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# LOVE THE OCEANS

## PROGRAM RULES AND CODE OF CONDUCT

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# **1. PROGRAM RULES**

## **1.1 STARTING TIMES**

Program starting times allocated by Love The Oceans are for a good reason and it is expected of each participant to be ready to start the day at least 10 minutes before the allocated time for each part of the program. Each participant will be expected to participate fully in the day's activities and lectures.

## **1.2 ACTIVITIES**

1.2.1 Certain outings and trips are mandatory and others are optional. If the participant chooses to miss out on a trip that trip is non-refundable.

1.2.2 In order to ensure the goals are met at the end of each program, Love The Oceans reserves the right to use participants to help complete tasks outside of normal working hours in exceptional circumstances

1.2.3 For the safety and well-being of other participants as well as the participants themselves, if a Love The Oceans staff member or partner's staff believe a participant to be unfit to complete a task, Love The Oceans reserves the right to prevent the participant participating if endangering others, damaging the environment, or not aiding the end conservation goal.

1.2.4 Students should bring laptops or note taking facilities to lectures to ensure they make full use of the material being taught.

## **1.3 EQUIPMENT**

1.3.1 All teaching, learning and research equipment is to be cared for. Love The Oceans reserves the right to stop anyone from using the equipment until such time that the staff are confident it is clean and safe to do so and it has been correctly prepared.

1.3.2 No participant is to open a GoPro housing on the boat or on the beach unless in exceptional circumstances e.g. when failing to do so will destroy the camera.

1.3.3 When using any Love The Oceans equipment or that of our partners, participants will follow the relevant risk assessments.

1.3.4 If the user breaks the piece of equipment and it is user error, they will pay to replace it.

1.3.5 User assumes all risk when renting, borrowing, or using LTO equipment. You accept full responsibility for injury, loss or death arising from such use, even if an LTO staff-member is present for logistical support or local knowledge. Staff are not certified outdoor, SUP or diving instructors unless expressly stated.

1.3.6 You release and hold harmless LTO, its directors, trustees, employees and participants from any and all liability, claims or demands resulting from equipment use, including but not limited to drowning, impact, weather or vessel collision.

## **1.4 VISITORS, OVERNIGHT LEAVE AND OFF-SITE STAYS**

1.4.1 Residential-only programme: All Love The Oceans expeditions are run as fully-residential experiences. From arrival to departure participants must live at the expedition base (or other accommodation provided by LTO).

1.4.2 No private visitors on-site: Friends, partners, family members or any third parties not formally enrolled on the same expedition are not permitted to visit, participate in LTO activities, stay, or overnight in LTO accommodation, vehicles, or field sites at any time.

1.4.3 No overnight absence: Participants may not stay overnight off-site during the programme period without written permission from LTO senior management. Permission will be granted only for bona-fide emergencies. Illness, fatigue or personal preference are not valid reasons.

1.4.4 Choosing to leave site overnight without permission will be treated as voluntary withdrawal under clause 1.7 in our Terms and Conditions. LTO will have no duty of care or liability for you during the absence, and no refund will be issued.

1.4.5 Guests before / after programme: Should participants wish to holiday with loved ones, this must be scheduled before arrival day or after departure day and LTO staff made aware at least 2 weeks in advance. Guests cannot be accommodated in LTO housing and must make independent arrangements.

1.4.6 Liability & insurance: By signing our Terms and Conditions, you acknowledge that (a) LTO has no duty of care toward any unauthorised visitor; (b) any injury, loss or incident involving such persons lies solely with the participant who invited them; and (c) your personal insurance must cover the consequences of breaching this clause.

1.4.7 Off-site after dark: In the event that participants want to go off-site after dark and have sort permission from LTO staff, they must be accompanied by an LTO staff member at all times.

## **2. GENERAL CODE OF CONDUCT**

As a participant in a Love The Oceans expedition we require you to operate within a Code of Conduct. This is not an attempt to ‘spoil your fun’ but most of it is just common sense and respect for others. Your co-operation is vital to maintain a happy working atmosphere for everyone participating in the projects.

Our policy regarding alcohol, drugs and relationships is as follows, by completing and returning your application form, you are agreeing to comply with this Code of Conduct.

### **2.1 ALCOHOL**

Our expeditions take place in a remote, rural Mozambique community where most locals do not drink. However, it is not illegal and we are aware participants may want to drink. There is a bar at our partner dive centre that serves alcohol and a couple of local bars on the beach.

We request participants do not drink alcohol between the hours of 6am and 4pm on week days and if they decide to go off site, a staff member must be present at all times.

Anyone drinking more alcohol than recommended the night before a dive may be asked to sit out of that dive for everyone's safety and may miss out on that dive altogether and it may not be possible to catch up. The participant will receive no refund for this.

When venturing into the local town we require all our participants to not consume excessive alcohol as it can be seen as disrespectful in the local culture. Anyone disregarding the site rules or being drunk or intoxicated on an expedition will be disciplined and may even be ejected from the program.

## **2.2 DRUGS**

Love The Oceans has a zero tolerance policy relating to drugs. Anyone caught in possession of illegal substances or anyone who is suspected of using them will be asked to leave the program and site immediately with no refund. Love The Oceans revokes all responsibility regarding the individual and their safety.

## **2.3 RELATIONSHIPS**

Relationships between students and staff are not allowed. These restrictions are in place to protect students so please ensure that you adhere to them. Also please remember the cultural expectations surrounding public conduct between two people in a relationship are different country to country. Cultural expectations such as this will be explained at your induction meeting when you arrive on site.

## **2.4 GENERAL BEHAVIOUR**

We ask all our participants and staff members to remember that their behaviour always leaves an impression, and therefore to try and ensure that that impression is a positive one and a culturally appropriate one. Please ensure that you follow the site rules (which you will be talked through on site) with regards to conduct and, if you are unsure about anything, please do not hesitate to ask. We always try to ensure that everybody has the best time possible on-site, so if there is anything that you are unhappy with please do not hesitate to bring it up straight away with a Love The Oceans staff member.

## **2.5 INCLUSIVITY, RESPECT AND ANTI-PREJUDICE**

We have a zero-tolerance policy. Any act or remark that is racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, xenophobic, or otherwise discriminatory is prohibited. Bullying, intimidation or harassment—whether verbal, physical, written or online—will result in immediate disciplinary action that may include removal from the programme without refund.

We expect participants to use inclusive language & behaviour. Use respectful language and chosen names/pronouns. Avoid jokes, slurs or “banter” that target protected characteristics or could make others feel unwelcome. If unsure about a cultural custom or personal boundary, ask politely. If you witness prejudice or harassment, support the affected person and report the incident to an LTO staff-member as soon as possible. Silence enables harm.

Concerns can be raised verbally or in writing to any senior staff-member. All complaints are taken seriously, investigated promptly and handled confidentially.

Remember we operate in a rural Mozambican community. Behaviours considered acceptable elsewhere (speech, clothing, displays of affection, alcohol use) may be inappropriate or offensive locally. Follow staff guidance at all times. Every day's a school day. We expect everyone to engage with feedback, reflect on their behaviour and commit to improving inclusivity within the team and the wider community.

We strive to accommodate diverse needs. If you require an adjustment to fully participate (e.g., dietary, religious, mobility, sensory) inform LTO staff before arrival so we can explore reasonable solutions.

### **3. ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS**

Love The Oceans is a marine conservation and we therefore strive to minimise our impact on the marine environment by abiding by international codes of conduct for wildlife encounters as well as following environmentally responsible diving practices.

#### **3.1 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR WHALE SHARK ENCOUNTERS**

- Divers or snorkelers must stay min. 3 metres from the body of the shark and min. 4 metres from the tail of the shark
- Divers or snorkelers should avoid swimming directly under or over the shark as this is likely to induce avoidance behaviour
- Divers or snorkelers must at no point touch or make contact with the shark
- Divers, snorkelers and dive boats must not obstruct or limit the whale shark's movements by blocking its path
- Use of flash when taking photos is not permitted
- Dive boats in contact with the whale shark must stay at min. 20 metres distance from the shark. If the shark approaches the dive boat the engines must be turned off to minimise the risk of injuries to both the whale shark and divers or snorkelers in the water with the shark
- When approaching the whale shark, dive boats must approach from ahead of the shark's direction
- Max. 1 group of divers or snorkelers must be in the water with the shark at any time. Other dive boats not in contact with the shark must stay min. 50 metres distance from the whale shark
- If the whale shark exhibits avoidance behaviour by diving or 'banking' (i.e. turning its back towards the divers or snorkelers) the encounter must be terminated

#### **3.2 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MANTA RAY ENCOUNTERS**

- Divers or snorkelers must stay min. 3 metres from the manta ray

- Divers or snorkelers should avoid swimming directly under or over the manta ray
- Divers or snorkelers must at no point touch or make contact with the manta ray
- Divers, snorkelers and dive boats must not obstruct or limit the manta ray's movements by blocking its path
- Use of flash when taking photos is not permitted
- Dive boats in contact with the manta ray must stay at min. 20 metres distance from the ray. If the ray approaches the dive boat the engines must be turned off to minimise the risk of injuries to both the ray and divers or snorkelers in the water with the shark
- Max. 1 group of divers or snorkelers must be in the water with the manta ray at any time. Other dive boats not in contact with the ray must stay min. 50 metres distance from the manta ray
- When approaching the manta ray, dive boats must approach from ahead of the ray's direction
- When encountering a manta ray under water divers must stay low on the reef, at or below the manta rays level, and to the side of the ray
- Divers or snorkelers must not chase the manta ray by swimming after it – not even the purpose of obtaining ID photos
- Manta rays have a blind spot in their field of vision directly behind them. To avoid scaring the animal, divers and snorkelers must approach slowly from the front or side

Manta rays visit cleaning stations on the reef to be cleaned. This cleaning behaviour is essential to manta rays and must therefore not be disrupted. To avoid disrupting cleaning behaviour divers must abide by the following guidelines:

- Divers must not enter cleaning stations, regardless of whether manta rays are cleaning in the stations or not. Entering the cleaning stations, even when these are 'empty', may negatively impact the cleaning fish on which the manta rays rely, and hence disrupt cleaning behaviour

### **3.3 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR HUMPBACK WHALE ENCOUNTERS**

- There must not be more than three dive boats at any one time surrounding one group of whales or one individual. If multiple boats are present, the boats must stay on the same side of the whale to ensure the whale does not feel encircled
- Dive boats must operate at a constant speed of less than 6 knots
- Dive boats must not approach closer than 100 metres to a whale. If a whale approaches the boat or is spotted less than 100 metres from the boat engines must be put in neutral if the Boat Captain deems it safe to do so. If the whale approaches within 50 metres the engines must be turned off and not re-engaged until the whale is observed well clear of the dive boat
- Dive boats must slowly approach whales sideways, never from the front or rear
- Dive boats must not obstruct or limit the whale's movements by blocking its path or causing the whale to surface within 100 metres of the boat
- Avoidance behaviour must be respected: If the whale exhibits avoidance behaviour (i.e. sudden changes in direction or speed, sharply veering away from boats and/or divers/snorkelers, changes in breathing pattern, aggressive behaviour) or protective

behaviour when calves are present, the encounter must be terminated by the dive boat by withdrawing immediately

- Noise levels must be kept to a minimum
- Interactions must be limited to 20 minutes, if the whale ends the encounter during this time, the whale must not be pursued
- Divers or snorkelers must not enter the water for their own safety. If whales are encountered underwater, divers should exhibit caution and not attempt to make contact with the whales
- Mother and calf units should be avoided. Divers/snorkelers must not enter the water with newborns or calves

#### **4. GENERAL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR DIVING**

- Do not touch anything. If needed divers can stabilise themselves by holding onto the reef with two fingers – when doing so divers must ensure that they are holding onto rock and not coral
- Do not take anything out of the ocean, the only exception being trash and/or discarded fishing gear
- Do not chase or harass animals
- Secure alternate air source, SPG, depth gauge and other loose appendages to avoid dragging on the reef and damaging corals
- LTO Participants must not lead or assist with dives, even if they are PADI Professionals. For the purpose of training and recreational dives LTO Participants are considered Participants of LTO and clients of Jay's Pro Dive Centre even if they are PADI Professionals and must therefore not lead or assist with dives, including supervising or guiding other divers.
- Snorkelers must not wear weights and free dive while snorkelling during course dives as the snorkeler is alone in the water. Weights must only be worn after explicit agreement with a Jay's Pro Dive Centre staff member during free dives supervised by a PADI Professional.
- LTO Participants must stay clear of the boat and tractor during launching and must not approach until the boat is in the water, clear of the tractor and it is deemed safe by the Dive Leader or Boat Captain.