



USA: 1-800-304-9446

CAN: 1-800-657-7754

INFO@PROMETOUR.COM

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
2. YOUNG PEOPLE'S RIGHTS
3. GENERAL CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR
4. GOOD PRACTICES FOR PROMÉTOUR STAFF
5. RECRUITMENT PROCESS AT PROMÉTOUR
6. WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?
7. RECOGNIZING ABUSE
8. BULLYING
9. REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

**“At Prométour we believe that all children and young people travelling with us have a right to feel safe and protected at all times. We will support their rights, wishes and feelings and encourage an atmosphere of mutual respect.”**

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out the guidelines and procedures to be followed in regards to child protection issues by all Prométour Staff in the management of its Educational Tours, Homes Stay and School Exchange programs. This will ensure that every child involved in Prométour organized activities is safe, comfortable and able to participate in a relaxed, protective environment.

The following points support this policy:

- Everyone under the age of 18 will be considered a child.
- The child's welfare is the paramount concern.
- All children have the right to protection from abuse.
- All children should feel safe and secure while using Prométour services and or when in the care of its staff.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously, reacted to appropriately and actioned without delay.

USA: 1-800-304-9446

CAN: 1-800-657-7754

INFO@PROMETOUR.COM



USA: 1-800-304-9446

CAN: 1-800-657-7754

INFO@PROMETOUR.COM

- Staff working with children has an understanding of the issues surrounding child protection and are aware of good practice in relation to working with young people.
- IF IN DOUBT – SPEAK UP!

Throughout this document reference will be made to “Staff” this also applies to Tour Project Managers, Tour Directors, Specialized Guides and other contracted workers who provide services on behalf of Prométour Educational Tours

## 2. YOUNG PEOPLE’S RIGHTS

### Children have the right to:

- be safe
- be happy, have fun and enjoy their activities
- participate on an equal basis in activities which are appropriate to their ability and stage of development
- be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- make comments and suggestions
- make a complaint and have it dealt with through an effective complaints procedure
- be afforded confidentiality where appropriate
- have a voice in the running of their activity
- be listened to
- be believed
- acknowledged as an individual

**Prométour Staff have a duty to ensure these rights are upheld.**

## 3. GENERAL CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR

The Group Leader is completely responsible for the supervision and general well being of their group. In the event of student misbehaviour it is the responsibility of the Group Leader to discipline the students involved and decide what action to take, as far as contacting parents and dealing with any situations that arise.

All groups have a minimum complimentary staff ratio of one to ten students. Normally these are teachers from the school so they will know the students and will assist the Group Leader with issues relating to conduct and behaviour.

USA: 1-800-304-9446

CAN: 1-800-657-7754

INFO@PROMETOUR.COM



USA: 1-800-304-9446

CAN: 1-800-657-7754

INFO@PROMETOUR.COM

## 4. GOOD PRACTICES FOR PROMÉTOUR STAFF

This section outlines the guidelines that Staff should follow when working with children. In addition to tackling abuse it is good practice to ensure that children feel safe and comfortable while engaging in activities. To this end this policy also includes direction regarding issues such as bullying, name-calling and horse-play either between children or between adults and children. The more secure and safe children feel during a Prométour Educational Tour or any of its programs, the more likely they, and adults, are to realize that any form of child abuse is unacceptable.

This approach is based on the following supporting principles:

- Staff should be properly recruited, managed and appropriate training should be made available
- The development of all programs should encourage and foster the empowerment of children
- All activities which involve children should recognize the needs of the child and be child-centered
- Staff should ensure an environment in which children can enjoy their participation
- All adults have a responsibility to be aware of child protection policy
- Staff should be mindful of the fact that children with disabilities may be more vulnerable.

Positive adult-child interactions are characterized by: An open and encouraging atmosphere which recognizes young peoples' voluntary engagement in activities and shows an awareness of the child's autonomy. This is set in an atmosphere which promotes the protection and rights of children.

Those working with children should:

- Always be accessible to others when working with children
- Avoid situations where they and a child are completely unobserved
- Ensure that male and female staff jointly supervise mixed activities, where possible
- Wear ID and, where issued or available, a uniform at all times

Those working with children should never:

- Engage in activities which could be considered physical or sexually provocative
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow inappropriate language to remain unchallenged, including remarks between children
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child or in the presence of a child
- Allow allegations by a child to go unreported, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves

### Child Protection Training

- Each new member of Staff will receive child protection training, without which, they will not be permitted to work unsupervised with children.
- Prométour Tour Directors and Specialized Guides must receive training prior to taking up each new appointment or annually whichever is appropriate to their work schedule.
- Staff should undertake training on a three year cycle.
- Child protection training will be tailored to the department in which Staff is in contact with children.
- Managers are responsible for ensuring that copies of training material used within departments are available and that good practice are disseminated to others.

USA: 1-800-304-9446

CAN: 1-800-657-7754

INFO@PROMETOUR.COM



USA: 1-800-304-9446

CAN: 1-800-657-7754

INFO@PROMETOUR.COM

**Staff Responsibilities**

Where possible, Staff should avoid:

- spending time with a child or small group of children away from others

Staff should not:

- avoid at all times taking children on a journey alone
- use any form of physical force on a child
- exercise undue influence over a child in order to obtain personal benefit or reward
- engage in rough physical games
- make sexually suggestive comments about, or to, a child in the context of physical activity
- take physical measurements or engage in testing without the presence of another adult

**Policy Review**

This policy will be subject to an annual review, following a reported incident and/or changes in legislation whichever comes first.

## 5. RECRUITMENT PROCESS AT PROMÉTOUR

**Selection of Tour Directors**

Prométour Tour Directors are recruited directly through our international offices and subjected to a rigorous selection process. All hired candidates are licensed professionals. This assessment is divided into the following categories:

- Number of years as a licensed professional working with students and minors
- Destination & geographical knowledge
- Management of emergency situation
- Previous employment references
- Language skills

Prométour Tour Directors are with the group from arrival to departure and available 24 hours a day.

**Selection of Tour Project Managers**

Prométour Tour Project Managers are recruited directly through our international offices and subjected to a rigorous selection process. All hired candidates have extensive work expertise in the travel industry and/or have vast personal or professional travel experience. Some Staff may also have a teaching background. All hired candidates are certified licensed professionals. Selection criteria are divided into the following categories:

- Number of years as a professional working in the travel industry
- Destination & geographical knowledge
- Previous employment references
- Language skills (English, Spanish & French required)

Prométour Tour Project Managers oversee all the details of your group. They address the group needs, concerns, requirements and all questions from the first point of contact until the group returns home from their trip.

USA: 1-800-304-9446

CAN: 1-800-657-7754

INFO@PROMETOUR.COM



USA: 1-800-304-9446

CAN: 1-800-657-7754

INFO@PROMETOUR.COM

## 6. WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Children can be harmed in a variety of ways, the more obvious of which are:

- Neglect
- Emotional
- Physical
- Sexual

These categories of abuse are detailed below with examples of how abuse may manifest itself.

The intention of this policy is to produce a safe and comfortable environment for young people. Therefore, all other forms of harm to children must be dealt with including bullying and name-calling. In most, but certainly not all cases, the abuse is perpetrated by an adult, usually by someone known to and trusted by the victim. It should be remembered that children can abuse other children. Staff must remain alert to these issues and also ensure that bullying and name-calling are always reported to the Group Leader.

Child abuse can occur in any situation in which children are involved. Training in child protection procedures and sharing of best practice will lead to Staff being properly equipped to provide safe and enjoyable experiences for children. These child protection procedures must be followed at all times to ensure the safety of children and Staff.

### Categories of Abuse

All Staff should be familiar with the ways in which abuse manifests itself. Though a child may be subjected to more than one type of harm, abuse is normally categorized into four different types as listed above.

#### Child Neglect

Neglect is normally defined in terms of omission, where a child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived. It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs including intellectual stimulation and affection. Neglect generally becomes apparent over a period of time rather than in one specific incident. For example, a child who suffers a series of minor injuries may not be having their needs for supervision and safety met. The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child's needs are neglected to the extent that his or her well-being and/or development are severely affected.

Examples of neglect include:

- inadequate clothing
- frequent hunger
- poor or no medical treatment (untreated injuries, dirty bandages)
- children left without supervision
- lack of care or supervision during activities

USA: 1-800-304-9446

CAN: 1-800-657-7754

INFO@PROMETOUR.COM



USA: 1-800-304-9446

CAN: 1-800-657-7754

INFO@PROMETOUR.COM

### Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency or security are not met. It is centered on the relationship between an adult and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It is rarely manifested in terms of physical symptoms. For children with disabilities it may include over-protection or failure to acknowledge or understand a child's disability.

Examples of emotional abuse include:

- regular name-calling, repeated criticism, condemnation and or hostility
- care being conditional on a child's behavior
- inconsistent or unrealistic expectations of a child or failure to respond to their difficulties
- placing unrealistic responsibility on the child
- over or under protection of the child
- failure to foster the child's education and development
- unrealistic or overly harsh discipline
- exposure to domestic violence

### Physical Abuse

Physical abuse occurs when someone inflicts injuries on a child, or does not prevent such injuries when in a position to do so. Staff should, in particular, be aware that the nature and intensity of exercise which disregards the capability of a child's immature and growing body, or causes injury resulting from fatigue or overuse will be deemed to constitute physical abuse.

Examples of physical abuse include:

- allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child
- physical punishment
- use of excessive force
- poisoning
- suffocation
- Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy, or situations where parents/guardians make up stories of illness about their child or cause physical signs of illness
- shaking
- for children with special needs this could include confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately
- given drugs to control behavior

### Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when someone, irrespective of age or gender, use children for their own sexual gratification.

Examples of sexual abuse include:

- exposure of the sexual organs or any sex act performed in the presence of a child
- touching or molesting a child for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- sexual intercourse with a child
- sexual exploitation of a child
- non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at pornographic material or watching sexual activities,
- or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways

USA: 1-800-304-9446

CAN: 1-800-657-7754

INFO@PROMETOUR.COM



USA: 1-800-304-9446

CAN: 1-800-657-7754

INFO@PROMETOUR.COM

## 7. RECOGNIZING ABUSE

It must be borne in mind that dealing with child abuse is complex. It is not easy to recognize situations where abuse may occur, or where it has already taken place. Prométour Staff is not expected to be experts in this area. It is not the responsibility of Prométour Staff to decide that child abuse has occurred during a trip, but it is their responsibility to follow through on any concerns that they have, or are raised with them. Any concerns with respect to the welfare of a child should be reported immediately to the Group Leader and the most senior Prométour Management member available.

As outlined above, signs of abuse can be physical, behavioral or developmental. Below is a list which details some indicators of abuse. It should be remembered that these indicators can occur in other, non-abusive, situations and that the list is not exhaustive

### Physical Indicators

- unexplained bruising in soft tissue areas
- burns and scalds
- repeated injury
- bites
- black eye(s)
- fractures
- injuries to mouth
- marks from implements
- torn or bloodstained clothing

### Behavioral Indicators

- unexplained changes in behavior - becoming withdrawn or aggressive
- unusual reluctance to remove clothing where activities require it
- regressive behavior
- distrustful of adults or excessive attachment to adults
- change in attendance pattern
- difficulty in making friends
- sudden drop in performance
- inconsistent stories, excuses relating to injuries
- inappropriate sexual awareness, behavior or language
- reluctance to go home

## 8. BULLYING

Bullying is behaviors such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting or extortion by one or more children against another. It is an act or series of acts designed to aggravate and intimidate. Many children are reluctant to tell adults that they are being bullied, more particularly older children. The risk of bullying and harassment by adults and children should be anticipated by taking active steps to prevent it occurring.

It is the responsibility of the Group Leader to deal immediately with bullying whenever it takes place.

USA: 1-800-304-9446

CAN: 1-800-657-7754

INFO@PROMETOUR.COM



USA: 1-800-304-9446

CAN: 1-800-657-7754

INFO@PROMETOUR.COM

Examples of bullying include:

- physical aggression / intimidation
- verbal bullying
- cyber bullying
- damage to property
- isolation
- repeated gestures or expressions of a threatening or intimidating nature
- comments intended to degrade the child
- initiation rituals

Bullying and abuse can be reduced by the following measures:

- raising awareness of bullying and abuse as unacceptable forms of behavior
- creating an ethical environment which encourages children, staff and parents/guardians to report bullying and abuse and to address these issues
- ensuring the supervision of children during all activities
- ensuring a supportive environment for victims of bullying and abuse
- securing the support of Group Leaders/Teachers/Chaperones/Parents/Guardians to counter bullying and abuse
- removing persistent bullies from activities

**Bullying will not be tolerated, under any circumstances, during any Prométour programs.**

## 9. REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

The decision to respond to allegations of, or suspicions about, abuse can be a very difficult one. There is a responsibility to protect the child in order that appropriate agencies can then make enquiries. Prométour Staff should not be afraid to refer concerns, particularly as others may have previously raised similar concerns. All referrals will be considered thoroughly by the statutory agencies prior to action being taken.

As noted previously, it is not the responsibility of Prométour Staff to investigate concerns, but simply to report those concerns to the agencies charged with responsibility to conduct investigations. Should a situation arise where an immediate place of safety is required, such as a child fearing to return home because of the risk of further abuse, or if Staff suspect that further abuse would occur, it may be appropriate to contact the police.

### What to do in the Event of Disclosure

If a child discloses or suggests that they have been abused, or information is obtained which gives concern that a child is being abused, the Prométour Staff member receiving this information should:

- stay calm and not rush into any inappropriate action
- reassure the child that they are not to blame and that they have done the right thing by telling
- listen to what the child has to say and show them that you take them seriously

USA: 1-800-304-9446

CAN: 1-800-657-7754

INFO@PROMETOUR.COM





USA: 1-800-304-9446    CAN: 1-800-657-7754    INFO@PROMETOUR.COM

- keep questions to an absolute minimum - the child should be allowed to speak freely without any undue interruption or questioning, but a clear account should be ensured
- reassure the child but do not make a promise of confidentiality, confidentiality might not be possible

Given that a report may have to be prepared

- make a full written record of what was said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible
- record full details of the allegation

These details should be written on plain paper.

Retain the original record if you have to fill-in an official form later.

### **Reporting to Senior Prométour Management Staff**

Any information regarding abuse of a child by a Member of Staff should be reported to

- the Group Leader and Senior Management Staff of Prométour

For Prométour Tour Directors and specialized guides, while on tour, the first point of contact should be

- the Group Leader

The most senior person on tour shall discuss the issue with the appropriate officer.

If the most senior person on tour is the subject of the report or suspicion, the report must be made directly to

- the Police department
- and the Prométour Management Team at 1-800-657-7754 (CAN) or 1-800-304-9446 (USA) or by email to the General Manager and Owner, Sebastien Letailleur, at [sebastien@prometour.com](mailto:sebastien@prometour.com)

If the most senior Member of Staff is unavailable then direct contact must be made with

- the local Police station

Discussion should be with only one senior Member of Staff and not with any other colleagues/friends.

### **What happens next?**

The most senior person on tour, be it the Group Leader, will

- refer the allegation to the Police
- communicate the facts to his/her immediate supervisor at the School or School Board
- communicate the issue to the Prométour Tour Director

The Prométour Tour Director will then inform

- the Prométour Management Team

Parents/legal guardians/care givers will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Police.

All possible assistance will be given to Police Officers investigating the allegations