



Minors Policy

This policy addresses

- minors as participants in Global Village Builds;
- children and minors in the local community, and
- safeguarding.

Minors as Part of a Team

It is the policy of Habitat for Humanity Great Britain (HFHGB) not to take GV volunteers younger than 16 years of age. Young people aged 16 and 17 are considered minors and may go on HFHGB trips under certain conditions:

- The minor *must* be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, or
- Participating in an official team for “youth” volunteers.

When there is a minor on a team the following provisions will take effect:

- Gender of Team Leaders.
- Satisfactory references for Team Leaders.
- Team Leader/adult to minor ratio of 1 adult per minor on the team.
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure of Team Leaders and Deputy Team Leaders.
- The HFHI Child Labour Policy detailing what work can/ cannot be done by minors.
- The Team Leader signs the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and ticks the box indicating they consent to take minors.
- Parents (or legal guardians) will be asked sign the Minor Confirmation Form giving the Team Leader certain rights in respect to the care of the minor for the duration of the trip.

The scope of work available to minors on a HFHGB building site is limited; this is outlined the HFHI Child Labour Policy.

Whose Responsibility is the Minor?

If the minor is accompanied by a parent or guardian, that parent or legal guardian will have parental responsibility for the minor. The minor should always be part of the same site team as their parent or guardian and stay in the same accommodation as their parent or guardian. For matters of work on the Habitat for Humanity site, the Team Leader will have overall responsibility and in particular ensure that only appropriate work is undertaken by the minor. The parent or guardian will need to sign a Parental Form of Authority if the minor is unaccompanied in which case the Team Leader will act in loco parentis and the Team Leader will sign the MOU, which includes a section on consent to take minors.

Children and Minors in the Local Community

It is inevitable that there will be local children on site and there will be contact between team members and local children. HFHGB recognises that it has a responsibility to local children insofar as they come into contact with HFHGB team members. Team Leaders should be aware of what is happening with their teams and keep an eye on anything that does not seem to be in order, such as a team member taking a particular interest in a child or walking away from the site with a child.

Principles of Good Practice When Working with Local Children

Health and safety on the work site is of paramount importance. All individuals should follow the instructions and advice of construction supervisors on site. Children should not be encouraged to work on site by any team member.

Whenever you have contact with any child it is important that they always feel safe around you or any member of a Global Village team. With this in mind, when interacting with children, team members are asked to adhere to the following guidelines and to ensure that the safety and welfare of any child is a priority in all their dealings. *Please remember:*

- Team members should respect children and young people at all times
- Team members should be thoughtful about their language and tone of voice.
- Team members should never participate with children in games of either an aggressive or sexual nature.
- Team members should never invade the privacy of children or engage in inappropriate or intrusive touching of any kind.
- Individual team members should never be alone with any child or group of children.
- Team members should not spend excessive amounts of time with any one child or group of children.
- Team members should not make unnecessary physical contact with any child or make any demeaning remarks or gestures to or about a child.
- When taking photographs of children, team members should always ask the permission of their parents or guardians.

Safeguarding

HFHGB secures an enhanced DBS check on all Team Leaders.

The team or Team Leader is not ultimately responsible for the safety of minors outside the team, but they do have a responsibility to ensure that their team do not add danger to the lives of local children. As it is not practical for all team members to be police vetted, our Team Leaders, Deputy Team Leaders, Group Organisers (e.g. teachers) and parents or guardians have a responsibility to keep an eye out for any behaviour from the team that may be deemed inappropriate or may lead to suspicion concerning child protection. All members of the team also have a responsibility not to put themselves into situations where they are alone with children out of sight from the rest of the team. This is for their own protection as well as for the children.

HFHGB is committed to safeguard, care and nurture all children and young people on our teams. We shall respond without delay to every complaint made that a child or young person for whom we have responsibility may have been harmed and we shall report any suspected child abuse immediately to the UK police. We shall fully cooperate with statutory agencies during any investigation they make. We shall review this policy frequently, and ensure all our procedures are current.