



COMPASSION
**SPONSOR VISIT
HANDBOOK**

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ALSO ENCLOSED

- Compassion Child Protection Form
- Compassion Itinerary Form

1. FIRST STEPS

A sponsor visit is one of those precious moments that makes God's blessing very real in the life of a child and we welcome visits as an added gift and a valuable input in their life.

Please note: You must have sponsored your child for at least a year before visiting and Compassion reserves the right to refuse a visit.

1.1 ARRANGING YOUR VISIT

Visits must be arranged six weeks in advance through Compassion UK. Sponsors arriving unannounced will not be able to visit their child. In order to arrange your visit, please contact our Tours and Visits team on 01932 836490 or by emailing info@compassionuk.org.

Once we have received your forms and documents *(see Section 1.2)*, we will contact the country you wish to visit and they will let us know whether the proposed dates are suitable. We will then confirm the details with you, including date, cost and contact information.

1.2 FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

In order to arrange your visit, we will need some information from you. Please fill in the enclosed ***Compassion Child Protection Form*** and ***Itinerary Form*** and return them to us with the documents listed below. [We suggest you keep photocopies of the completed forms.]

- Photocopy of a valid **Police Check, Criminal Records Bureau Check (CRB)** or **Basic Disclosure** that was done in the last two years *(please see Section 3.3 for more information)*
- Recent **photograph**
- Photocopy of your **passport**

Please note: We are more than happy to help you plan your visit to your sponsored child and can provide suggestions for accommodation and transport directly connected to your visit, but we are not a travel agency and cannot provide service of that level.

2. IMPORTANT INFORMATION

2.1 COSTS

While visiting your child, you will have to pay for any expenses incurred, which could include transport, translation, visit host, meals and accommodation. These will depend on the location and we will inform you of the costs before the visit. Wherever possible, please pay any costs directly to the vendor. If there is anything that you cannot pay directly and therefore the Compassion staff has to pay, we will contact you for reimbursement and forward the amount on to the country office. Please do not give any money directly to the project or Compassion staff.

2.2 VISIT HOSTS

During your visit you will always have a Compassion staff member or representative with you. This is for translation, logistics and child protection purposes.

2.3 TRAVELLING WITH FAMILY OR FRIENDS

Family and friends are welcome to join you on your visit. However, we will require a valid criminal record check for each person over the age of 18 who will be meeting your sponsored child. In order to avoid overwhelming your sponsored child, their family or the project staff, we may advise on appropriate numbers.

2.4 LENGTH OF A VISIT

Sponsor visits are usually three to six hours long, allowing you plenty of time to get to know your sponsored child. Visits are limited to one day only.

2.5 VISITING PROJECTS

The main purpose of your visit is to meet your child. Not all Compassion projects are open every day and most close during the school holidays, so it may not be possible for you to see your child's project in action.

3. CHILD PROTECTION

3.1 REASONS

Individual visits are an opportunity for sponsors to connect personally with their sponsored children.

We know that our sponsors share our concern for children. However, it is possible that some people may try to use Compassion's child sponsorship programme for the wrong motives. We are opposed to all forms of child abuse and exploitation and will do everything within our power to ensure that no harm comes to any child registered in our programme.

These guidelines are intended to protect children in Compassion projects from abuse as well as Compassion sponsors from wrongful allegations of abuse.

For everyone's protection, it is important that sponsors avoid even the appearance of inappropriate conduct and you should always be aware of the way in which your behaviour towards children and minors could be perceived.

3.2 REGULATIONS

While we want to make your visit as memorable as possible, we do also have the best interests of the children at heart. Therefore we ask that you adhere to the following regulations during your visit:

- The visit must be arranged through the Compassion UK office
- You must be accompanied by a Compassion visit host at all times
- The length of your visit will not exceed one day
- You may not stay overnight with your sponsored child
- If you have the opportunity to visit your sponsored child's home, you must be accompanied by a Compassion visit host
- You may not ask for or accept accommodation at the project or with your sponsored child's family
- Show respect towards you sponsored child and their family

- Be culturally sensitive in expressing affection towards your sponsored child
- Avoid flirting, unwelcome flattery or suggestive comments
- Do not give your personal contact information to your sponsored child or their family
- Do not ask for or record your sponsored child's contact information
- Do not give any cash to your sponsored child, their family or the project staff
- All gifts for the sponsored child, family or community must be in accordance with Compassion's policy *(see Section 4.4)*

3.3 CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

We accept three types of criminal record checks. Please note that not just the sponsor, but everyone over the age of 18 who will meet your sponsored child will have to submit a criminal record check. Compassion UK cannot apply for criminal checks on your behalf.

Criminal Records Bureau Check (CRB)

We will accept a **copy of an existing Criminal Records Bureau Check** that was **carried out in the last two years** for another purpose such as ministry or employment.

Please note: We cannot accept a reference number and do need to see a photocopy of the actual form. If you do not have the form, you will need to request a Police Check.

Police Check

We will accept a **copy of an existing Police Check** that was **carried out in the last two years** for another purpose.

If you do not have an existing CRB or Police Check, you may be able to obtain a straightforward Police Check at your local police station.

This will incur a charge and you will need to take photo ID and proof of your current address, such as a utility bill, with you.

You will be asked to complete a form at the police station and it can take up to 40 days to receive a Police Check. Please note that not all police stations offer this service.

Basic Disclosure

Another alternative is to apply for a basic disclosure at the following website: www.disclosurescotland.co.uk. This service is available to all residents of the United Kingdom.

Please note: This child protection policy is not unique to Compassion. Most other child sponsorship charities in the UK adhere to the same guidelines.

4. VISITING YOUR CHILD

4.1 MEETING YOUR CHILD

When you meet your sponsored child, they are likely to be very shy at first. The visit host will help with translation, giving you the opportunity to chat and get to know each other better. As the day progresses, your child will usually become more relaxed. Games are a great way to break the ice – try a game of football.

4.2 VISITING YOUR CHILD'S HOME

You may have the opportunity to visit the home of your sponsored child and the family will consider your visit a great honour. Please appreciate their hospitality and take an interest in their life. Before you leave the home, please ask if there is anything which you can pray for and spend some time in prayer with the family.

Please note: The best way to find out more information about the family is to ask your child in your letters. Compassion UK will not be able to find out this kind of detailed information prior to a visit.

Please do not give cash to the family, as we cannot guarantee what it will be used for. If you are touched by a family's circumstances, you should give through the Compassion UK office on your return. This will ensure that the money is spent wisely, as well as protecting the family from becoming a target of jealousy in the community.

Please note: For your own safety as well as that of the child, please never revisit or keep in touch with the family or project directly and never give out your address. If you are feeling pressured to do so, please use the Compassion UK office address.

When visiting a home, guests seldom leave empty-handed. If you are given a gift, accept it graciously. If you do not want to or cannot take the gift with you, share it with the project or the family. In the case of live animals and birds, ask your child to take care of it for you. This will give you something to talk about in your letters.

4.3 VISITING YOUR CHILD'S PROJECT

You may have the opportunity to visit the project which your child attends. If you do, please take time to chat with the project staff and, if it is a project day, play with the children. It's fine to take photographs in the projects; however, it's polite to ask first.

Please note: Not all of the children in the projects will be sponsored. If you meet a child that you would like to support, please DO NOT promise the child that you will sponsor them. Instead, mention to the visit host that you are interested in supporting the child and then speak to Compassion UK on your return. There is the possibility that the child may have been sponsored during your time away.

4.4 GIFTS

Your visit itself is the best gift of all. During this time you will learn a great deal about your child and their family and it will help you pray more effectively.

However, a few well chosen gifts will serve as a reminder of your visit, so we have included some guidelines that will help you give wisely:

One suggestion is buying a small school backpack and filling it with gifts. You could then leave the backpack behind as a gift.

Bring practical gifts such as:

- clothes, shoes, hair ribbons and clips
- pens, pencils, crayons and paper
- books
- towels, flat bed sheets or blankets
- dishcloths or tablecloths
- soap, toothpaste and toothbrushes
- wind up torch or radio
- a football or doll

Do not give too many gifts

Too many gifts can overwhelm and create unnecessary jealousy. If your gifts do not fit into a small backpack, you've probably bought too much and may need to reconsider.

Remember the rest of the family

Your sponsored child will share their gifts, so you could give something for the entire family. Foodstuffs (e.g. rice or maize meal) or gifts for the whole family (e.g. sheets and towels) will be greatly appreciated. You can bring gifts from the UK or buy culturally appropriate presents such as sugar, tea or cooking pots in the country.

Do not promise other gifts

Make a mental note of anything else you would like to do when you get home, but do not tell your sponsored child. We have many children still waiting for spoken promises to be fulfilled, each one made with the best of intentions.

<p>Please note: As with all financial gifts to children and projects, any money you may send after your return has to fall within the Compassion UK gift policy guidelines. More information is available on www.compassionuk.org/gift</p>
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Bring a current photo of your family

This is a great conversation starter and will be treasured by your child for years to come. You could bring a photo album with blank pages at the end for photos you send after your return.

5. TRAVEL INFORMATION

We want you to enjoy a wonderful visit and have included a few suggestions to help make your stay safe and enjoyable.

5.1 ADAPTING TO THE LOCAL CULTURE

These are some basic guidelines:

- Take the time to learn a few words and phrases in the local language
- Ask the visit host questions about what to expect so that your expectations will be realistic
- Have a positive regard for others, showing respect and love
- Tolerate differences and remember that there is more than one way to do something
- Be open-minded and receptive to new experiences
- Greetings are often lengthier and more elaborate than we are used to, but please take the time to return the greeting and have a chat
- Keep your sense of humour

5.2 PERSONAL SAFETY

Theft and pick pocketing are the biggest dangers. The usual common sense rules apply:

- Do not carry large amounts of money with you
- Do not carry your passport, identification documents, money, insurance and credit cards together – you risk being left entirely without identification and funds in the case of theft or loss
- When paying for something, do not allow bystanders to see how much money you have

Please note: As a matter of courtesy, do not take photographs of anyone without asking their permission first. Note that government and security installations are strictly off-limits.

5.3 HEALTH

Most travel related diseases can be prevented by following some common sense advice:

Avoiding food-related illnesses

- Don't eat fruit that does not need peeling
- Don't eat uncooked vegetables, including salads
- Don't eat undercooked or raw meat, fish or shellfish
- Make sure that food arrives hot and well cooked
- Don't drink unpasteurised milk or other dairy products
- Avoid eating food purchased from street vendors

Avoiding water-borne diseases

- Drink only bottled or purified water or hot beverages
- Don't use ice cubes
- Use bottled water to brush your teeth

Avoiding sunstroke

- Drink far more water than you would at home
- Spend less time in the sun
- Always carry a hat and sunscreen with you
- Try to keep your skin covered as much as possible

<p>Please note: For information on vaccinations and avoiding serious diseases such as malaria, please consult your local GP or travel clinic.</p>
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5.4 WHAT TO WEAR

Please ensure that your clothing will be considered modest by the people you will be visiting.

Women should wear skirts that reach below the knee when visiting their sponsored child. Trousers, shorts, jeans and shoestring tops are not appropriate. Men should wear long trousers. Shorts and jeans are not appropriate.

5.5 MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the work of Compassion, the country you are visiting and issues relating to child poverty, you can take a look at the following sources:

www.compassionuk.org

Compassion UK

www.compassion.com

Compassion International

www.unicef.org/publications/index.html

Unicef's 'State of the World's Children' for information about child poverty

www.lonelyplanet.com

For more information about the country you'll be visiting

6. ON YOUR RETURN

6.1 EXPENSES

We will be in contact to advise you of any outstanding expenses connected to your visit. These can be sent to the Compassion UK office in the form of a cheque. We will reimburse the country office.

6.2 FEEDBACK FORMS

We will also be sending you a feedback form. Please do let us know how you got on. If things went well, it encourages us, if things did not go smoothly, we want to make sure we improve for next time.