

IMMERSIVE TRAVEL ASIA



Child Safety

CODES OF CONDUCT

INTERNAL & SUPPLIER STANDARD

FOREWORD

Why this exists

Children are the most vulnerable people in any destination we operate in, and often the easiest to overlook when a trip is being designed. This document sets out where we draw the line, what we ask of our suppliers, and how our own staff and guides are expected to behave.

We work across countries where child protection systems vary widely, and where a significant number of children face real risk, from poverty, from exploitation, from an industry that sometimes treats them as part of the scenery rather than as people with rights.

This isn't a marketing statement. It's the standard every itinerary, every supplier relationship, and every member of our team is held to.

DEFINITIONS

What we mean by these terms

A child, for the purposes of this policy, is anyone under eighteen, unless the law of a given country sets a different age. That includes our own children, the children of our staff and suppliers, the children travelling with our clients, and the children in the communities we visit.

Child welfare means protecting a child's safety and supporting their emotional, physical, and social development. Child abuse, using the World Health Organization's definition, covers any physical or emotional mistreatment, neglect, or exploitation that harms a child's health, development, or dignity.

FORMS OF ABUSE WE GUARD AGAINST

- **Physical abuse** — injury or the threat of injury
- **Emotional abuse** — a sustained attack on a child's sense of self, through intimidation, ridicule, or isolation
- **Sexual abuse** — any sexual contact with, or exploitation of, a child, physical or otherwise
- **Neglect** — a persistent failure to meet a child's basic needs

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Where we stand

Every child is a person with rights we're obligated to respect, not an object of charity or a photo opportunity. Those rights don't vary by gender, background, health, religion, or where a child happens to have been born. Abuse is never acceptable, and every member of our team, every guide, every supplier, carries some responsibility for a child's safety while they're in a situation connected to our business.

WE WILL

- Set minimum standards of child protection for every supplier and partner we work with
- Train our staff and guides to recognise and respond to risk
- Keep every tour free of activities that put children in harm's way
- Report any concern, suspicion, or incident through a clear process, without exception

WE WILL NOT

- Promote or sell visits to orphanages, shelters, or schools, or any unsupervised activity involving children
- Employ anyone under eighteen, or under fifteen without the specific legal conditions that permit it
- Produce marketing that exploits or degrades a child in any way
- Accept "it could never happen here" as a reason not to act

OUR OWN STAFF

Child protection starts inside our own business

We follow national law in every country we operate in on fair wages, and on maternity and paternity leave, and we offer flexible working hours to accommodate pregnancy and childcare needs, including time for pre-natal appointments, breastfeeding, or being home with a child after school.

When we hire, we carry out reference checks on every candidate, and background checks where a role brings someone into contact with children or into a community setting, in line with each country's legal requirements.

We don't accept child labour below the legal minimum working age, and every one of our own employment contracts reflects the same conditions we require of our suppliers. Decent working conditions apply to every member of our team, not just the ones working directly with clients.

TRAINING & AWARENESS

Making sure the standard is actually known

Every member of staff and every freelance guide we work with completes training on recognising and responding to risks to children, whether that's an online course, in-person training led by a partner organisation, or both. It isn't a one-off, we treat it as something to revisit and reinforce.

New employees are introduced to our position on child safety from their first day, it's covered in our staff handbook rather than left to be discovered later. In every destination, our team knows the contact details for the appropriate local authorities and emergency services, so a suspected case of abuse can be acted on quickly rather than researched under pressure.

Where we can, we also offer internships and training placements to local youth, giving young people in the destinations we operate a genuine route into the industry, not just a photo opportunity for a brochure.

SUPPLIER REQUIREMENTS

Extending the standard through the supply chain

A tour is built from services we buy from other people, hotels, guides, transport, activity providers, so our commitment to child protection has to extend through that whole chain, not stop at our own office door.

Every supplier is asked to commit, through their contract with us, to using no child labour, respecting national and international labour law, including maternity leave and conditions for pregnant employees, and taking action against any form of child exploitation.

We don't work with organisations, dance schools, cultural venues, or otherwise, that use children under fourteen to perform on a regular basis or late at night for tourists. When we develop a new experience, we check with specialists on the ground first, to make sure it won't cause a child to drop out of school, disrupt family life, or spend time outside their normal care.

OUR POSITION

Why we don't visit schools or orphanages

We don't include visits to orphanages, shelters, or schools on any itinerary, and we don't offer short-term volunteering with children, teaching English for an afternoon, helping in a care centre for a morning. It's a position some travellers find surprising, because it's often framed as a good deed.

The evidence from child protection organisations says otherwise. Repeated, short-term visits from strangers disrupt a child's education and development, and turn institutions meant to care for children into a stop on a tour. Children can become used to being photographed by strangers, or to receiving gifts and money from people they'll never see again, patterns that make it harder, not easier, to tell a well-meaning visitor from someone with worse intentions.

Facilitating development and education is a job for people trained to do it, in the local language, over years, not for a traveller looking for a meaningful afternoon. We'd rather offer something that doesn't put a child at risk to deliver it.

OUR POSITION

Where we make an exception, and where we don't

Where we do include visits involving young people, it's limited to vocational training programmes for adolescents over fourteen, run by professionals, where a visit is part of the trainee's own curriculum rather than an interruption to it. We check that the programme has its own child protection policy before we put it on an itinerary, and we brief travellers on appropriate behaviour beforehand.

We don't support voluntourism. Volunteering with children is a role for skilled people committed over a long period, not a short stop on someone's holiday. Where clients want to help, we point them toward established organisations that support children and families properly.

WELL-MEANT, BUT HARMFUL

- Giving money to a child begging or selling souvenirs
- Donating directly to a school or its pupils
- Engaging an unofficial child guide
- Volunteering with children without the relevant skills or time

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

For our guides and travellers

These rules apply to our own staff and guides at all times, and we brief every traveller on them before a trip that involves community contact.

WE DO

- Respect local laws and customs around children at all times
- Report any concern through our process, however small it seems
- Keep any gift-giving to parents or guardians, in public, through an organisation, never directly to a child
- Treat every child as someone with rights, not a photo opportunity

WE DON'T

- Initiate physical contact, hugging, lifting, or touching a child, however well-meant
- Photograph an identifiable child without informed consent from a parent or guardian
- Take a child who isn't in our care to a private space, hotel room, or vehicle
- Stay alone with a child where nobody else can see what's happening

If you're ever unsure whether something crosses a line, treat that uncertainty as your answer, and raise it with us.

COMMUNICATIONS & PHOTOGRAPHY

How we portray children in our own materials

Every image we use of a child is a decision with real consequences for that child. We favour group images over single portraits that could make an individual child identifiable or connect their face to a specific, often difficult, story.

Where we do use identifiable images, we get informed consent from a parent or guardian first, and we never depict a child in a way that implies poverty, distress, or vulnerability for effect. A child in our marketing is shown with dignity, in a safe setting, doing something ordinary, not performing hardship for a camera.

We don't publish a child's full name alongside their location, and we brief any external photographer or filmmaker we work with on these same standards before they're allowed near a shoot.

Source: adapted from Child Welfare and the Travel Industry, Global Good Practice Guidelines.

COMMUNICATIONS & PHOTOGRAPHY

Consent, interviews & safeguarding identity

A child must always feel in control of the situation. If a child seems uncomfortable or distressed, filming or photographing stops immediately, and every child should know they're free to stop at any time.

We don't interview a child alone, they're accompanied by a trusted adult of their choosing, and we discuss our questions with a parent or guardian first, in a language the child is comfortable with, avoiding anything that risks causing distress or touches on political sensitivity. Interviews happen somewhere the child feels familiar and comfortable, not a location chosen for the shot.

Where we publish material, we don't use a child's full name alongside identifying details like their exact location, an alias is used instead unless a child specifically asks otherwise. Where an image isn't directly connected to the story it illustrates, we say so.

REPORTING A CONCERN

If something doesn't look right

Every member of our team knows how to raise a concern about a child's safety, and every supplier is expected to do the same. A report can be made face to face, by phone, or in writing, and it goes to a senior member of our team without delay.

Depending on what's involved, that may mean contacting local authorities directly, launching an internal review, or both. Nobody is asked to investigate a situation alone or confront the person they suspect, doing either puts both the reporter and the child at greater risk. The only expectation is that a concern gets raised, quickly and without hesitation.

Travellers who witness anything concerning can also report it directly to us, or through Think Childsafe at report@thinkchildsafe.org, an independent reporting channel run for the travel industry across the region.



A child's safety isn't something we weigh against a good story or a memorable afternoon. Where there's a conflict between the two, the child comes first, every time.

This document exists so nobody on our team, or working with us, has to guess where that line sits.



IMMERSIVE TRAVEL ASIA