

Volunteer Code of Conduct

While FACE Nepal prides itself on its support and care of volunteers it also has a duty of care to the local community in which volunteers are placed.

Good relationships between volunteers, their host families and the local community are essential for the best possible volunteer experiences and for FACE Nepal to remain an effective and positive influence within the community.

Detailed below is the FACE Nepal volunteer Code of Conduct.

Please read it and ensure that you understand it. If you have any queries then please contact a Member of the International Board of Directors. Email addresses of the relevant Members are detailed below.

Once you have read and understood the Code of Conduct then please sign the statement to indicate that you have done so.

Members of the International Board of Directors

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Volunteer Code of Conduct

Objectives

This document:

- Sets out the responsibilities of volunteers to ensure that they get the most out of their time in Nepal while developing good relationships with the local communities based on respect and consideration.
- Should be read in conjunction with the FACE Nepal Volunteer Handbook, which is provided to new volunteers in their first few days.
- It should also be noted that the guidelines on roles and responsibilities for the Advisory Board, International Board, and FACE Nepal staff are available for volunteers to read. These guidelines detail what support volunteers should expect.

Health and Safety

Volunteers are expected to:

- Take responsibility for their own safety and remember that Nepal is a developing country.
- Use either bottled water or use a water purifying method such as iodine tablets in the first two or three weeks in Nepal. It is possible to drink water from the pump once a level of tolerance has developed.
- Exercise common sense when eating food. Food prepared by your host family is freshly cooked but be careful when eating food elsewhere, especially meats, fish, food exposed to flies, street ice creams and lassis.
- Minimise exposure to air pollution in cities. Air pollution can be a problem in the cities and volunteers should obtain face masks if they will be spending a lot of time in busy towns and cities.
- Take reasonable safety precautions when out at night. While the Patihani area is incredibly safe compared to many places in the world, volunteers should use the same common sense they would use at home. This applies to being out alone after dark and venturing into unknown areas where there may be wildlife or the possibility of getting lost. It is recommended that you let someone know where you are going when you venture out alone.
- Walk on pathways and roads until they have more awareness of their area. Nepal is a very biodiverse country and wandering through fields and unknown pathways is not recommended. Please get used to your area and walk with locals who are familiar with the territory until you are. Take advice from locals before indulging in activities such as bathing in the Rapti River or walking through the Buffer Zone of Chitwan National Park.
- Avoid insect bites where possible. Mosquitos bite from dusk til dawn and it is recommended that you wear repellants when appropriate and sleep under netting. Your host family will provide netting – please speak to Shreeram if this is not the case.
- Only use the FACE Nepal motorbike when/if competent. If you ride the FACE Nepal motorbike you are responsible for refueling it and general maintenance costs. You must wear a helmet - it is illegal not to do so.

Dress

Volunteers are expected to:

- Dress modestly at all times in the local area of their placement. Full guidelines are given in the volunteer handbook.

Host Family and Mealtimes

Please read the guidelines in the Volunteer Handbook.

Volunteers must:

- Inform their host family as soon as possible when they know they will miss a meal. This will avoid wastage and the host family waiting unnecessarily before they eat themselves
- Inform their host family as soon as possible if they intend to stay out overnight or will be home late.
- Not invite any individuals other than those living in their host family house to stay either overnight or after the host family has gone to bed.
- Not invite anyone they have developed a romantic relationship with to stay overnight in the host family's house. This is culturally unacceptable and breach of this guidance in particular severely compromises the volunteer's and FACE Nepal's relationships with host families.
- Not consume alcohol openly until they are certain that this does not cause offense. Occasional drinking at festival times and other special events may be acceptable but please ask Shreeram for guidance. Guidance on alcohol consumption can also be found in the volunteer handbook.

Cultural approaches to planning and time

Volunteers are expected to:

- Be patient. Be aware that Nepali approaches to planning tend to be more last-minute and informal than many Western cultures. Volunteers should approach this with flexibility and patience, and be aware that things do not always work or start on time
- Be tolerant and flexible. Schedules do not always start on time or work to plan but do progress in the Nepali way.
- Be proactive. If a volunteer finds that their program is not progressing as they would like then it is appropriate to take action. This can be independently, through Shreeram or a Member of the local Advisory Board. If this fails, volunteers should contact members of the International Board.

Free Time

Volunteers should:

- Read the guidelines about free time in the Volunteer Handbook
- Inform their host family, a Member of the Advisory Board and the children/adults at their placement location when they will be away from the village and not participating in classes/other parts of their program.
- Inform the teacher if the volunteer placement is in a school if/when they are going to miss a class.
- Obtain the necessary contact details from Shreeram or Reema or ask either to help with informing the relevant people of changes to their programme.
- Remember that their first obligation is to volunteer. Time off for exploring Nepal can be negotiated but must be balanced sensibly with volunteering commitment.

Code of Conduct Breaches

- If the Advisory Board believes that a volunteer is not meeting the expectations outlined in this code of conduct and the volunteer handbook the volunteer will receive a written warning. Members of the International Board will also be informed.
- If the volunteer continues to breach the Volunteer Code of Conduct then they will be asked to leave their FACE Nepal project and host family home. The Advisory Board will decide whether or not any of the program fee will be refunded.
- If the volunteer believes that they have been treated unjustly then they should contact a Member of the International Board at the earliest opportunity.

FACE Nepal and its representatives aim to fully support volunteers in what can be a difficult transition from home to an unfamiliar and developing country. Please be honest and constructive about any criticism or conflict you experience but also remember that while you are volunteering you are a representative of FACE Nepal and your home country.

We hope that difficult issues can be avoided by good communication and frequent meetings which facilitate this. Please be proactive in calling meetings should this be the best way to discuss the progress of your placement and experience in Nepal.

I, _____ have read and understand the Volunteer Code of Conduct and agree to adhere to the guidance given.

Signed _____ Date _____