

Child Protection Policy of ABOUTAsia Schools



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Child Protection Policy

Children the world over are at risk from exploitation, inappropriate sexual behaviour and other forms of abuse from adults and older children. Cambodian children are especially at risk as the country adapts to rapid changes, movements of people, a lack of robustness in the legal process and booming inbound tourism industry. This last is a special problem as doubtless an element of such inbound tourism is motivated by or results in inappropriate sexual behaviour; so called sex tourism.

ABOUTASIA SCHOOLS is committed to protecting children from any form of exploitation or abuse.

ABOUTASIA SCHOOLS is especially aware of its connections to the tourism industry and remains vigilant to threats arising to children from this source. All employees will be trained in child protection issues such as awareness, identification and where to seek additional help and volunteers will be informed of relevant child protection issues prior to their placement with ABOUTASIA Schools.

In addition ABOUTASIA Schools has adopted the following Child Protection Policy that must be read and signed by all persons employed by or offering voluntary services to ABOUTASIA Schools. The signing and observation of the policy form an integral part of any contract of employment or written or verbal agreement between ABOUTASIA Schools and volunteers.

Cambodia Specific background:

Cambodia is a signatory of the UNCRC and so has developed a series of laws for the protection of children. Sexual abuse of children carries a penalty of up to 30 years imprisonment.

Various countries have also passed extra-territoriality laws that allow them to prosecute their citizens for offences committed in other countries. Crimes against children in Cambodia can and will be prosecuted in Cambodia or in the offender's home country.

"Any person who commits acts of debauchery involving a minor, even if there is 'consent' from the concerned minor, ...shall be punished by ten (10) to twenty (20) years in prison"

(Law on Suppression of the Kidnapping, Trafficking, and Exploitation of Human Beings, Cambodia, Article 8).

ABOUTASIA SCHOOLS Child Protection Policy statement

ABOUTASIA SCHOOLS has a duty of care to safeguard all children it supports. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled and disadvantaged children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be addressed.

Recruitment of ABOUTASIA SCHOOLS staff and volunteers

ABOUTASIA SCHOOLS recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

Good practice guidelines for all ABOUTASIA SCHOOLS staff and volunteers

All personnel of ABOUTASIA SCHOOLS should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations with children.
- Treating all children and young people equally with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each child first.
- Maintaining a safe, appropriate and respectful distance with children.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering children to share in decision making and communication.
- Striving to make all contact with children fun, enjoyable and fair.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support or play is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines in this document.
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people and appropriate dress.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive communication, play and feedback.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children – avoiding any instructions beyond their capability.

- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

Practices never sanctioned by ABOUTASIA SCHOOLS

The following are never sanctioned. Under no circumstances must you:

- Engage in any inappropriate conduct with children.
- Be alone with less than three children at any time
- Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games, including over the top horseplay.
- Spend time alone with children away from others.
- Escort less than three children at a time in any vehicle (unless in an emergency situation).
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Invite or allow children to enter your accommodation.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the appropriate ABOUTAsia Schools official and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child and principals of the schools are informed if appropriate:

- If you accidentally hurt a child.
- If he/she seems unusually distressed in any manner.
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done with the result that the situation could be construed to be in contravention of this Child protection Policy.
- **If you suspect any form of child exploitation is occurring, regardless of the suspected perpetrator.**

Use of photographic/filming equipment at any ABOUTASIA SCHOOLS location

Inappropriate activity

Sensitivity is encouraged with regard to taking individual or close up photos or video of any children, both with respect to the intrusiveness of the action and the duration. Shorter duration volunteers especially should remember that while this may be a unique opportunity for them to record images it is unhelpful for the children to be photographed time and again on a regular basis.

Staff and volunteers should be vigilant while at any ABOUTAsia Schools site and any concerns should to be reported to the relevant ABOUTAsia Schools official. The possibility of error in the reporting of concerns will be assured.

If a disclosure is made to you, the following procedure should be followed:

- Remain calm and try to assume a non-judgemental attitude.
- Do not question children directly/further beyond that which they have (or third party has) told you.
- Do not make any promises but do tell the child or third party what your responsibility is and what you will do.
- Even if encouraged by the child or third party to 'not tell anyone' you have a duty to report concerns to the relevant authority. You must explain to the informer what your responsibility is and what you have to do, as stated in this policy.
- Make detailed notes about any allegation/suspicion and;
- Report your concerns as soon as possible to the relevant ABOUTAsia Schools official who will then contact the appropriate authorities or;
- Contact the authorities yourself if concerns need immediate/ alternative attention or you do not feel comfortable discussing the issue with the ABOUTAsia Schools official.

Who to contact:

In Cambodia, Childsafe-Cambodia is the leading NGO in the area of Child Protection (see <http://www.childsafe-cambodia.org/index.asp>). They provide the following contact points for any child protection concerns within ABOUTASIA SCHOOLS:

- Initially the relevant ABOUTAsia Schools official, then
- 24 hour Police Hotline: 023 720 555 or
- ChildSafe Hotline: 012 296 609

Where there is a misconduct complaint against or a disregard for the ABOUTAsia Schools Child Protection Policy by anyone working within the ABOUTAsia Schools organisation the following actions will take place:

- Immediate removal of the suspected person from the relevant ABOUTAsia Schools premises pending further investigation
- A report to the appropriate authorities
- A criminal investigation and prosecution with the support of ABOUTAsia Schools

I have read and agree to the above

Volunteer

Date

For ABOUTASIA SCHOOLS:

Date