

GREENTALIST

Youth-led environmental leadership · Costa Rica

Code of Conduct

Global Greentalist Program · Version 1.2 · July 2026

Read this first

This Code of Conduct is one of the most important documents you will sign with Greentalist. It explains the standards every participant lives by and, above all, how we keep one another safe.

You will be asked to read it fully and sign it before you begin. Take your time: signing is a genuine commitment to your team, to the communities that host us, and to yourself.

1. Welcome to Greentalist

Greentalist is a youth-led movement. Everything we do is built on the belief that young people, given the right support and a real challenge, become confident leaders for their communities and for the planet. When you join a Greentalist program in Costa Rica, you step into that movement as a full member of it.

This document sets out what it means to be part of Greentalist in practice. It is not a list of rules for their own sake. It exists so that everyone on the program, participants, team leaders, staff, partners, and the communities we work alongside, shares the same understanding of what good conduct looks like, and so that we can all get the most from the experience in a positive, respectful, and safe environment.

Greentalist will train and support you to meet these standards. You are never expected to know everything on day one. What we ask is a genuine commitment to learn, to take part, and to look after the people around you.

A note on commitment. Leaving a program early affects far more than you. It disrupts your team, the placement, and the host community, and it carries financial consequences for you. You will invest real time and effort preparing for this experience, so please read this agreement carefully before you sign and commit. This document is a statement of mutual expectations and is not a legally binding contract.

2. Health, Safety and Wellbeing: Our First Commitment

Safety is not one rule among many. It is the foundation of everything we do.

Greentalist operates in rural, remote, and sometimes physically demanding environments. The single most important thing we ask of you is this: never let your actions or your inaction put your own safety or anyone else's at risk. A safe program is a successful program. There are no exceptions to this, and no goal, deadline, or personal preference ever outranks it.

2.1 Why we take this so seriously

Field-based program carries real risks: terrain, weather, water, wildlife, road travel, and physical activity all demand respect. We have built our safety systems over many years of operating in Costa Rica, and they work, but only when every person on the program follows them. A single decision that seems harmless to one person can endanger an entire team. That is why safety is woven through every part of this Code, not confined to a single page.

2.2 Our promise to you on safety

- We assess and monitor risks before and throughout every program, and we adapt when conditions change.
- We give you clear, practical safety briefings and training for the activities and environments you will encounter.
- We maintain in-country staff, emergency procedures, and trusted links to medical and transport support so we can respond when something goes wrong.
- We provide ongoing welfare support to safeguard your physical and mental wellbeing for the whole program.

An honest limit. No organization can remove every risk from field-based work. We manage risk carefully and seriously, but you must understand and accept that some inherent risk remains, and that your participation is voluntary and undertaken with that knowledge.

2.3 Your part in keeping everyone safe

- **Follow the protocols:** Safety briefings and instructions from staff and team leaders are not optional. If you don't understand something, ask before you act.
- **Speak up early:** If you see a hazard, feel unwell, or are worried about someone, report it straight away. Raising a concern early is always the right call, and never something you will be judged for.
- **Look after yourself:** Rest, hydration, hygiene, and basic self-care are part of staying safe in the field. Tell staff about any health needs or changes promptly.
- **Look after each other:** We work as a team. Watching out for the wellbeing of the people around you is a core expectation, not an extra.

3. The Greentalist Mindset

We don't ask for prior technical skills or experience. What we look for is the willingness to grow into an active, contributing member of the Greentalist community. Throughout your time with us, we expect you to develop and demonstrate the following qualities. Falling short of them, particularly in ways that affect your team or your safety, may be treated as a breach of this Code (see Section 7).

- **Show up with purpose:** Bring a constructive attitude and real motivation, grounded in realistic expectations of what the program is and isn't.
- **Stay curious:** Keep wanting to learn and stay humble enough to learn from and teach the people around you.
- **Solve problems on the ground:** Use the resources you have to tackle real challenges with creativity and a positive outlook, and make sound decisions when you need to.
- **Adapt:** Meet new, unfamiliar, and demanding situations with a flexible mind.
- **Back yourself:** Have the confidence to be self-reliant, and the composure and good humor to face challenges and other people calmly.
- **Work well with others:** Collaborate honestly, support your teammates through difficulty, and follow through on shared plans with integrity.
- **Lead with empathy:** Be open, respectful, and non-judgmental toward every person and culture you meet. Listen well; never act in ways that demean or exclude.

4. What Greentalist Expects of You

4.1 Before the program, you will

- Read and understand every piece of information and training material we provide, and complete what's required by the deadlines given.
- Make an informed, voluntary decision to take part, based on our materials and your own research, accepting the conditions you will live and work in and the risks they involve.
- Make every reasonable effort to fundraise and contribute. Please note that donations are non-refundable if you withdraw or leave the program early.
- Be ready to look after yourself day to day, including cooking, hygiene, basic health, and domestic tasks, and to pull your weight in shared household and group responsibilities.

4.2 During the program

As a representative of Greentalist and of your own country, you are expected to uphold the conduct standards in Section 5. Falling short of them may lead to the steps set out in Section 7.

5. The Greentalist Code — Conduct Standards

These standards exist to protect safety, respect, and the success of the program for everyone. They apply from the moment our staff first collect you until you are dropped off at the end of your placement.

5.1 A clear head, always

- **No alcohol:** Because of the environments we operate in and the responsibility you carry, consuming or possessing alcohol is not permitted at any point during the program, regardless of age or role. A clear head keeps you and your team safe, sharpens your judgment, and lets you be fully present for the experience.
- **No illegal drugs or activities:** Any involvement with illegal drugs or activities, such as but not limited to possessing, sharing, using, buying, or supplying drugs, including marijuana, is forbidden. It may lead to removal from the program and to legal consequences under Costa Rican law.

5.2 Respect for people

- **Zero tolerance for violence:** Physical or verbal aggression of any kind, including threats, bullying, or intimidation, will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Everyone is responsible for a culture of respect and collaboration.
- **Healthy boundaries in relationships:** Personal relationships must never put anyone at risk or disrupt the team. Sexual relationships on placement are strongly discouraged. Intimate relationships between staff, team leaders, coordinators, or volunteer managers and volunteers; or with community members and partners are strictly prohibited. Any form of coercion or transactional sexual activity is forbidden.
- **Equal respect for all:** Discrimination of any kind has no place at Greentalist. Everyone is treated fairly regardless of gender, age, ability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, or cultural background.
- **Child protection:** Following Costa Rican child protection laws, Greentalist will report to the relevant authority any inappropriate behavior, or suspicion of the same, between adults (over 18) and minors. Children, as one of the most vulnerable groups in society, must be protected and prioritized. Our commitment is zero tolerance for violence, exploitation, and abuse of children.

5.3 Safeguarding and welfare

Greentalist is committed to a safe and inclusive environment for all. Every participant shares the responsibility to protect themselves and others from physical, emotional, or sexual harm. Our Safeguarding Policy applies to everyone on the program and includes confidential routes for reporting any concerns. If something doesn't feel right, about your own safety or anyone else's, tell a member of staff.

5.4 Everyday agreements

By signing, you also agree to:

- Engage fully and accept that everyone's experience will be different.
- Avoid anything that conflicts with the program's objectives.
- Not take on paid work or run personal business during the program.
- Not hitchhike or drive any motor vehicle without permission.
- Not ride motorcycles, scooters, or bicycles, as drivers or passengers.
- Not get tattoos or piercings during the program.
- Not use or share computers, devices, or external media without permission.
- Not possess or distribute offensive, violent, or pornographic material.
- Take leave only for a family emergency, and only with prior approval from the country management team.

5.5 Images and devices

- **Use of images:** Greentalist may use photos or videos you share for communications and promotion. Before sharing any image, get the consent of everyone in it.
- **Devices and connection:** We encourage you to limit personal device use on placement, to stay present, protect your belongings, and respect the communities we visit, some of which are remote. Social media posting may be restricted in certain placements; staff will give you clear guidance on communication access.

6. Caring for the Environment and Our Host Communities

Environmental leadership is the reason Greentalist exists. How you treat the places and people that host us is not a side note; it is the heart of the program!

6.1 Tread lightly

- **Minimize your impact:** Reduce waste, protect natural spaces, and leave every site as you found it, or better. The way you live on the program is itself a model of the environmental values we promote.
- **Respect wildlife and habitats:** Observe, don't disturb. Follow staff guidance on interacting with the natural environment around you.

6.2 Honour local cultures

- **Be a respectful guest:** Be mindful of local customs, traditions, and ways of life. Cultural sensitivity builds the trust that makes our work possible.

Remember that the effects of a cross-cultural misstep are often hard to see from the inside and during a relatively short stay. When in doubt, ask, listen, and follow the lead of staff and community members.

7. When Standards Are Not Met

If you breach this Code, our aim is first to guide and correct, so the issue does not recur. We use a three-step process:

1. Verbal warning.
2. Written warning.
3. Removal from the program.

Serious breaches may move straight to removal. The final decision on how we respond to any breach rests with Greentalist staff. If you are required to leave the program, you are responsible for any additional costs of your onward travel.

8. In Closing

A successful program rests on one thing above all: people treating each other, and every member of our host communities, with respect, and keeping each other safe while they do it. Decisions that feel sensible to one person can sometimes put a whole program at risk. This Code is how we guard against that together. In our experience, it is the foundation of every program that goes well. We can't wait to see what you build with us.

9. Agreement

I have read and fully accepted this Code of Conduct. The information I have provided to Greentalist Costa Rica to date is, to the best of my knowledge, true and accurate. In signing this agreement, I confirm my acceptance of a place on the Global Greentalist Program.

Participant

Full name

Signature

Date