EL AYUDANTE NICARAGUA

Child Awareness & Safety Policy

Our Ten Core Standards for Protecting Children, Staff, and Visiting Teams

Our Commitment to Child Protection

El Ayudante is passionately dedicated to creating an environment where every child is safe, respected, and protected from harm. These policies exist to protect our children, protect volunteers from unfounded accusations, and model healthy, positive boundaries.

> **Core Principle:** Every team member, intern, and staff member must complete orientation and strictly adhere to these ten non-negotiable safety standards at all times.

The Ten Safety Policies

1. **Appropriate Physical Affection:** When greeting or encouraging a child, always offer side hugs, high fives, or fist bumps. Full frontal embraces are discouraged.
2. **Open-Door & Line-of-Sight Rule:** When working one-on-one with a child in any room, always ensure an uncovered window allows clear line-of-sight from outside, or keep the door fully open.
3. **Mentoring in Public Spaces:** Mentorship, tutoring, and personal conversations must take place in open, visible areas or group settings.
4. **No One-on-One Isolation:** An adult or adolescent male shall never be left alone in a private room with a female child, nor an adult female alone with a male child.
5. **Vehicle Safety:** When a child is transported in any El Ayudante vehicle off campus, at least two adults must always be present inside the vehicle.
6. **Holding Children Guidelines:** It is appropriate to hold or carry children aged 5 and under. Children older than 5 should not be carried or held on laps.
7. **Child Confidentiality & Mandatory Reporting:** Confidentiality is honored, UNLESS a child shares that they are hurting themselves, someone is hurting them, or they intend to harm someone else. Such statements must immediately be reported to leadership (Marisol or Maria Mercedes).
8. **Off-Campus Trips & Supervision:** All excursions require signed parental/guardian permission slips. An official EA staff member must accompany all off-campus outings involving minors. Teen boys and girls may not share adjacent vehicle seats without adult supervision.
9. **Campus Buddy System:** When children walk between campus facilities (such as walking up to the team house or out to agricultural fields), they must always travel with a partner.
10. **Supervised Peer Interaction:** When older adolescents interact with younger children, an adult staff member or volunteer must remain present in a group setting.

Accountability & Reporting

If you observe any concerning behavior, policy violation, or boundary concern, notify the Executive Director (Vanessa Paz) or Mission Team Liaison immediately. We maintain a zero-tolerance policy regarding child endangerment.