



Overview of KCH

Kenya Children's Homes (formerly Thomas Barnados House) is home to approximately 100 children who have either been orphaned, abandoned or destitute. KCH consists of a large nursery and six individual houses, each one home to 10 - 13 children and their House Mother. The House Mothers are supported by Aunties, who step in and assume full duties when the House Mothers take time off. The babies are looked after in the nursery, either until they are adopted, or are old enough to enter one of the houses (c. 18 months old). The older children (aged 14 and over) attend boarding school during term-time but return to KCH for the holidays, whilst the younger children remain at the Home and attend Jonathan Gloag Academy. JGA is the school located on the compound which is run in conjunction with the Home and is open to children from local Kenyan families as well as those who attend KCH.

What to expect

1. Arriving in Kenya

Landing: When you land you will be required to obtain your Kenyan visa, which costs \$US50 or £30 (only Bank of England notes accepted, no Scottish/Irish). There are two options with the visa, you can apply online at this website <http://evisa.go.ke/evisa.html> or you can apply on arrival. It is normal for visa procedures to take more than an hour at immigration, but don't worry if it takes longer! A driver will be waiting outside for you who understands that this process may take time.

Plastic bags: Please be aware that from the August 2017 Kenya has completely banned the use of plastic bags. Unlike other countries with this ban, the rules are very strict. You may be fined if you are carrying an old plastic bag on the street or at the airport. We recommend bringing a few re-usable bags (canvas or biodegradable) with you. Please remove all plastic bags from your luggage before you leave your home country.

Accommodation: There will be a driver from KCH waiting outside the airport who will take you to your accommodation at Akila 2. There are three comfortable, furnished apartments for the KCH volunteers. All volunteers have their own private room and may share a shower/toilet. *Please see below for house rules.* Plug fittings are of the three-point (UK) format for your appliances such as cameras, phones, etc. The power tends to be quite reliable but has been known to go off for a few hours when it rains heavily or during power cuts, so please be sure to pack a torch and batteries. When you arrive at Akila 2, there will be a welcome pack with basic food, washing and hygiene items. All other food/home/personal items remain your responsibility to purchase throughout your stay in Kenya. You will be shown local stores and supermarkets as part of your orientation.

Weather: February is the hottest month in Nairobi with an average temperature of **21°C (69°F)** and the coldest is July at **17°C (62°F)**. The wettest month is April with an average of 130mm of rain.

First day: After getting some rest, you will be met by our Programme Manager who will give you an orientation of the Home and compound. You will go through the Volunteer Policy with the rules and regulations set out for your time with KCH. The Programme Manager is your mediator should you have any grievances, they will approach the KCH Senior Management on your behalf.

2. Volunteering at KCH

Dress code; *For everyone:* The clothes we wear and the way we look, communicate a message. It is important to dress with respect for both women and men. Volunteers should wear clothing appropriate for the tasks they will complete - comfortable but practical clothing is recommended eg. jeans, trainers, t-shirts etc. We thank you in advance for your compliance and willingness to embrace this code whilst volunteering with us. No flip flops to be worn at the Home.

For women: The length of skirts and shorts should cover your knees when sitting. Bra- straps should not be seen and 'spaghetti strap' vests and/or dresses are not recommended. Leggings are acceptable for sporting events. Covering the shoulders is considered polite when in a professional environment especially at the Home or at Church.

For men: No vests to be worn at the Home. Shorts should be on or just above the knee.

Swimming: Swimming is a regular activity at JGA. If you wish to join; women should wear a sun shirt or a dark shirt (so it does not go see through), over a bikini or one piece and swim shorts in the water and men should wear boxer or short-style swim trunks. No tight-fitted swimwear.

Weekly schedule and activities: You will be given a programme for the week detailing what activities you are expected to participate in and when. Please be aware that plans change at short notice depending on the needs of the business. Volunteers at KCH can expect to enjoy many different, daily activities, each new day is different from the last. Week days include caring, feeding and playing with the babies and toddlers in the nursery, helping in the kitchens and bakery, planning fun activities for the Saturday Clubs and Connect Group, chaperoning children to swimming lessons, going on day trips (especially during the holidays), helping with homework, house checks and attending Fellowship with the children on Friday evenings. Lunch is provided at KCH during your shifts. For more information about typical Kenyan food please visit this link <http://www.kenyasafari.com/food-of-kenya.html>

Saturday Clubs: As the children are at school during the week, Saturday Clubs are the best time to spend quality time with them. Clubs start at 10am and run until 12:30pm (plus pack up time). Previous clubs run by volunteers have included seasonal craft sessions, educational (but fun!) videos on animals, countries and their traditions etc, scavenger hunts, hand painting and many other great activities! We love to get fresh ideas for our clubs, so feel free to come prepared with ideas and plans. Every second Saturday we attend the Connect Group, a group of ex-home children, from 2pm - 5pm. We use this time to bond, learn and laugh!

Weekly hours: Volunteer days are 5 days per week, with 2 days off. Hours can vary but are normally 10am - 6pm from Monday - Thursday. Mandatory activities include Friday Fellowships, Saturday Clubs and Sunday Church. Volunteers will be put on a rotation of these activities.

Church on Sundays: We have an expectation that our volunteers will attend church on Sunday morning with the House Mothers and younger children. This helps us to present ourselves as positive role models to the children in the Home.

Area: KCH is situated in on Langata Rd and the accommodation is a 15 minute walk on the adjacent road - Mbagathi Way. For volunteers personal safety, we recommend not to travel alone after dark or early in the morning. Uber and Taxify are fairly reliable services in Nairobi if the user has an unlocked smartphone topped up with data. Please be aware that Boda Boda's/Motobike taxi's and Matatu's are not recommended forms of transport.

3. Other projects

Suswa: During your time at KCH, you may be lucky enough to travel to Suswa, in the Rift Valley which is situated roughly 1.5 - 2.5 hour drive away (depending on traffic) Here you will meet the girls at The Soila Maasai Girls Rescue Centre. For more information please visit this link:

https://www.kenyachildrenshomes.org.uk/projects/soila_maasai

Butterfly Support Programme and Outreach: There are 3 main camps during the year where previous members of KCH return for 1 week of the holidays. This is an especially fun time as KCH organises day trips, activities, sports days, special dinners and usually a talent show and disco party! If you are thinking of joining us in April, August or Nov/Dec, feel free to come with new ideas for all ages and a willingness to jump into a busy schedule for the week!

https://www.kenyachildrenshomes.org.uk/projects/outreach_programme

House rules

Unlike many other organisations in Kenya, Kenya Children's Homes provides free accommodation to all volunteers. We provide volunteers with House Rules so that everyone can live together harmoniously. Breaking the House Rules may result in warnings or, in extreme cases, termination of volunteer placement.

Guests - We have a strict policy of no guests staying overnight in any of the flats. *Please be aware that Senior Management will be notified if this policy is broken.* This rule is implemented for the safety of all occupants and the security of all of your personal belongings.

Kitchen - Please wash your dishes before you go to bed or rinse them thoroughly, this is to prevent insect/rodent problems. Please make sure you are throwing chunks of food, rice etc in the bin and not down the sink as it can easily become blocked and/or attract flies.

Quiet time - Unless agreed by all housemates, the flat should be quiet after 10pm. If you come home later than this, please be respectful to others who may be sleeping (including when you are in the stairwell). After 10pm TV should be turned down and headphones must be used for music.

Communal areas - Please be respectful of your housemates and make sure personal items are kept to a minimum in communal areas to avoid personal items getting mixed up or misplaced.

Ladies: We regularly have male workers going into the flats to fix and repair things. It is highly recommended that you keep your dirty laundry in a washing basket in your room as these items may offend Kenyans entering the flat for work purposes.

Pets - Strictly no pets in the flats please.

Locks/keys - Please always lock the door after you enter or exit the flat. This is for insurance purposes. Each volunteer will be given a set of keys to the flat. It is your responsibility to keep the keys safe and to return them at the end of your volunteering period.

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with us!

If you have any questions please contact our office in the UK at

info@kenyachildrenshomes.org.uk