
Keeping safe from neglect, sexual, physical and emotional harm and grooming

SOTW Ltd is committed to child safety and requires zero tolerance of child abuse from all management, staff, students, volunteers and families.

We are committed to the principle of zero tolerance, child-safety and wellbeing and:

- Follow our child safety policy.
- Support, encourage and enable staff, parents, volunteers and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters. During the induction session, students will be briefed on the above mentioned child safety matters.
- Support or assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.
- Our child safety policy applies to all exchange environments.
- Child safety is considered in the recruitment, screening, selection and management of staff, host families and volunteers to reduce risk of child abuse.
- In each country that SOTW Ltd work with there are variations in the legal requirements of working with children and criminal background checks for volunteer host families. In all cases, we and our overseas partners comply with the requirements of the law when selecting management of staff, host families and volunteers to reduce risk of child abuse.

Child Abuse is when the adults responsible for caring for you harm you or do not meet your needs properly. If you are being hurt in any way, it is okay to tell someone and we would like to help you. Abuse is not your fault and you have done nothing wrong. You have the right to feel safe.

Types of abuse

Emotional Abuse is when people aren't talking to you nicely and hurting you with words. This may involve name-calling, swearing, yelling or being put down.

Neglect – Is if your family fails to meet your basic needs, such as providing enough food, drink, somewhere safe to sleep, medical attention if needed, leaving you unattended for a long period of time

Physical Abuse - occurs if your parent, host parent or other adult hurts you physically. This could include hitting, biting, pushing, kicking or smacking or anything else that hurts your body.

Sexual Abuse - occurs when a person uses power, force or authority to involve you in any form of sexual activity. It might include watching you naked, touching genitals or breasts, showing you pornography or inappropriate phone calls/texts.



Support Networks

Great importance is placed on the safety and wellbeing of all international students. Our support service starts before a student leaves the home country and continues throughout their stay to ensure students enjoy their experience at school and in their homestay.

An assigned local area coordinator is available for regular contact, support, and advice. If you are having a problem you can talk to your local area coordinator who will offer advice and assistance. This number will be given to you at the orientation session.

Furthermore, we assist you with ongoing support including;

- Orientation program on arrival into host country providing information about;
- Living in that country - expectations of the international student program
- Monitoring of homestay experience
- 24-hour emergency phone service

If you are experiencing any emotional distress while away, from homesickness to discomfort in your environment, please talk to someone about the way you feel. You can talk to your host-family, a teacher, or a local coordinator. We don't want you to feel alone.

Section Seven: Italy

Italy is a country of great beauty – food, architecture, churches, fashion, coastline, beaches, mountains and language. It also has a history that is rich and colourful – having been home to many European cultures, such as the Etruscans and the Romans and later the birthplace of the renaissance period. It is easy to understand why Italy has long remained one of the most favoured tourist destinations with more than 40 million tourists flocking to its shores each year.

Experience the beauty of Italy as more than a tourist by immersing yourself in an Italian family. Imagine sitting around the table speaking Italian with your host family while eating one of Nonna's delicious pastas or strolling cobblestoned streets with your host sibling – gelato in hand!

Most students attend school from Monday to Saturday between 8am and 1pm. During your school stay, the opportunity may arise to assist the local teachers with their English Classes.

Outside of school hours, students are free to return home and join their family for a long lunch, then students normally meet their friends in the local piazza or go for a walk (passeggiata), hangout or maybe grab a gelato.

Transport: Transport in Italy is affordable, quick and efficient. Trains are reasonably priced, depart frequently and cover the country extensively. Buses are cheaper, slower and best used for getting to more remote villages that are not serviced by trains.

Climate: From the Alpine climate of the snow-capped mountains of the North to the Mediterranean climate with year round warmth in the South, Italy's climate has something for everyone. From beaches to mountains and everything in between.

Food: Italians take their food quite seriously. With the main meal of the day being lunch, you can expect a long lunch with the family, traditionally consisting of around five or six courses. Imagine a table set with home grown fruits, fresh bread from the local baker, an array of cold meats, local cheeses, the tastiest tomatoes you've ever tried and home-made pasta!

Business hours: are approximately from 8am to 1pm and from 3pm to 7pm, Monday to Friday. Banking hours in Italy are approximately 8.30am to 1.30pm and 3pm to 4.30pm Monday to Friday. The afternoon opening hours will vary from city to city. Banks are closed on Saturday, Sunday and on national holidays.

Child Protection Laws

SOTW Ltd work with exchange partners in Italy that recruit, select and screen host families via personal references. Adult members of host families may apply to their local Giudice Unico di Primo Grade for a Certificate Generale which contains both civil and criminal records. This service is provided by the Ministry of Justice (Ministero della Giustizia). This process is not compulsory but, if it is to be undertaken, must be done so in a township where the family has been resident for at least five years. The Certificate will not show offences which may have occurred in the last two years. Children required to appear in court may be accompanied and represented by lawyers. Mandatory reporting of sexual abuse in Italy is not required by law.

Legal ages

SOTW Ltd have rules and guidelines which prohibit participants' marriage, the driving of motorised vehicles and the use of non-prescription drugs. Member organisations also have rules regarding the use of alcohol and guidelines for employment. Participants and their parents/guardians must be mindful of rules about these matters in addition to the information provided below about local law. To violate the rules or the law may render a participant's insurance invalid, and result in termination of program participation:

Alcohol – There is no minimum age for consuming alcohol in Italy. However, it is illegal to sell alcohol to anyone under 16, and under 16s must not consume alcohol in a public place.

Driving – The minimum driving age is 18 for cars. Motorcycle licences may be gained at 16 (for motorcycles less than 125 cc but passengers may not be carried until 18).

Marriage – To be allowed to marry in Italy without consent, people must have reached the age of 18. Court consent may be granted for those between 16 and 18.

Employment - The legal age for employment commences at 16.

Public transport – In Italy, students receive a monthly discount on public transport fares.

Corporal punishment - Corporal punishment is lawful in the home and prohibited in schools.

Italian Ministry of Justice contact details:

Ministero della giustizia
via Arenula 70 - 00186 Roma
Tel: +39 - 06 68851
<http://www.giustizia.it/giustizia/>

Alternatively, the Italian embassy in Canberra may be contacted for details:

Embassy of Italy in Canberra

12 Grey Street
Deakin ACT 2600
Telephone: (02) 6273 3333
Fax: (02) 6273 4223
Email: ambasciata.canberra@esteri.it
Website: www.ambcanberra.esteri.it



Sources and further information:

A respected source providing general information about Italy (and other countries)

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/it.html>

Drinking ages

www.geocities.jp/m_kato_clinic/mini-age-alcohol-eng-1.html

Driving age

<https://www.tispol.org/guides/italy.pdf>

Marriage information

<http://www.right-to-education.org/page/comparative-table-minimum-age-legislation>

Employment Information

<http://www.right-to-education.org/node/279>

http://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resourceattachments/RTE_At_What_Age_Report_Annotated_Version_2011.pdf

Information on corporal punishment

<http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/interactive-map>

Government portal

<http://www.governo.it/>

Public transport information

<http://www.atac.roma.it/>

Ministry of Justice

<http://www.giustizia.it/giustizia/>

Disclaimer:

The information contained herein has been reviewed and updated in May 2015, April 2016 and March 2018 as a resource for Australian families whose child intends participating on a high school exchange program to Italy. The information has been obtained from a variety of external, publicly available sources none of which is owned, written or maintained by Students of the World. Students of the World is reliant on the validity of the information provided by the external sources and encourages parents to undertake their own research.

Section Eight: France

Ranked as the number one tourist destination in the world, France is a beautiful and important cultural centre – known for its elegant language, architecture, fashion and sophisticated food. France has 37 sites in the UNESCO's World Heritage List and features cities of high cultural interest, beaches, Alps and rural regions that are famous for their beauty and tranquility.

The French language has a long history as an international language of literature and is famously described as the language of love. It is also the second most studied language around the world.

Picture yourself living in a delightful French village, immersed in the stunning language and rich traditions that the country has to offer. Imagine on your walk to school, stopping by the local boulangeries to pick up a sneaky croissant or pain au chocolat, before heading to school to learn with local students from the village.

Most students attend school from Monday to Friday between 8:30am and 5pm with a 1-2 hour lunch break. During your school stay, the opportunity may arise to assist the local teachers with their English classes, which is a great opportunity to see how they teach your native language.

Transport: France has great public transport – from the underground metro systems to their TGV (fast trains). Transport is not at a great cost and is typically easy to follow.

Climate: The weather in France can vary dramatically depending on where you are; a Mediterranean climate on the Southern coast, temperate climate around the rolling hills of the East; the French Alps have more extreme weather (perfect for skiing); and Paris, North and West France have warm summers and cold winters.

Food: The French definitely know good food, from their crunchy baguettes made fresh daily, to decadent pastries and sweets, they have it all. But they really love their cheese! They eat about 25kg of cheese per person each year, making them the biggest cheese eaters in the world! They also have some other interesting dishes worth trying, such as les escargot and les cuisses de grenouille. Will you give these a go?? Don't forget to say Bon appetite before each meal!

Business hours: The classic French shopping week comprises six days, Monday to Saturday, with shops generally open from 9 a.m. to Midday, and 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. In towns and villages, it is still the rule that shops close at lunchtime.

Child Protection Laws:

SOTW Ltd members work with exchange partners in France that recruit, select and screen host families via personal references. The French government maintains a National Criminal Record Service. "Bulletin 3" (or Extrait No 3 du Casier Judiciaire) may be requested by adult members of host family households. They have the right to choose with whom this record of criminal history is shared. Children required to appear in court may be accompanied and represented by lawyers. Such appearances may be conducted by video connection in order to minimise the stress for the child. Article 226-14 of the French Penal Code allows that "disclosures of secrets" will not lead to disciplinary sanctions if the disclosure relates to informing a judicial, medical or administrative authority of cruelty or deprivation, including sexual abuse which has been inflicted on a minor.

Legal ages

SOTW Ltd have rules and guidelines which prohibit participants' marriage, the driving of motorised vehicles and the use of non-prescription drugs. Member organisations also have rules regarding the use of alcohol and guidelines for employment. Participants and their parents/guardians must be mindful of rules about these matters in addition to the information provided below about local law. To violate the rules or the law may render a participant's insurance invalid, and result in termination of program participation:

Alcohol - The legal drinking age for buying alcohol in France is 18. There is no legal age for consuming alcohol in private but public drunkenness is illegal.

Driving – The minimum driving age is 18. However, learning may commence from age 16 under certain conditions.

Marriage – To be allowed to marry in France without consent, people must have reached the age of 18.

Employment - The legal age for employment commences at 16." Light work" may be considered between 14 and 16.

Public transport – In France, the cost of a ticket or transport pass will vary according to a number of factors including age and student status and family passes. Discounts are available for students.

Corporal punishment - Corporal punishment remains lawful in the home and alternative care/day care but has been prohibited in schools.

French Justice Department contact details:

Casier Judiciaire National
Ministère de la Justice et des Libertés
13, place Vendôme
75042 Paris cedex 01
Tel: + 33 0251 8989 51

Website: <http://www.justice.gouv.fr/le-ministere-de-la-justice-10017/contacter-les-services-du-ministere-de-la-justice-12359/>

Alternatively, the French Embassy in Canberra may be contacted for details:

Embassy of France

6 Perth Avenue

Yarralumla ACT 2600

Telephone: (02) 6216 0100

Fax: (02) 6216 0127

Email: information.canberraamba@diplomatie.gouv.fr

Sources and further information:

A respected source providing general information about France (and other countries)

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/fr.html>

Drinking ages

<http://drinkingage.procon.org/view.resource.php?resourceID=004294>

Driving information

<https://www.tispol.org/guides/france.pdf>

Marriage information

<http://france.embassy.gov.au/pari/Marriage.html>

Information on corporal punishment

<http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/interactive-map>

Children's rights in France; Employment Information

<http://www.loc.gov/law/help/child-rights/france.php>

French Legal information,

<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/>

Ministry of National Education

<http://www.education.gouv.fr/>

Ministry of Justice

<http://www.justice.gouv.fr/>

Public Transport Information

<http://www.sncf.com/>

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Section Nine: Spain

Spain is widely known for Flamenco music and dance, bull-fights, fantastic beaches and lots of sunshine. However, Spain is also steeped in history and culture with some of the most beautiful cities and towns mixing historical monuments with futuristic architecture. The country has a diverse landscape with beautiful mountain ranges, stunning wild cliffs, picturesque coves of the Mediterranean, tiny villages perched on hilltops and the beauty of coastal outcrops reflective of the old Spain.

Spanish people possess a passion for life, expressed through their love of food, the music in their soul and their love of celebrating all the good things in life.

Spain is the third largest country in Europe with a population of around 45 million. Spain's largest city and capital is Madrid, located in the centre of the country. Madrid is also Spain's financial and commercial capital, as it has been for hundreds of years. Other major urban areas include Barcelona, Valencia, Seville Bilbao and Malaga.

Whilst daily life in Spain is the same as in other Western Countries, some important practices that are particular to the country still remain. The most obvious is the organization of the day and the scheduling of meals. Lunch, which is the main meal of the day, is eaten between 2pm and 3pm. Traditionally it was followed by a nap – the famous siesta – however, as most people now commute between home and work, this custom is in decline. Supper, a lighter meal, is also taken late, between 9pm and 10pm, or even later during the hot summer months.

Transport: Spain's network of train and bus services is one of the best in Europe and there aren't many places that can't be reached by using one or the other. Madrid and Barcelona have extensive bus and metro systems, however, all cities and provincial capitals have reasonable bus networks.

Climate: The climate of Spain varies greatly from region to region. The northern coastal regions are cool and humid with an average annual temperature of 14 degrees Celsius. The central plateau is cold in winter and hot in summer; Madrid has a winter average of about 8 degrees Celsius and a summer average of 23 degrees Celsius. In Andalusia and the Levante, the climate is temperate except in summer, when temperatures can reach above 40 degrees Celsius in the shade!

Food: Spanish cooking varies greatly from region to region, linked to local products and traditions. The Valencia region is home to one of Spain's most famous dishes, paella south in Andalusia gazpacho is a beloved dish, while the cattle-producing region of Castile boasts succulent roasts and air-dried hams or jamon. Tapas are also associated with Spain and is the custom of having a small snack before a meal.

Business hours: The most usual business hours are from Monday-Saturday, from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm, and 4:30 to 8 pm. Major shopping centres and department stores are open all day from 10 am to 9 or 10 pm.

Child Protection Laws:

SOTW Ltd works with exchange partners in Spain that recruit, select and screen host families via personal references.

Law 5/1996 of 8 July on the Ombudsman for Children of the Autonomous Community of Madrid Article 3,1.b) states that the Ombudsman's purpose is "to receive and pursue, under this Law, any complaint on threats to or infringement of the rights of children and adolescents lodged by any adult or minor." Criminal history checks are not required for volunteer host families in Spain but are required for some employment in security or law industries. However, Spanish nationals may choose to apply for the Certificado de Antecedentes Penales and the Ministerio de Justicia or Ministerio del Interior, in most provincial capitals in Spain. Mandatory reporting is legislated in Spain.

Legal ages

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Alcohol – The World Health Organisation lists the drinking age as 16. Other sources note variations by region and/or whether or not the young person is accompanied by their parents.

Driving – The minimum driving age is 18.

Marriage – To be allowed to marry in Spain without parental consent, people must have reached the age of 16.

Employment - The legal age for employment commences at 16 but permission from parents must be granted for those between 16 and 18.

Public transport – School students may receive monthly or yearly discounts on public transport in Spain.

Corporal punishment - Corporal punishment is prohibited in all settings in Spain.

Spain contact details:

Ministry of Justice (ES)

Calle Bolsa, núm. 8, 28012 Madrid

Tel: Support Centre + 902 007 214 - 91 837 22 95

<http://www.mjusticia.gob.es/cs/Satellite/Portal/es/inicio>



Alternatively, the Spanish embassy in Canberra may be contacted for details:

Embassy of Spain in Canberra

15 Arkana Street

Yarralumla ACT 2600

Phone: (02) 6273 3555

Email: emb.canberra@maec.es

Sources and further information:

A respected source providing general information about Spain (and other countries)

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sp.html>

Drinking ages

<http://drinkingage.procon.org/view.resource.php?resourceID=004294>

Marriage age

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33636920>

<http://www.right-to-education.org/page/comparative-table-minimum-age-legislation>

Driving information

<https://www.tispol.org/guides/spain.pdf>

Employment information

http://www.expatica.com/es/employment/Spanish-labour-law-Employment-contracts_104539.html

Public transport information

http://www.expatica.com/es/about/Spain-transportation-Trains-metro-and-buses-in-Spain_101423.html

Information on corporal punishment

<http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/>

Protection of minors in Spain

<http://www.protection-of-minors.eu/en/country/ES>

Government portal

<http://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/Paginas/index.aspx>

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Your exchange with Students of the World will give you the opportunity to grow and develop socially, personally and academically. It will be exciting, rewarding and often challenging.

Ultimately it is up to you – your level of commitment to the program, your enthusiasm, positivity, willingness to contribute and participate and spirit of adventure are the attributes that will determine an experience that you can build on for the rest of your life.

We wish you a wonderful, memorable time abroad!

STUDENTS OF THE WORLD TEAM 😊