

PICTURE POLICY REGARDING ORPHANAGE CHILDREN IN QUITO

No one associated with OSSO (including leaders, volunteers, employees or visitors) is allowed to take any pictures or videos of the children we work with without specific permission from both OSSO's Project Directors and the head of the institution that is responsible for the children. Employees at the orphanages do not have the authority to give permission to take pictures. There might be occasions when they encourage you to do so, but you cannot without permission from OSSO's Project Directors as well as the head of the institution.

Besides the privacy issue with taking pictures there have been safety problems with taking pictures of the children—there have been times that volunteers have been so absorbed taking pictures that they were not properly watching and taking care of the children.

Failure to follow these rules may result in volunteers being sent home early or even with OSSO being thrown out of the orphanages.

Quito baby/toddler orphanage (Orphanage "A")—no pictures/videos can be taken at any time except when designated by the Project Director (one day/week will be allowed and one person will be assigned to each shift that day, morning and afternoon, who's allowed to bring a camera and take pictures/video; the volunteer is still completely responsible for working their shift and pictures should be taken in moderation); this is a recently earned privilege and should not be abused; other than when stated above, cameras are not allowed to even be taken inside this orphanage at any time—we do not want any misunderstandings; do not ask for an exception to this rule without talking to the Project Directors first; this policy applies to all children from this orphanage, regardless of where they are (hospital, sidewalk, mass, OSSO house, etc.); employees telling volunteers they can take pictures when they really don't have the authority to do so has been a recurring problem here; sometimes the nuns will take pictures of the kids when we do field trips with them—they sometimes give us copies; no pictures of these children displayed at any time in the OSSO house

Family-style orphanage (Orphanage "B")—you cannot take pictures at this orphanage unless you've gotten specific permission from the Project Directors and the head nuns; the group leaving can take pictures their last day (with permission) but only the volunteers who are leaving can be in the pictures; pictures can be taken on the field trips that we do with the kids as long as the children are okay with this; sometimes the head nuns will give permission to take pictures when there's a special occasion; these rules are for the safety of our kids, so please don't break them

All other orphanages—we try not to take pictures all the time because we worry that this privilege will be taken away, so just keep this in mind and be good about it; don't be secretive about taking pictures, but try to be low-key when taking pictures—don't abuse this privilege; pictures should be group pictures overall instead of individual pictures; it's best to ask permission before you take any pictures, but in general we have open permission to take pictures of the kids, as long as they're nice pictures

IMPORTANT HISTORY

We have a lot of history at the baby/toddler orphanage because we've been working there since 2001. When we first had volunteers here, we could take pictures basically whenever we wanted. As time went on, volunteers started stretching this privilege and the nuns became more concerned about how many pictures were being taken and what they were being used for; suspicion even came into play. The open picture policy evolved into the volunteers needing to ask every time they wanted to take pictures, and then it was up to the whim of the nun in charge whether she gave permission or not.

Over time, the privilege of taking pictures by the volunteers themselves came to a screeching halt due to the irresponsibility and poor judgment of many volunteers leading up to this point, including volunteers sneaking pictures (taking them when they knew it was prohibited), and several volunteers were sent home for breaking this important rule. We begged and pleaded and the head nun finally agreed to allow the Project Directors to be the only ones to take pictures. The picture policy in April 2003 was: "no pictures or videos can be taken at any time, except one roll of pictures will be taken by the Project Directors before each group leaves; the roll of pictures is OSSO's, but the negatives can be borrowed to get copies made."

We continued having volunteers break the picture policy by sneaking pictures, which resulted in their being sent home. The nuns knew our volunteers loved the children, but they kept being deceived by the acts of a few volunteers, and the picture policy got must stricter. Only a matter of a few months after the April 2003 policy came the September 2003 policy: "no pictures or videos can be taken at any time, except two group pictures will be taken by the Project Directors before each group leaves; the pictures are OSSO's, but copies can be made." Two group pictures versus an entire roll of pictures.

And just one year later, the October 2004 policy came about due to further rule breaking by a few volunteers: "no pictures or videos can be taken at any time, except one group picture will be taken by the Project Director before each group leaves; the pictures are OSSO's, but copies can be made." One group picture.

Over the years many volunteers were bitter and resentful at the few who ruined it for everyone else. The gravity of the situation wasn't only about taking pictures and having something to remember the children by but was about the risk that the nuns would get fed up and possibly decide to kick us out (which they threatened many times over the years).

Thankfully, volunteers started taking the picture policy seriously (but still with occasional volunteers who felt it didn't matter and chose to risk everything for everyone, including the children, since if we were to get kicked out of the orphanage, they would have suffered incredibly by our not being there). Slowly, after building up trust, the picture policy was relaxed slightly in April 2006 to be that "no pictures or videos can be taken at any time, except a couple group pictures will be taken by the Project Director before each group leaves; the pictures are OSSO's, but copies can be made." And then relaxed even further in September 2006 to be "no pictures or videos can be taken at any time, except a couple group pictures will be taken by the Project Director before each group leaves, as well as one individual picture of each volunteer who is leaving with a child of their choice; the pictures are OSSO's, but copies can be made."

Due to continued compliance with the picture policy and earning back the nuns' trust, the picture policy was relaxed again in September 2007 to what it currently is: "no pictures or videos can be taken at any time except when designated by the Project Director (one day/week will be allowed and one person will be assigned to each shift that day, morning and afternoon, who is allowed to bring a camera and take pictures/video; this is a recently earned privilege and should not be abused."

For the family-style orphanage, we also unfortunately have a negative history there with the picture policy. At the beginning there was no restriction for taking pictures, but because it became an issue and volunteers broke the policy, in April 2003 this policy is what it was tightened up to: "you cannot take pictures unless you've gotten specific permission from the Project Directors and the head nuns; if you ask them if you can take pictures on your last day, they'll normally agree—please don't break this rule."

However, things didn't get better here. In January 2005, the following policy was put in place: "you cannot take pictures unless you've gotten specific permission from the Project Directors and the head nuns; the group leaving can take pictures their last day (with permission) but only the volunteers who are leaving can be in the pictures; pictures can be taken on the field trips that we do with the kids as long as the children are okay with this; sometimes the head nuns will give permission to take pictures when there's a special occasion." This policy has remained in place and hasn't relaxed any further.

For most of the volunteers who broke the picture policy over the years, they didn't realize how serious the repercussions were until the consequences were already decided by their actions. Usually the excuse was "but I didn't understand how important that rule was" or "I didn't know it was that big of a deal" as they were having to pack because they were being sent home.

The picture policy is extremely important. It's taken many years to earn back a lot of trust, and now we need to keep it. Imagine how you'd feel if by your actions and poorly thought-out decisions you prevented future volunteers from being able to take *any* pictures...or the children suffered because we got kicked out... **Please respect the picture policy and the seriousness of it for everyone involved.**