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**HEALTH AND SAFETY AT BERRIDGE**

At Berridge Programs, we prioritize safety and trust by implementing rigorous policies, procedures, and protocols to identify and manage risks. Our goal is to support participants and staff in delivering high-quality programming rooted in transparency and shared responsibility.

**Participant Responsibility with Regards to Risk**

All Berridge Programs participants have a Duty of Care in managing their own wellbeing and following Berridge Programs’ risk management practices. Once the participant is enrolled, Berridge Programs sends information about the program to the participant which includes:

* Participant Handbook
* Medical/Dietary/Travel Forms
* Participant Orientation Handbook

These materials include information on how the program is run, planning, travel and program policies as well as detailed information about the assumed risks of international travel.

On the ground, participants receive a safety orientation before:

* any class, workshop or general program activity especially those that might contain risk.
* any excursion or field trip off-campus
* any off-campus class or workshop
* any outdoor activity including coastal or country walking
* before starting any chores, especially working in the kitchen
* the week-long Paris trip has a separate and more involved orientation

Each orientation provides a clear explanation of:

* activity
* environmental hazards
* inherent or other risks of the activity
* participant responsibilities
* prohibited activities & no-go zones
* emergency procedures and/or activity goals.

Participants are given this information so that they understand the importance of responsible behavior, follow good risk management practices, and understand that each participant shares in the responsibility for their own well-being and the well-being of those on the program.

**Organizational Responsibility with Regards to Risk**

Berridge Programs has a formal risk management program that designates responsibility for risk identification, outlines actions for risk mitigation and defines clear protocols for effective emergency response. Risk management and oversight is a program-wide responsibility that calls for the active involvement of the Executive Director, Program Director, teaching staff, support staff, and others involved in decision-making concerning risks. Some of our risk management policies include:

**Staff Hiring and Training:** Our hiring process includes a background check and a minimum of three references. Staff must attend a 40-hour training before working on our programs that includes First Aid, Mental Health First Aid, Diversity and Inclusion, Bystander Awareness, In-Country Orientation and Emergency Procedures.

**Vendor Vetting:** Outside vendors, including transportation companies, activities providers, catering services and supplementary accommodations, are vetted for safety records, insurance, emergency responsiveness and hiring and training practices to ensure that they operate to a high safety standard.

**Transportation:** Staff who drive vans on our programs are fully vetted and trained before driving on the program. Staff and Participants are required to adhere to policies with regards to transportation that includes safety checks, the mandatory wearing of seatbelts and appropriate conduct in vehicles.

**Staying Informed:** Berridge Programs staff stay up to date on events such as political unrest, natural disasters and other local events that may impact our programming and student wellbeing through daily monitoring of news and official channels such as the US Department of State, CDC and Overseas Security Advisor Council.

**Sexual Harassment and Assault:** Staff and participants receive clear guidelines on appropriate boundaries, including the prohibition of relationships between staff and participants. Participant Orientation includes information on sexual harassment/assault including definitions of both harassment and assault, consent and how and who to report to in the event of sexual harassment or assault.

**Bystander Awareness Training:** All Berridge staff and participants must attend a 4-hour Bystander Awareness Training upon arrival at the program so that they are informed on how to safely and effectively intervene in situations involving drugs, alcohol, and sexual assault or harassment.

**Emergency Response and Communications**

Berridge Programs has robust policies and procedures in place in the event of an emergency including professional, licensed medical and mental health professionals on call. In the event of an emergency, Berridge Programs uses a stoplight system to categorize incidents, respond efficiently and guide effective communication with parents:

Green: An incident, such as a doctor's visit or minor injury, may occur during the program. Participants remain together unless medical attention is necessary. The Program Director informs parents within 24 hours or sooner, and they can contact the Program Director for further information at any time.

Yellow: Involuntary separation incidents, like missing persons or hospitalizations, prompt immediate parent contact by the Program Director within 2 hours or as decisions unfold (e.g., doctor visits). The Executive Director may follow up within 24 hours.

Red: In critical incidents like serious accidents or urgent surgeries, parents are contacted promptly by the Program Director. The Executive Director follows up within 12 hours or sooner if needed.

**Partners in Risk Management**

Berridge Programs is a proud member of Cornerstone Safety Group, risk management, medical and mental health experts with decades of experience in overseas travel. Dave and his team offer year-round advice and support with our policies and procedures as well as on-call services in medical and mental health emergencies on the programs. [www.cornerstonesafetygroup.com](http://www.cornerstonesafetygroup.com)

**Questions**

We welcome conversations around safety, security and risk management policies and protocols on our programs. If you have any questions around our Risk Management policies and protocols, please reach out to the Executive Director Andrea Mardon at [andrea@berridgeprograms.com](mailto:andrea@berridgeprograms.com).