriate behaviour from visitors which is not age appropriate.

It is important that travellers are not left alone with children in a homestay and similarly that travelling children are always supervised by their parents or guardians.

Begging and child vendors

Visitors may encounter children working in informal vendor settings. This is considered child labour and such work puts them at increased risk and exposure to unsafe situations. We recommend not buying items from child vendors.

We also recognise it is often difficult to ignore beggars. However, giving money and gifts to children might dissuade their parents from sending their children to school as well as encourage the practice.

We do not support tourists giving money or food directly to children begging and recommends instead donating to a local children's charity. We and our suppliers can provide information on reputable organisations, or you may consider a contribution to one of our recommended projects through the LATA Foundation.

Orphanages

We do not include visits to orphanages on any of our trips. Visiting Orphanages is bolstering an outdated model of care which is proven to harm children. It may also incentivise the trafficking and unnecessary displacement of children from their families. Orphanage tourism also has proven links to child abuse and exploitation.

School visits

We have reviewed all community visits which include visits to schools and we do not include such visits in our itineraries. Additionally, we recommend our suppliers to remove such visits from their portfolios. Although we are confident that such visits are well intentioned and part of an ongoing commitment to improve the lives of local populations, we feel these will invariably be disruptive to a

child's education and a similar equivalent would not be an acceptable arrangement in the UK. When children are at school, they should be free to learn and play in a safe environment. Visiting schools and giving gifts also promotes a belief that all tourists are safe and perpetuates ideas of inequality. We will however continue to support local education providers through the LATA Foundation and the wide-ranging charities our local partners support.

Photography

We will review all the images of children in our family brochures, marketing materials and website:

- We will ensure dignity and respect is observed in the images used.
- Unless explicit permission is given by the child and guardian, images will ensure the participants are not identifiable.
- Images will require the appropriate permission from the child and parent/guardian which includes informed consent and an understanding of the purpose and scope of how any images will be used.

Traveller Advice

We hope all our trips are fulfilling to all involved and have a positive effect on the destination. We are conscious some of the best and most rewarding experiences involve interacting with locals and our Child Safeguarding policy aims to ensure all such encounters are managed appropriately and enrich the holiday.

With that in mind, below are some tips as suggested by the Child Safe movement (www.thinkchildsafe.org).

- Children are not tourist attractions. Children living or studying in schools, orphanages or slums shouldn't be exposed to tourist visits.
- Obtain permission before taking photographs, and in the case of children, permission should be sought from their parents or guardian.
- Be cautious of volunteering with children. Children need experienced and skilled caretakers and teachers who know the local culture and language.
- We recommend not giving to beggars or buying items from child vendors. Although often difficult to ignore beggars, giving money and gifts to children might dissuade their parents from sending their children to school as well as encourage the practice. We and our suppliers can provide information on reputable organisations, or you may consider a contribution to one of our recommended projects through the [LATA Foundation](#)
- Professionals know best – Call a child protection hotline, contact a local organisation, our local representatives or the police if a child needs help. The international platform where suspicious activities can be reported is <https://dontlookaway.report/>
- If any visitors are concerned about child welfare and safeguarding, please inform our local representatives or contact us on our emergency telephone number or email us at CS@journeylatinamerica.co.uk / CS@journeyscape.com and appropriate action will be taken.

Supplier communication

We consider all forms of abuse towards children to be unacceptable and recognises that we have a duty to safeguard children – that is to keep them safe, promote their wellbeing and protect them from abuse and harm.

Any form of behaviour which breaches these principles must be reported. We will end any contractual agreement prematurely if the Supplier does not take adequate measures to prevent the exploitation of children within the direct supply chain (e.g. accommodation, excursions, etc).

As a minimum requirement we ask all our partners to commit to:

- Not employing children under the age of employment as defined by national law or International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No 138.
- To fight against the exploitation of children
- Not to tolerate any child sexual abuse whatsoever

Child Safeguarding – Good practice guidelines for suppliers

General Guidelines

- The supplier of services should establish a procedure when designing new products and services to identify potential risks to children and develop a child welfare risk-management plan
- Guides should be aware of - and act upon - any inappropriate interactions visitors may have with children, including but not limited to: giving sweets or gifts to children, taking photographs with and/or of children without permission, entering private areas without invitation, spending time alone with a child or children and physical contact.
- The supplier of services should establish mechanisms for communities and children to provide grievances or complaints against tourist/tourism activities.

The following guidelines are recommended and in line with our Child Safeguarding Interactions Review.

Community Visits

- Establish operational practices for providers that address the welfare of children in the community and children-as-clients to ensure they are always safe and free from harm
- Guides and service providers should advise that gifts are not given to individual community members or children.
- Guides and service providers should ensure there are no interactions or activities which includes physical contact with children (eg, inappropriate photos, hand holding, hugging etc).
- Guides and service providers must ensure travellers are not left alone when in the presence of local children.

Homestays

- The supplier should develop a set of operational practices for homestay providers that address the welfare of homestay families and children in the community.
- Our suppliers should carefully select and continuously monitor homestay providers and their suitability to host clients and families.
- Homestay monitoring processes should address the welfare of child customers, children of host families, and children living in host communities. To do this, the supplier should actively engage with host providers.
- Hosts are informed that child welfare is a key concern for our business.
- Under no circumstances are travellers to share rooms with children, unless they are the child's parent or legal guardian.
- Hosts should inform travellers of good behaviour guidelines upon arrival.

- Hosts should be encouraged to express themselves freely and report any concerns as they occur.

Begging and child vendors

- We do not support tourists giving money or food directly to children begging and recommends instead donating to a local children's charity.
- Guides and service providers should inform travellers on the correct ways of interacting when confronted with children begging or selling goods/services

School Visits and Orphanages

- Visits to schools and orphanages should not be offered in any included or optional excursions for our clients. Schools are meant to be a safe place for children. They are not tourist attractions. Visiting school classrooms and orphanages not only disrupts child development but can also put children at risk of emotional or physical harm through direct or indirect contact with travellers with inadequate supervision. This inappropriate behaviour can also seed unhealthy child behaviours and ideals, encouraging situations of exploitation.
- Many well-intentioned clients may want to give gifts to children centres, but this can do more harm than good, as some institutions exploit children for commercial gain. The supplier should advise clients on reputable child friendly charities which they can donate to instead which benefits local children and the community at large.

*Please note this does not apply to vocational training programs which uses a tourism enterprise to create educational and employment pathways for adolescents and young adults and is taking advantage of traveller visits to benefit youth for their futures. In these specific circumstances a documented Child Welfare Policy should be observed and students must be either adolescents or young adults in line with local laws (in most cases 16 years of age or older)

Photography

- Guides and service providers should ensure visitors obtain permission from the subjects of photographs if they are identifiable, and in the case of children, permission should be sought from their parents or guardian;
- As a general guide, photographic images should always respect the dignity, values, history, religion and culture of the people portrayed. If they do not, they are not acceptable.

Children under the age of 18 travelling as clients

The supplier should conduct safety checks for transport vehicles with children in mind (eg, safety belts) - See our Safe Journey policy for more details.

- The supplier should conduct accommodation inspections with children in mind. (eg, balcony safety, pool safety etc) - see our Safe Journey policy for more details
- The supplier must ensure all company representatives and staff meet the legal standards for working with children.
- The supplier should establish a response system to uphold the wellbeing of child customers in event an incident that incapacitates their parent/legal guardian. This can include a client incurring serious physical harm or death, a client going missing, being neglectful, or subject to legal action

- The supplier should train all company representatives on how to identify child abuse and how to react in the event that child abuse is flagged.

Child labour

Any form of child labour in the products of our business are not permitted unless the age limits defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) are observed. This includes cultural or folkloric performances dances, and shows. While they can maintain traditions and generate income, they can also create new dependencies.

The following age limits must be strictly observed and complied with in tourism activities and performances involving children:

< 13 years – No work

13 years - Light work

- Light, age-appropriate work to assist in the family business or to earn pocket money that is not dangerous to the child's health and development
- No negative impact on the child's education and on school, study, play or sleep times or vocational orientation programmes
- No continuous work, i.e., basically within a narrow time not exceeding 2 hours a day, only after school or during holidays
- No exploitative conditions
- Supervision of the child by parents or other guardians is necessary to ensure compliance with the above mentioned points

15 years - Starting age for work subject to conditions

- The right of juvenile workers to employment must be respected, and juvenile workers must not be excluded from work because of their age
- Heavy, hazardous, or mentally stressful work is not permitted
- Young people must not be employed on night shifts or in work that is hazardous to their health or immoral
- Safety and social development must not be impaired
- Employers must comply with all legal requirements for employment and maintain personnel lists and job descriptions
- Evidence of further training in occupational health and safety and health checks must be provided
- Overtime is not permitted. The combination of work time, school time, and commuting time must not exceed ten hours

18 years - Starting age for work

- All legal regulations must be complied with
- Health and safety regulations in particular must be complied with