

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR EDUCATIONAL VISITS – CLASS TOURS LIMITED

Class Tours Ltd operates educational trips under the Voyager School Travel and COGO brands, and provides residential stays at company-owned centres, Château de la Baudonnière, La Grand'Ferme and Moulin aux Draps.

The policy extends to all Class Tours Ltd employees, including senior managers, paid staff, volunteers and seasonal workers, agency staff and students.

The purpose of this policy:

- To promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by responding to concerns efficiently and with discretion;
- To make sure that all roles and responsibilities of our staff and associates relating to the safeguarding of children are understood and upheld;
- To provide staff and volunteers with the appropriate training, support and guidance regarding our approach to safeguarding and child protection;
- To minimise the risk of employing individuals who are unsuitable to be working with children;
- To outline the procedures for reporting in the event of concerns, incidents and allegations of abuse or harm.

Class Tours Ltd believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind and be safeguarded appropriately. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people to help keep them safe. We are committed to practise in a way that protects them.

We aim to achieve this by:

- Promoting the welfare, health and full development of children and protecting them from harm of any nature.
- Recognising the rights of children as individuals and treating them with dignity and respect.
- Raising awareness of the dangers from which children must be protected.
- Consistently applying a thorough and clearly defined method of selection and vetting of staff.
- Planning our work and organisation to minimise situations in which children may suffer harm.
- Developing effective procedures in responding to accidents and complaints.
- Developing effective procedures in responding to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse.
- Establishing links with teachers, party leaders and other relevant bodies/organisations.
- Implementing a staff code of conduct and setting protocols.

In case of alleged or suspected abuse

Dealing with abuse cases is a matter for professionals within local authorities – the police and the social services department. If faced with such a situation, a senior member of staff (Director) must be consulted to deem whether local authorities should become involved. The employee's responsibility is to record, report and pass the disclosure onwards. Staff should not enter into counselling procedures. Any information should be treated with caution and sensitivity.

What is child abuse?

A child is normally considered to be anyone less than 18 years of age. Adults or children can be abusers. There can be many different reasons for inflicting abuse on others. Whatever the reason, abuse must be stopped or, preferably, prevented. It is always wrong and it is never the victim's fault.

Abuse falls into four main categories - although a child may experience more than one kind at any one time (e.g. the child may be both physically and emotionally abused at the same time).

Neglect

The persistent or severe neglect of a child (e.g. by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation) can result in the impairment of the child's health or development. Children who are neglected may often show signs of unhappiness; they may appear withdrawn or unusually aggressive in some way. They may have lingering health problems or have difficulties at school.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse of a child, whether the injury was deliberate or knowingly not prevented, can cause injuries such as bruising, burns, fractures, internal injuries and brain damage.

Sexual abuse

The sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent occurs when an adult forces them to take part in a sexual activity, using the child to satisfy his or her own sexual desires.

This can involve rape, fondling, masturbation, or exposing children to pornographic videos, books, magazines or other material.

Emotional Abuse

Severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection can cause adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child. Emotional abuse hurts children very deeply. Children need love, reassurance and praise from their parents and carers, so that they become fulfilled, confident and happy in themselves.

Bullying

Child abuse, therefore, is the result of a direct act or failure on the part of the parent or career to act to provide proper care or both.

Class Tours and its Employees should:

- Treat everyone with respect
- Provide an example they wish others to follow
- Plan activities that involve more than one other person being present, or at least which are within sight or hearing of others
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- Ensure separate sleeping accommodation for leaders and young people
- Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- Maintain a healthy adult lifestyle
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret their actions, no matter how well-intentioned
- Recognise that caution is required even in sensitive moments of counselling, such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse
- Under no circumstances attempt to deal with an accusation of abuse alone

Class Tours and its Employees should never:

- Spend time alone with children away from others
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay
- Permit abusive youth peer activities (e.g. Initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying)
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments about, or to a child, even in fun
- Let allegations a child makes go unchallenged or unrecorded
- Do things of a personal nature for a child that they can do for themselves
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- Be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour such as tantrums or crushes
- Exaggerate or trivialize child-abuse issues
- Show favouritism towards an individual
- Rely on their own good name to protect them
- Believe 'it could never happen to me'
- Form a relationship or keep in contact with children via social media

Procedure for employees dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse

If a child discloses information to you:

Do:

- Listen carefully and remain calm and approachable.
- Repeat the following: "I believe what you are saying, but I need someone with me while we talk".
- Take the child to the appropriate Party Leader (unless this is the person complained about).
- If the child refuses to go to the Party Leader do not force them, but ensure the Party Leader is informed.
- Report the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- Record the disclosure using the attached forms.
- Details of any disclosure should be recorded in a retrievable and permanent medium. If possible record the details immediately or as soon afterwards as possible. Record the actual words spoken by the child. Include who is present and where the information was disclosed (e.g. after morning briefing in hotel reception).

Do not:

- Panic
- Promise to keep secrets
- Inquire into the details of the abuse
- Make a child repeat the story unnecessarily.
- Allow witnesses to give an account in the presence and hearing of other witnesses (a child who is a victim is also a witness).
- The child should not be asked questions except to establish whether there is any immediate or ongoing risk to them or any other child, or to establish whether the matter needs to be reported to the authorities locally or in the UK.
- Under no circumstances should a child be asked to give detailed information of an incident that is clearly an offence requiring referral to the social services or police.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely;

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0-25 years – Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities; HM Government 2014
- NSPCC Safer Recruitment

This policy should be read alongside company policies and procedures on:

- Recruitment, induction and training
- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- Recording and information sharing - GDPR
- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Complaints
- Health and Safety – Safety Management System

Disclosure and Barring

Class Tours Ltd offers various travel components and activities for children. Therefore, adult staff members, adult leaders and coach drivers that come into contact with children all undergo a DBS and/or French Police check under the Safeguarding Vulnerable groups Act 2006. The required level of checking (if any) will broadly reflect the degree and frequency of unsupervised access given to a child.

The team will take very seriously any allegation of impropriety on the part of any member of Class Tours Ltd employees. Any staff member who discovers anything amiss should get in touch immediately with either Nigel English – Chief Executive Officer or Louise Richardson – General Manager.

Nigel English
Chief Executive Officer
Class Tours Ltd Group of Companies