



NPH International

# VISITOR POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Thank you for joining us to visit our children of Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos! We view your visit as an opportunity for you to learn about our work while building long lasting relationships with the children and youth in our care. During your stay we ask that you help us ensure your visit has a minimal impact on the daily lives and schedules of the children. As with any family, the children and staff have a daily schedule that needs to be respected as life goes on as usual. The Visitor Coordinator will help you to organize your agenda in order to be the least disruptive as possible to the children and staff in our homes. We have developed this policy and these guidelines to ensure that your presence at our NPH homes will be a positive, uplifting experience for everyone involved. We ask that you please read them carefully and respect them at all times during your visit.

Your visit to NPH will give you an opportunity to learn about our work and briefly experience life at an NPH home. Please remember that as a visitor you are only seeing a brief period of time and may not understand the entire program from a short visit. We encourage you to ask questions and grow in your understanding of our programs as well as the country you are visiting. We also advise you to read about the country you are visiting ahead of time in order to have a deeper understanding of the host country. We will include information on NPH, the NPH home and the country in your trip materials. The NPH local Visitor Coordinator will send you materials prior to your arrival and provide an orientation when you arrive, to review specific rules and individual guidelines of the NPH home you are visiting.

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**If you are a Godparent to a child who lives off-site with their family, please see page 8-10 for further information.**

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This NPHI International Policy applies to **ALL VISITORS, INDIVIDUALS, ALL GROUPS, ALL MEDICAL BRIGADES and ALL CONSTRUCTION GROUPS**, while visiting and/or working in any of our nine homes. All visitors staying overnight must sign the policy. In addition, each individual home may have additional home-specific rules/guidelines that they ask visitors to comply with.





## ACTIVITIES

When planning activities, please respect the obligations and routines of our home. Please do not expect to take children out of school for activities. We can arrange special permission for afternoon/evening and weekend time with the group, with godparents and/or with the visitors. We ask that all visitors respect our religious spaces, our chapels and churches. Activities that are not spiritual do not belong in these spaces.

Activities with your godchildren, with a specific hogar/section/group/ of children or a family of children must be arranged in advance with the Visitor Coordinator of the home you are visiting.

## GUIDELINES: in alphabetical order

### ABUSE PREVENTION

We strive to provide a safe home for all of our children, employees and volunteers. All visitors, donors, sponsors, trip leaders, members of medical brigades and construction groups are asked to respect the following international rules to ensure the children's safety. Children (pequeños) are not allowed to be in any employee, volunteer or visitor rooms under any circumstances. To spend time with a visitor/visitors outside the home, approval must be given by the National Director or House Director. In addition, these visits must be accompanied by a volunteer, caregiver or other staff member. Under no circumstances are pequeños allowed to stay overnight outside of the NPH home with visitors, sponsors, donors, trip leaders, etc.

If you are visiting your Godchild or another child, your trip leader will arrange for you to spend time with them during your trip. Excursions for you and your Godchild outside of the NPH home may also be arranged as a part of your trip. If you are visiting NPH on your own, please contact your local fundraising office and the Visitor Coordinator of the home you wish to visit to arrange your trip. Please ask the Visitor Coordinator for the rules of the home and the Visitor Policy BEFORE your visit and ALSO upon arrival.

### ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND TOBACCO

Please respect the specific rules and designated areas in each home in regards to smoking or drinking of alcohol. Please refrain from drinking and smoking in front of the pequeños regardless of your location. In addition, please do not visit with our children or youth after you have been drinking or smoking. Do not offer alcohol, drugs and tobacco to a pequeño regardless of their age. The use of drugs is prohibited at all of our NPH homes.

### COMMUNICATION

Please communicate with the NPH community through established channels. Your trip leader and/or fundraising office should be your first point of contact before, during and after your trip. The fundraising office or trip leader should be in direct contact with the Visitor Coordinator in the home. This process helps to prevent cross cultural misunderstandings and confusion. In addition, all communication sent to your sponsored child or any other children you meet should be sent through the established correspondence process. This process ensures that your correspondence will reach the children while not causing additional work for the NPH in-country staff.



## DRESS CODE

Please dress modestly as cultural standards in Latin America are different than the US and Europe. We ask that you please pay particular attention to the following: no short shorts/skirts, do not wear clothing that is revealing including showing your stomach or chest. We ask that all skirts and shorts should come to mid-thigh and all straps should be at least three fingers wide. Please remove all piercings except for in ears. Again, please check with the visitor coordinator of the home you are visiting for any additional specific guidelines.



Please do not exchange e-mail addresses or become Facebook friends with the children. Because it is difficult to monitor the children's Facebook use, Facebook is blocked at some of our NPH homes. Please respect the NPH guidelines of Facebook use and do not "friend" or accept a friend request from the children. We recognize it may be uncomfortable to say no if a child asks you for your e-mail address but the children are aware of these rules so please support the NPH staff in abiding by them. You or your trip leader can ask the Visitor Coordinator for the specific guidelines in each home regarding electronic communication. Our high school and university students who live in the cities where they study have access to and have permission to use social media and to communicate electronically. (See Social Media section below)

## FINANCIAL DONATIONS

Visiting the NPH homes will naturally bring up questions of project costs, budgets and funding needs. During your visit you will be confronted with many needs and may feel compelled to respond immediately to these circumstances. However, a visitor distributing cash and making promises (i.e. future financial support or return trips) may cause misunderstandings. During your trip, your trip leader will provide you with information on funding needs that are considered top priorities by the NPH leadership in each home. If you want to make a donation, please consider giving toward these high priority projects. Please address any current and future questions regarding funding or how you think you can help with the local Visitor Coordinator, your trip leader and/or your fundraising office. Please make all financial donations through your fundraising office. To assure tax deductibility of your philanthropic contributions, please make all donations to NPH through your fundraising office.



## FOOTPRINT DONATION

Each home encourages visitors and visitor groups to donate a small “footprint” to cover basic costs such as transportation, food, electricity and small necessities. These costs may range from \$25 – \$35 a night, depending on the home and the group. Please confirm the encouraged amount when you are first in contact with the local Visitor Coordinator and/or your trip leader.

## GIFTS AND DONATIONS

Many visitors collect items to bring as donations to NPH. A list of specific needs will be available from your trip leader, your fundraising office and/or the local Visitor Coordinator of the home in which you are visiting. In general, new clothes (underwear, socks, t-shirts, pants, shoes) in all sizes are always needed. Please coordinate your donations with your trip leader or the Visitor Coordinator of the home you are visiting. If you are traveling on your own to an NPH home please inform the Visitor Coordinator of your donations upon arrival. These items will be given to the Visitor Coordinator or the NPH staff person in charge of donations to be used and distributed where most needed.

We understand that both visitors as well as sponsors will want to give their godchild or children they meet a gift. We encourage all sponsors and visitors to consider simple and modest gifts that will be meaningful to the child (e.g. a book in Spanish, a cross necklace, a picture frame with a photograph of you with the child, photo album of your time together). The best gifts are those that can be shared by everyone in the child’s or your Godchild’s home/hogar/section (e.g. board games, a deck of cards, soccer ball etc.). We ask that you avoid electronics or any expensive gift. We also ask that you refrain from giving money/cash as gifts. Please understand that some of the children do not receive gifts. Giving one child an expensive, personal gift may unintentionally create feelings of jealousy and cause problems for that child. Please talk to your trip leader and/or the Visitor Coordinator of the home you are visiting if you have additional questions about gift-giving to your godchild or any other children or youth.

Please remember that your presence is the most important gift you can give the children. Please avoid giving out random small gifts to the children (ie. candy, stickers, etc.). This type of gift giving can teach the children that all foreigners bring gifts and encourage the children to ask for and expect them.



If you have other questions regarding gifts or donations please ask the Visitor Coordinator directly, they can talk to specific on-site staff regarding your request. It is easily arranged to have you or your group organize an activity that includes small gifts, etc. for a group of children, but this must be organized with the local Visitor Coordinator and local on-site staff.



## MEDIA POLICIES

### PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO:

Please use your camera only after building a relationship with the people you want to photograph. Just as you would in your own country, it is generally a good idea to ask for permission before taking a picture/video of someone.

- Please be respectful and only photograph children that are in the custody of NPH, unless prior authorization is approved by the NPH Communication Officer or your trip leader.
- These NPH homes have additional restrictions for photography and video: Bolivia and Peru (minors can only be photographed if their faces are not identifiable) Guatemala (internal NPH children in protective care can only be photographed if their faces are not identifiable, external community students can be photographed) Matamoros, Mexico (minors can only be photographed if their faces are not identifiable). In some of our countries including Mexico and El Salvador, there are specific children who also cannot be photographed due to privacy concerns.
- Please do not take photographs of any children or adults in any community outreach program.
- Please do not take pictures of children unless they are fully clothed.

The children will want to use your camera and other electronic devices. We advise you to not give your electronics to them to borrow. If you do give your camera to a child please be aware that they will play with it and many visitors have had all of their photos erased.

### SOCIAL MEDIA:

We hope you will be excited to share your trip experience with your network of friends and family on social media. We encourage you to spread the word about our work as this is a powerful way to get more people involved in helping the children. We have developed these guidelines to help you determine what is appropriate to share. First and foremost, we ask that you respect each child's personal story. Some children will be very open about their stories and other children will not. Please recognize that this is a personal choice and it is up to each child to decide if they choose to share their story with others. Be sensitive about the privacy of a child's family; do not give details on the death or disease of family members. The use of a minor's (under 18 years old) real name is not permitted in any type of posting on social media. If the young adult is over the age of 18, you must have the personal permission to publish his/her real name.



Please recognize that photographing and sharing the stories of children and youth has its special challenges. In some instances the act of sharing a picture or story can put the child or other children at risk of retribution or stigmatization. Please be cautious in sharing any photographs or videos on any social media platform (Facebook, websites, blogs, etc.).

Please be aware that we reserve the right to request that any media used of an NPH home, child, or program be removed from any social media platform. Please do not post any photos of the children if they are not fully dressed. Again, the use of a child minor's real name is not permitted in any type of posting on social media, and you must have permission for those 18 or older. Also, please do not take photos of people in the NPH outreach programs.

As a guideline, think about why “personal” and “private” are not the same. While communication through social media networks is primarily a personal matter, this is not the same as it being private. Written conversations inside these networks can be found through search engines such as Google. Even in cases where only your contacts can see what you write, there is a possibility that one of them will forward what you say and make it visible to a wider audience. As a result, personal conversation within social media networks should be considered public rather than private.

Think of CNN, your mother, and your boss — be conscientious of what you are posting. Don’t say anything online that you wouldn’t be comfortable seeing quoted on any news channel, being asked about by your mother or having to justify to your boss.

## MEDICAL SUPPORT

If you would like to support the medical staff in the home, your group will need to contact a staff member in the clinic or the NPHI Medical Services team to request permission. You will be asked to fill out a simple application and also write a brief report after your work. If you are planning to bring medicine or equipment, you will need to submit a detailed summary of the name, quantity and expiration date of the medicine and equipment to a member of the home’s clinical staff and/or NPHI Medical Services team. You may need a letter of donation or a letter of invitation in order to pass through Customs. The process for each country is different, so you will need to contact the NPH team before your trip in order to learn the necessary procedure and requirements.

If you are planning to do community service or outreach and stay in the home, you must submit an application and report to the NPH staff member coordinating your stay. Please keep in mind that although you will be visiting, you are representing NPH to the local and many times international community. Medical students are allowed and encouraged to be part of medical brigades, provided the tutor to student ratio is followed, and must not administer any services that they would not be permitted to give within their own country.

## RELATIONSHIPS

Please model healthy and respectful relationships. Many of the children living at NPH come from homes without healthy boundaries and we strive to provide positive examples for the children. Unmarried couples will not be permitted to stay in the same room together on NPH property. Romantic relationships are prohibited between all children/youth of NPH and any employee, volunteer, visitor, donor, or sponsor regardless of the age of either person.



## VISITOR AND SHORT-TERM VOLUNTEER DIFFERENCES

**Visitors** are invited to spend time in our homes for up to two weeks, depending on availability. All visitors under 21 years of age must be accompanied by another adult. All visitors must adhere to the policy and guidelines mentioned above; if there are exceptions they must be approved by the Visitor Coordinator and the National Director.

**All short-term volunteers** must have the approval of the the home’s National Director and/or the International Service Teams, if under the umbrella of Family Services or Medical Services. All short-term volunteers must be under the supervision of someone specific in the home. All short-term volunteers must follow the guidelines and policies set forward by the Volunteer Program as well as the International Visitor Policy and rules of the local home. There are NO exceptions to this rule.

**SIGNATURE REQUIRED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE...**





# VISITOR POLICY AND GUIDELINES

**I HAVE READ AND FULLY UNDERSTAND THE NPH INTERNATIONAL VISITOR POLICY. I CLEARLY UNDERSTAND THIS POLICY AND THESE GUIDELINES RELATING TO THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abuse Prevention           | <input type="checkbox"/> "Footprint" Donation             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Activities                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Gifts and Donations              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol, Drugs and Smoking | <input type="checkbox"/> Media Policy                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication              | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Support                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dress Code                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Relationships                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Donations        | <input type="checkbox"/> Visitor and Short-term Volunteer |

Print Name:
Signature:
Date:
Group/Office Affiliation:

Version: July 2017



**NPH International**

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BOLIVIA DOMINICAN REPUBLIC EL SALVADOR GUATEMALA HAITI HONDURAS MEXICO NICARAGUA PERU



## VISITING CHILDREN THAT NPH SUPPORTS IN THEIR FAMILIES

Thank you for supporting Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos in creating loving and safe family environments for vulnerable children. NPH appreciates your decision to visit the child who has been given the opportunity to reach his/her unique potential through your support by living with their family in the community.

NPH serves to strengthen families and communities in solidarity with their self-expressed vision for development. All NPH programs align with our mission, vision, principles, and values. Thank you for contributing in this valuable service.

The rights and responsibilities of children always come first. The following principles should guide all NPH staff, volunteers, donors, and visitors in their community interactions:

### FAMILIES SHOULD ADVOCATE FOR THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THEIR CHILDREN

Families should feel comfortable in expressing what they believe is right for their children and should feel that their opinion will be respected. Culture, customs, learning, and distinct life experiences inform our beliefs. Families closest to the situation should always be included thoughtfully, sincerely, and meaningfully as part of a family's solution. The earnest desire to understand families' concerns and support them in a way that respects their values, culture, and opinion makes all the difference in finding lasting solutions.

The **NPH OneFamily** program supports children who have been reintegrated with their families after receiving care from NPH. This effort ensures a long term solution for children and families. NPH provides a unique commitment in ensuring ongoing support so that each child can reach their full potential in their family environment.







Children should take advantage of every moment in school afforded to them by their supporters. While scheduling visits must avoid taking children out of school, it must also take into account study time, exams, and field trips. Advance notice is required in order to enable NPH to navigate these issues and respect the best interest of the children. Supporters will be provided with regular updates regarding school attendance and progress reports.

### **FAMILIES DESERVE TO BE TOGETHER**

Every effort should be made so that children feel safe and secure. Families should feel at ease about their children's wellbeing. Therefore, NPH provides guardians the opportunity to accompany children in visits to NPH homes. Since families deserve a respectful approach that takes into account their needs, NPH must coordinate a visit with at least two months in advance.

Unemployment rates in the communities served by NPH is extremely high. NPH should never take action that would place the employment of guardians at risk. This could include family members requesting last-minute absences from work, prolonged trips away from work, or multiple absences that convey a lack of commitment.

### **FAMILIES DESERVE TO THRIVE PEACEFULLY IN THEIR COMMUNITIES**

NPH believes in strengthening families and communities by uplifting each individual child. NPH focuses on providing support that respects the integrity and innate abilities of each family. NPH support should recognize the potential of each individual to participate responsibly in a child's development. Support to children or families should always be coordinated with NPH staff and placed in social and cultural context. While it may be tempting to be generous to children and families with additional gifts or improvements, considerations must be taken to avoid the perception of dependency or that may unduly place families in situations removed from social reality.

NPH avoids placing undue burdens on vulnerable families. While NPH encourages family members to accompany their children, they should not feel forced to place other children at risk, or incur undue childcare costs, in order to participate in visits. Families should also not be placed in situations in which they are asked to consistently engage in trips which take them away from their communities.



In order for NPH to serve communities in solidarity effectively, families must see NPH and its supporters as empowering rather than a vehicle for transporting goods and services that can be taken advantage of. NPH has taken care to establish the appropriate methods of support. Gifts channeled directly to children or families may adversely affect their ability to provide for the child's best interests. Please refer to the **Gifts and Donations** in the International Visitor Guide for guidance on giving gifts and consult with NPH staff in advance prior to bringing a gift for a child or family.

## CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DESERVE RESPECT

Visiting the child you sponsor provides the children and families a tangible experience of solidarity and unconditional support. NPH will coordinate visits in order for sponsors to visit the children they support which take into account the above guiding principles. Visits will always be coordinated so that children visit their sponsors in an agreed upon location, ideally the NPH home.

While sponsors may wish to visit the children in their home environment, NPH does not facilitate visits to family environments. NPH serves in countries where security remains a grave concern. Traveling regularly with foreigners in and out of communities places visitors and NPH staff at risk for their lives. Secondly, children and families should have the right to feel secure and control their family environment. Regular requests by NPH to facilitate visits to their home environment can place undue pressure on families to accept a visit out of concern of risking the ongoing support of their children. **For that reason, NPH does not endorse, facilitate, or approve visits of NPH supporters to children and families' home environments.**



**NPH International**

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