

Group Leader Handbook

May 2016

Young Learners English UK is a special interest group of English UK. All members are British Council accredited schools that are working together to create a safe environment for you and your students whilst studying in the UK.

All students aged 17 and under are regarded as children by UK law. There are several UK laws that affect your English course in the UK and this handbook will guide you through the most important ones.

Whether you are an experienced group leader or whether this is your first time in the UK, we recommend that you take the time to read through this guide, as policies and requirements are always changing.

Your chosen school will also have a Group Leader handbook to give you. This guide works together to provide supplementary information since some rules and laws affect all students in every school in the UK.

We must point out that, the overall responsibility for your students lies with the school, even if they are coming with you as a Group Leader.

The British Council regulations relating to the information here are shown at the bottom of each section so you can see what the requirements are.

Accredited by the



for the teaching
of English

Safeguarding & Prevent

We recognise that laws affecting health and safety and working with children varies from country to country and understand that you may not necessarily know all the relevant British laws.

Health and Safety procedures and policies are written into UK law and as such each school will be obligated to adhere to them. We appreciate your co-operation with this.

As part of British safeguarding procedures, every adult who has roles involving responsibility for or substantial access to under 18s will have **a police check** (DBS). This is a legal requirement in the UK.

We are not raising specific concerns about your integrity but whilst at your chosen school, as a Group Leader, you will come into contact with other students who are not in your group. Each school has a responsibility to ensure that you too have been police checked and are suitable to work with children under the age of 18.

Each school will have at least one person who is the Designated Safeguarding and Prevent Officer. Often, but not always, it is the Welfare Officer for the school.

Safeguarding encompasses all areas of the safety and welfare of your students including homesickness, bullying, general health and well-being including that they are eating properly.

Each school will also have a Code of Conduct for Group Leaders, students and staff to adhere to. This is information about what you can expect from the centre and their staff and what they expect of you and your students. Often this will be explained to everyone in the First Day orientation meeting.

If you have any questions or concerns about one of your students or any other student, please see your Centre Manager or Designated Safeguarding Officer.

One aspect of safeguarding is the **health of your students**.

- If you give medicine to one of your students, please make sure you inform the Welfare Officer at your centre. This is for safety reasons in case of any adverse reaction later on.
- All medicines must be labelled correctly and have English instructions .
- If you have a student taking prescribed medication please tell your centre If that student has to go to hospital with an emergency, we have to be able to show them very quickly exactly what medication they are on.

Safeguarding & Prevent continued

- Medicine needs to be locked away at all times or stored with your or the host family.
- Under no circumstances, can you give medication to a student who is not in your group, even if their parents say that you can.

If you have a student who is ill, it is normally your duty to supervise them, sometimes on the centre's site if they have a Sick Room/Area, sometimes in the homestay.

As a Group Leader, other students may look up to you and look to you for information. You are never allowed to supervise students who are not in your group so please introduce them to a member of staff who can help them.

Data protection is another area of law in the UK. As a group leader you are in a position of trust and may see or hear information about one of your students or another student or even a host family, member of staff or another group leader. You will certainly have the contact details for your host families and certain key staff. All of these written details should be kept safe and are for your eyes only.

Some things are regarded as personal and private within the centres. Please don't give personal details to anybody other than senior members of staff. Also, do not discuss situations relating to someone who is not in your group with anyone other than the key centre staff. We have a duty to protect all our staff, homestay providers, group leaders and students from gossip and defamation of character.

Safeguarding is key to every school. As part of this, each school must have the next of kin **emergency contact** names and details for each student at their school.

If something happens to one of your students, the first person your school would contact is you. However, in case you are unavailable, each school must also have the contact details for the parents of your students.

Each school will also ask for your next of kin details in the unlikely event that anything happens to you too.

Each centre has their own 24 hour **emergency phone numbers** for you to contact in case you need help or support. We should point out that parents will not be able to talk to you or their students on this phone, it is only for emergencies.

In UK law we protect a number of minority groups so they cannot be discriminated against because of their sex, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, culture/nationality.

Safeguarding & Prevent continued

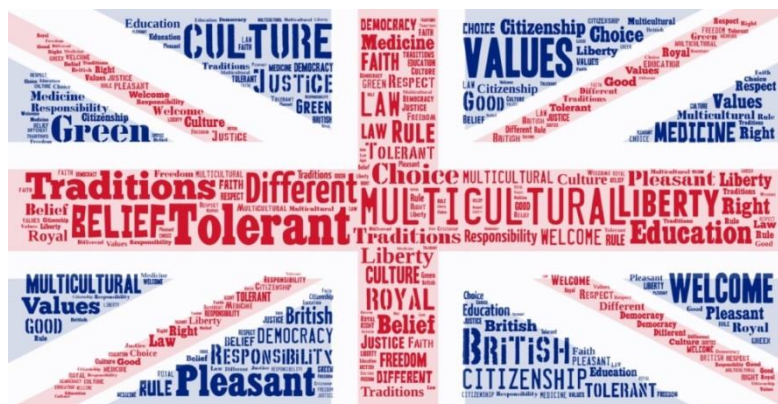
Prevent is now a legal requirement in the UK. It is the first part in a larger government initiative to try to stop extremism and terrorism and tries to identify people who might be developing extremist values so they can be educated as to why this is not in keeping with British values.

Extremism is defined as:

“Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values And calls for the death of members of our armed forces whether in this country or overseas.”

Prevent is not:

- Spying on students and staff
- Trying to change someone’s culture
- Stopping people from having opinions
- Stopping students from having discussions
- About criminalising people



To fulfil our legal requirements we have to make sure that our students, staff, host families, suppliers and group leaders exemplify British values. These include:

British Values:

- Democracy
- Rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.

Many of these duties are already dealt with by accredited British Council schools through Safeguarding rules and policies such as having lessons on British culture and issues such as bullying.

The main thing that we need you to support us with, is to remind your students about British law. Each school will talk to their students about these in the first days of their course or distribute Information Sheets, especially to make sure that students realise that there can be no discrimination against anybody.

All staff, and you, have a responsibility to address and report to Senior school staff any ‘extreme’ comments.

Essentially, Prevent is about respecting other cultures and students from all nations and backgrounds and making sure there is no discrimination.

Safeguarding and Prevent continued

Language schools are open and welcoming to students from all around the world and it is a marvellous opportunity to learn about the culture, similarities and differences of students in different countries.

UK Law

Organisations working with children must comply with the provisions of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, as well as the Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

Staff, student and host records should be maintained and divulged to third parties only within the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

British Council information

- M13 There will be effective systems to maintain up-to-date records of local contact details for students, and of their next of kin or other designated emergency contact.
- W1 Provision will be made for the safety and security of students on the provider's premises appropriate to their age, background and the location of the provider.
- W2 Students will be given pastoral care appropriate to their age, background and circumstances. Account will be taken of any special needs arising from religious observance.
- W3 A named person or persons will be identified to all staff and students to deal with students' personal problems.
- W4 There will be policies and procedures, known to all students and staff, for dealing with abusive behaviour by staff or students (verbal abuse, harassment, bullying, actual or threatened violence, damage to personal property) or behaviour that may lead to extremist radicalisation.
- W28 There will be effective systems in place to ensure the health and safety of students on all on-site and off-site activities, including written risk assessments and clear guidelines on how to respond to situations where students are at risk.
- C1 There will be a safeguarding policy which specifies procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of all students under the age of 18. A named member of staff will be responsible for implementing this policy and responding to child protection allegations.
- C2 The provider will make the policy known to all adults in contact with under 18s through their role with the organisation (including employees, sub-contractors, homestay hosts, group leaders and volunteers) and provide guidance or training relevant to its effective implementation.
- C5 (Group leaders and other adults travelling with students under 18 will be responsible only for students in their own group.
- C8 Arrangements will be in place to ensure contact between the provider and parents, legal guardians or their nominated representative concerning the welfare of students.

The provider will ensure that effective measures and information are in place to enable 24-hour contact with parents or legal guardians of students.

Supervision on activities and trips

Each school will place different demands on their Group Leaders but most schools will want you to supervise your students at meal times (if at school) and in their free time.

During these periods, we would like you to be present, contactable and making sure that your students follow the school rules.

Generally, Group Leaders have a lot of free time during classes and, sometimes on activities. During these periods you will often be able to go off site and relax but you must be contactable.

Active supervision means that you encouraging them to speak English, are interacting with your students and are aware of what they are doing. It is difficult to do this if you are talking with your friends, smoking (if allowed on the premises) or on your phone or tablet.

Failure to actively supervise means that you could be held responsible for your students misbehaving, as well as endangering their safety.

On coaches or on public transport, please make sure your students follow British law and have respect for their fellow passengers. E.g. wearing seatbelts, putting rubbish in bins, not using priority seating areas etc.

Please make sure you assist the school staff by being contactable and ensuring that your students are on time by regularly taking the register.

Continual co-operation with the school staff will make your day more safe, enjoyable and focused.

Please be aware that **meeting times** are non-negotiable on the day of your trip. The school and their transport provider will have a timetable to stick to. Each school has deadlines and transport must leave on time.

If you are not at the meeting point on time, then the school will have to leave without you and will supervise your students on the journey home.

If any of your students are not at the meeting point on time, it is your responsibility to wait for them and return to the centre by public transport at the expense of the students.

In the unlikely event that one of your students goes missing, the school will have procedures in place. Please adhere to them.

Supervision on trips

The **itinerary for each trip** has been pre-arranged. If you want any changes, you need to discuss this with your centre at least a week before the trip. e.g the trip to Bath is on Saturday 9th July – you need to talk to the school by the 2nd July.

On the day itself, for safety reasons, it is impossible to make changes as all centres will have made bookings and trained staff for that schedule.

Supervision by school staff at weekends, both in a homestay and residential environment, is limited as some staff will have some time off.

If one of your students is ill, it is normally your duty to remain on site or to regularly visit them at their host family. In these instances, the school staff will supervise your students on the trip. In some cases the centres may be able to make alternative arrangements so it is important to liaise with them.

British Council information

C5 Suitable arrangements will be made for the supervision and safety of students during scheduled lessons and activities, normally by:

- Ensuring there is sufficient adult supervision** for all scheduled activities both on-site and off-site, taking into account the nature of the activity, age, gender and needs of the students. (Group leaders and other adults travelling with students under 18 will be responsible only for students in their own group.)

** The 1998 DfEE publication Health & Safety of Pupils advises supervision ratios of:

- 1:6 for students aged under 8 years
- 1:10-15 for students aged 8 to 10 years
- 1: 15 – 20 for students aged 11 years +

C6

- Providing clear rules for what they may do outside the scheduled lesson or activity times and without supervision, appropriate to the age of the students and the location, and having procedures in place to ensure these rules are adhered to.
- Making hosts, group leaders and residence supervisors aware of the rules for what students may do outside the scheduled activity times, and particularly what time they are expected to return for meals and at night, and having procedures in place to ensure these rules are adhered to.

W7 As appropriate, students will be given advice on:

.....

- Traffic regulations
- Compliance with the law e.g. in relation to seat belts etc.

Risk Assessments

All lessons, activities or trips that we offer our students, are carefully considered so that we minimise any risks. Most schools will give their staff risk assessment training and also go through this with you in your Induction Session.

We have a range of risk assessments that cover:

- Fire
- The building and site
- Group leaders
- On site activities
- Off site activities and trips
- Prevent

Our staff all receive risk assessment training so that they can be aware of potential harm that could occur and make the situation safe.

In the same way that we train our staff, we also go through the risk assessments with you in your Induction Session.

We recognise that you may be a very experienced group leader, but each British Council accredited school has important local information relating to their city, town or village and what their procedures are in certain eventualities. We have a legal responsibility to ensure that we share this information with you.

The Risk Assessment for group leaders is particularly important. You will be required to go through a risk assessment with school staff at any time that you want take your students off site in their free time. You will need to sign it to acknowledge that you have read and understood it.

Ultimately, the school is responsible and has duty of care for you and your students in the UK.

British Council information

W28 There will be effective systems in place to ensure the health and safety of students on all on-site and off-site activities, including written risk assessments and clear guidelines on how to respond to situations where students are at risk.

Your duties

There are certain things you must ask your school on arrival or before you leave home. These include:

- Name and contact details for the Prevent Officer and Designated Safeguarding Officer
- Emergency contact name and phone numbers
- Name and address of the centre you are going to
- Code of Conduct and School rules, usually in the Group Leader handbook
- Accommodation details for you and your students including phone numbers
- Fire safety procedures
- Risk assessments
- Nearest hospital with Accident & Emergency facilities and the nearest doctor's surgery
- Places of worship
- Curfews
- Free time rules
- Up-dated programme
- Who to go to for information about academic, welfare, social, financial matters and general enquiries
- The Group Leader handbook
- Disciplinary procedures and under what conditions may a student or Group Leader be asked to leave the school.

Whilst the school has ultimate responsibility for you and your students, your help and support will be needed on a number of occasions. These will vary from centre to centre but most will want you to:

- Speak English with your students, even if you have to repeat it in your language afterwards.
- Be contactable at all times.
- Be at school to supervise meal times.
- Actively supervise your students in their free time.
- Attend weekly meetings with the senior centre staff.
- Abide by, and ensure that your students adhere to, the school's code of conduct and rules.
- Reporting any student concerns to the senior centre staff as soon as possible, even for students other than yours.

The main priority for schools in the Young Learners English UK group is to make sure that you and your students have a wonderful and safe time in the UK. The school staff are there to help and support you, so please do talk to them if you have any concerns or problems. This will help in the smooth running of your programme.