

Minooka TAP's

Adult Traveler Contract

Yup, believe it or not, this is necessary. In six years of taking these student trips, amazingly, we haven't dealt with very many student issues. You see, the students want to have fun, they want to learn, and they want to feel safe with us. They follow the rules.

The grown-ups, on the other hand, have not been so squeaky clean.

The only major issues we've dealt with over the years either concerns grown-ups or the students who are traveling with their parents and are confused as to who is in charge.

Let's go ahead and make it simple right out front.

Mr. Curtis is in charge. There is no principal, there's no superintendant, there's no school board, there's Mr. Curtis.

The other TAP teachers are Mr. Curtis' sheriffs. They know how things work, and they speak for him.

You, as tough as it is to conceive, as a grown up, possibly a parent, or even a grand-parent, have no responsibility. Enjoy it. Yes, that means Mr. Curtis, who very well may be younger than you, is in charge of you to. You're going to have to learn to accept this.

Furthermore, and this is the tough part for some folks to deal with, Mr. Curtis and the other TAP teachers supersede you on this trip when it comes to discipline and your own child. Sorry. That's just the way this works.

What we do ask is a few simple things:

1. Be our deputies. We like and respect you as an adult, but when it comes to a group dynamic like this, there can be no confusion amongst the students who is in charge. At home it's mom or dad, but here, teachers trump parents. We do need your help, though. As responsible grown people, we ask that you jump in if there's an immediate need for adult intervention and let us know as quickly as possible if there's something that needs our attention. It's a partnership like that.
2. You are welcome to go off on your own. Please be back where and when we ask you to be back. We'll never leave a kid behind, but a grown-up that can't get where they need to be when they need to be there may have to get a cab to catch up with the group.
3. You're also welcome to take your son/daughter/grandchild/niece/nephew off with you. Once again though, you break apart from the group, you need to be responsible enough to get back to us. Whenever you leave the group with your child, please be sure to let that child's assigned teacher know that you are leaving.

4. Please don't expect to take another child that doesn't belong to you away from the group. This is not allowed under any circumstance.
5. The TAP teacher rules regarding curfew are there for a reason. Sometimes you may feel we're putting the kid to bed too early, sometimes you may think it's too late. We have years of experience understanding the ebb and flow of this type of trip, reading the group's needs, and understanding when kids need some freedom or a little more rigidity. Please respect that.
6. Once kids are locked into their hotel rooms for the night, please do not ask them to open the doors. They have been instructed not to open the door for anyone other than a TAP teacher. Your son or daughter may be in that room, but so are several other kid that the TAP teachers, not you, are responsible for. Please honor that.
7. Sometimes problems arise. Sometimes the students aren't even aware of them. Unless it's necessary, let's keep it that way. Mr. Curtis, the teachers, and the tour director all have years of experience dealing with sick travelers, minor injuries, scheduling snafus, airport delays, and just about everything you can imagine. Mr. Curtis will communicate discreetly with adults when something needs to be discussed; your discretion is also expected. The last thing a group needs is panic.
8. Please be a grown-up and do your best to get along with the other grown-ups. It's really silly that this has to be included here, but it does.
9. Please don't undermine Mr. Curtis or the teachers. They are humans who do this the best they can. If you have a suggestion, a question, a problem, or just need a hug - we're always there. Please just talk to us, rather than about us.
10. One of the best things about traveling the world with these kids is seeing them mature right before our eyes. These trips change them. Please, if you are traveling with your kids, do not baby them. Let them make a stupid mistake. Let them drink the weird soda. Let them get excited. Encourage them to try new things. It's all part of growing up.
11. We have pretty strict food rules. One of the best ways to really get to know a foreign culture is through its food. Let the kids/make the kids/encourage the kids to try things. If you have a son/daughter who is a picky eater or has food concerns and you intend to get them food that will not be offered to the group, please do it discreetly and encourage your child to keep it quiet. When 26 kids bond over eating a weird fish with its face still attached, and your kid is in the corner eating KFC nuggets, it changes the dynamic of the group and kills part of the experience for everyone.
12. If you have issues with heights, strange food, enclosed spaces, or anything of that sort, please do your best to deal with these problems without impacting the students. The kids are growing up and trying new things, and an adult making a big fuss about something like that will discourage them from doing so.
13. Have fun. Learn some stuff. Help us keep the whole group safe.

Please return this signed sheet, stating that you understand our expectations for an adult traveler, along with a copy of your passport, to the TAP teachers at our next meeting.

Thanks,
Minooka TAP

Signature

Date