

VOLUNTEER POLICY

In order to provide quality physical, emotional and spiritual care to our children and as a registered NPO, we have chosen to operate under a number of guidelines. Before making a decision to volunteer with Sibongile, it is important you understand, respect and agree to adhere to these guidelines which have been detailed below.

SECTION 1 | FILMING & PHOTOGRAPHY

As legal guardians of the children of Sibongile, we are responsible for their protection and development. As such we request that NO FILMS or PHOTOGRAPHS are taken of the children or facilities during your placement.

We understand as a volunteer you may wish to take some photographs as memories of your time at Sibongile. We acknowledge this and will endeavour to make these opportunities (and a DVD containing Sibongile images) available to you under staff supervision on the final day of your assignment, however please respect the privacy of our children and do not use these images for marketing or profit.

Any request for photography outside of this arrangement requires approval from the Sibongile Director and Chairman.

SECTION 2 | HOUSE MOTHERS

Please understand that when you enter Sibongile grounds you are not entering an impersonal medical facility, you are entering a home. Like any home, please be respectful of the occupants by:

- Knocking before entering;
- Greeting the house mothers on arrival;
- Understanding the Xhosa culture may mean certain tasks are completed in a different manner than what you are used to (in this instance: please do not judge, rather politely take the opportunity to learn the Xhosa way and should any procedure make you uncomfortable please voice your concerns to the Sibongile Director or Chairman who can raise these issues in the appropriate setting); and
- Ensuring the activities you wish to undertake during your time at Sibongile do not conflict with the posted Daily Schedule.

It is also important we respect and empower the role of the house mothers in acting as the children's main guardians. In this way, please ensure you consult the house mothers:

- Prior to making any decisions on the physical, emotional or mental wellbeing of the children;
- Prior to taking the children offsite;
- Prior to giving any gifts or food items to the children; and
- Prior to making any additions or alterations to the facilities.

Staff meetings are held amongst the workers of Sibongile once per week. These meetings are a forum to share the vision of Sibongile and discuss the day to day operations of the organisation. As a volunteer, it is important you do not

make any commitments to the house parents with regard to donations, home upgrades, training, travel or gifts without first consulting with Sibongile Management. If such suggestions are approved, this will be communicated by Management to the house mothers at the Staff Meeting.

SECTION 3 | OUTINGS

For their personal and medical safety, it is vital we know the whereabouts of our children at all times. Should you wish to take a child off the premises please:

- Complete the Volunteer Site Register; and
- Ensure a house mother accompanies you at all times.

SECTION 4 | GENERAL CONDUCT

HARMFUL SUBSTANCES: Please refrain from bringing or consuming alcohol, drugs, tobacco (smoking) or any other harmful substances on or around Sibongile premises.

CHILD CARE: When dealing with the children of Sibongile we expect volunteers to follow the same Code of Conduct as paid care givers in:

- Never smacking or physically hurting a child (this is against the law and a criminal offence).
- Never saying cruel or hurtful things to a child.
- Never restraining a child unless it is for their own safety.
- Always talking to the children and making them aware of your actions before you touch them or pick them up.
- Being gentle to the children and respectful of the severity of their disabilities.

CONVERSATIONS: Although our children do not appear to be able to communicate or interact, many do understand the conversations within the house and those able to talk are readily able to repeat words in both English and Xhosa. For this reason, please be mindful of the language and tone of any conversations held within the house. In this way we also ask that you do not use derogatory terms to describe the condition of the children or the word 'orphan'.

SECTION 5 | HIV AIDS PRECAUTIONS

A number of our children are HIV positive. To ensure each child is treated equally despite their condition, we do not make their status known and rather implement universal precautions (that is, assume EVERY child has the disease) within our homes.

A FACT SHEET on transmission and precautions is included in your Volunteer Pack. As you will read, HIV AIDS main source of transmission is through infected bodily fluids (namely blood, sexual fluids and breast milk) coming into contact with an open sore or cut.

Although common sense and precaution is required, our carers are in daily contact with our children and have no hesitation in hugging or kissing them – you should feel welcome to do the same.

If a child is bleeding however, please use gloves to assist and keep other children from attempting to “help”. As soon as manageable please notify a staff member that an injury has occurred. Please also note some of our children are prone to biting so long sleeves or caution is recommended when playing.

As our children are in fragile health, please follow poster hand hygiene protocols to reduce the risk of infection and please ensure gloves are used should you be involved in any nappy changing and/or disposal.

SECTION 6 | PLACEMENT DURATION

As much as many hands make for light work, it is important that we assess the intended placement length of volunteers prior to agreeing on a start date. Often travelling teams like to make a “good will” stop into townships as part of their program, however it is important to recognise the children of Sibongile are not a tourist attraction.

Many of our children have been abandoned and are suffering emotionally. Allowing them to foster close relationships with others only to quickly lose them can be detrimental to their development. As such, we ask that you seriously consider the time you have available and how it could best be spent at Sibongile. If you are unable to commit to a period of 3 months with a minimum of 2 HOURS per SHIFT we would prefer that you embark on a special project (facility maintenance; one off outing; medical assistance, training and workshops; creative arts; etc) which is just as important to our operations, rather than working to form relationships with the children.

SECTION 7 | POLICE CLEARANCE CHECK

As legal guardians of the children, their health and safety is our primary concern. As such, a copy of your Police Clearance Certificate (or Volunteer Organisation Background Check) from your country of citizenship is required in order to ensure no volunteer has a record of crimes against children.

For those in South Africa, the certificate costs approximately R60 and can be obtained from your local police station (your ID is required; your fingerprints will be taken and application processed over a 6 week period).

International volunteers should have obtained a Clearance Certificate as part of their Visa application.

Should you have any questions with regard to this Policy please do not hesitate to contact **Marco Spalke, 99 Villa D'Algarve, Baden Powell Drive, MUIZENBERG Cape Town 7945, South Africa**; phone **+27 82 795 8077 / +27 21 788 1355** or email to **info@sibongile.org**.