

WORLDWISE EDVENTURES

Outdoor Education · Experiential Learning · Sustainable Tourism

Mae Kok River Village

MRV — General Information for Schools

Centre Address: 333 Moo 4, Tambol Mae Ai, Amphur Tha Ton, Chiang Mai 50280, Thailand

Operating Entity: The M.R.V. Project Company Limited (Tax ID: 0505541001795)

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1. Background

In 2002, after 20 years of teaching in Hong Kong international schools, Bryan and Rosie Massingham became shareholders in the M.R.V. Project and moved to Thailand to take over management of the centre and resort. The decision to develop a centre of this kind was a joint one with co-shareholders Shane and Aed Beary; at the time there were few — if any — places in South-East Asia for student groups offering safe and well-organised programmes combined with comfortable facilities.

Ban Thaton, although remote, is ideally suited for the purpose. Adjacent to a large river, surrounded by mountains, and with fascinating local geography, history and culture, the location supports a rich mix of outdoor activities and academic fieldwork. Alongside these we run a long-standing community-project strand: many schools in the area are poorly funded and benefit greatly from the support of visiting groups.

MRV has now hosted schools from across Thailand and from Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Kuwait, Malaysia, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Taiwan, the UAE, the UK, USA and Vietnam. From September 2024 the centre operates within the Worldwide Edventures group.

2. Ban Thaton

The village of Ban Thaton, about 180 km north of Chiang Mai and 100 km west of Chiang Rai, remained a remote backwater until a bridge across the Mae Kok River was completed in 1979. The road connecting Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai has since brought more visitors through and into the village, but Thaton remains a quiet and sleepy place.

The area is renowned for its temple complex (Wat), with numerous chedis, stupas and temples spread over a large area, and is a well-known centre for the study of meditation. Religious festivals attract people from across Thailand, and the Abbot has recently received a royal award. The village contains a small selection of shops, cafés and the inevitable Internet café.

3. Climate

The area has a typical monsoon climate with three main seasons.

The wet season runs from June through October. In this period, rain falls perhaps two days in three; storms are rarely prolonged and have a delightful cooling effect, turning the countryside a verdant green. Daytime temperatures reach around 30°C, dropping to 20°C overnight. September is usually the wettest month and longer rain events are possible.

The cool season runs from mid-October to the end of February. Humid air from the Indian Ocean gives way to dry, cooler air from the north. Daytime temperatures still reach 28–30°C, but mornings can drop to around 10°C. Mists burn off quickly so by mid-morning temperatures are typically in the mid-20s.

The hot season runs from mid-March to the end of May, with daytime temperatures of 35–40°C. Afternoon heat can bring impressive storms — strong winds, torrential rain and spectacular electrics — but they rarely last more than half an hour. A subsequent 10°C drop in temperature brings welcome relief, and altitude plus surrounding mountains keep evenings and early mornings pleasant.

4. Thai Etiquette

Thai value systems regarding dress, social behaviour, religion, authority figures and sexuality are more conservative than those of the average overseas visitor. Thais are extremely tolerant and forgiving when it comes to the behaviour of non-Thais, but a few simple courtesies help avoid embarrassment and misunderstanding.

- Revealing clothing should be avoided. Skimpy tops and shorts are not seen as polite dress. In particular, in temples, shoulders and legs above the knee should be covered. Students working in schools or community settings should dress as a teacher would. Swimwear is restricted to the pool / beach area, and shirts should be worn elsewhere on the centre
- The head is the most sacred part of the body and should not be touched. The feet are the least sacred — when sitting, they should not point at anyone. Putting feet up on a coffee table is considered offensive. When sitting on the floor, sit cross-legged or with your legs tucked behind you
- It is common practice to leave shoes outside homes and temples. Most Thais wear easy slip-on footwear for this reason
- Shaking hands is rare. The common greeting is the wai — palms placed together as in prayer with the head slightly lowered. There is no need to wai someone younger or junior; a simple nod and a smile is sufficient

Our staff appreciate students who are courteous and polite. Acknowledging a small service such as a refilled water jug with a smile and a nod, or — better still — a “khop khun kha” (female speaker) or “khop khun khap” (male speaker), is always warmly received.

5. Accommodation

There are three accommodation villas. Two blocks have six student rooms (each with eight beds and two bathrooms); a third block has five student rooms. There are 13 teacher rooms in total — 7 singles, 5 doubles and 1 twin — all attached to the student accommodation. If additional teacher rooms are needed, extra staff are accommodated in the resort.

We ask that teachers inspect students' rooms every morning at 08:15. Without inspections, rooms quickly become unacceptably untidy; students often lose belongings in the muddle and make unfounded accusations of theft, only to find the missing item in their own pile.

6. The Restaurant

Meals are taken in our student restaurant, which has expansive views across the Fang Valley to the Wa Wee mountains. Breakfast combines Asian and Western foods; lunch is a Thai–Western buffet; evening meals are generally Thai, although “chicken and chips” can be requested if absolutely necessary. The food is high quality and we have had very few complaints. Spice in the Thai dishes is toned down, with chilli sauces available for those who want to heat things up.

Water is provided at every meal and from several stations around the student village. We are very used to special requests and provide vegetarian, halal and other alternatives. Dietary requirements and allergies should be confirmed before arrival; please note we operate a general no-nut policy for all student food.

- Buffet etiquette: students should not pile food on their plates. Chafing dishes are quickly emptied and other students are left waiting. Students may return to the buffet as often as they like, so initial helpings should be sensible
- Used plates and cutlery should be returned to the kitchen hatch at the end of the meal

7. The Bamboo / Adventure Club

The Bamboo Club is the social space dedicated to students. It includes a large lounge with a bar selling drinks, snacks and ice creams, plus a snooker room, table tennis, basketball, volleyball and badminton. There is a swimming pool reserved for student use, a high-ropes course, a 12-metre climbing wall with six routes, and a bouldering wall.

Drinks and snacks at the Bamboo Club are paid for using tokens — 100-baht packets are available, and staff cannot accept cash. Tokens left at the end of the week can be exchanged back for cash, or placed in the donations box for the community project.

8. Programmes & Daily Schedule

The programme will have been agreed with the visiting school before arrival. Changes during the visit can be made if logistically possible; weather and other external factors may also force adjustments.

Programmes are led by Worldwide instructors, which gives accompanying teachers flexibility in how they engage with the group. Teachers are very welcome to participate fully and to lead any activity they feel comfortable with — including evening sessions.

The general daily pattern is below, with some flexibility:

- 07:00 — Wake up
- 07:30 — Breakfast
- 08:15 — Room inspection
- 08:30 — Meet at briefing area
- 08:45 — Activities begin
- 12:00 — Lunch
- 13:30 — Briefing
- 13:45 — Activities
- 17:00 — Free time
- 18:00 — Dinner
- 19:00 — Evening activities

- 20:00 — Free time

Lights-out times depend on the age group, but we ask that a curfew is set and enforced — tired students under-perform and are at greater risk of accidents.

Suggested latest lights-out:

- Junior students: 21:30
- Middle school: 22:00
- Seniors: 22:30

Our night-duty staff have been instructed to contact the teacher in charge if students are seen out of their rooms or making undue noise after midnight.

9. Kit List

A full kit list is provided in the separate Worldwide Edventures Kit List document, which covers requirements common to all centres plus centre-specific additions. Schools should distribute it together with this General Information document.

In summary, students should bring: a good day pack, a 1-litre water bottle, sturdy trainers (plus an old pair for water activities), sandals, long trousers and long-sleeve shirts (×2 of each), shorts (×2), T-shirts (×4), swimwear, a lightweight waterproof jacket, sun protection, insect repellent, a wash kit, personal medication and a torch (head torch preferred).

Please do not bring expensive clothes, jewellery, or unnecessary electronics.

10. A Few Simple Rules

- All school rules regarding smoking and consumption of alcohol apply at the centre
- Students should not enter others' rooms — and in particular not those of the opposite sex
- No chewing gum (the mess is significant)
- Swimming pool: a member of staff must be present at all times. No diving. Students should shower before entering the pool
- At no time should students use centre activity equipment (climbing wall, ropes course, kayaks, snorkelling gear etc.) without an instructor present
- Students should remain in the designated student areas of the centre and respect other guests' need for peace, particularly early in the morning and at night
- Dress appropriately throughout the centre — in line with Thai etiquette above
- No student should leave the site unless accompanied by an adult and only with the permission of the teacher in charge
- Guest toilets in public areas are reserved for restaurant guests; students should use the toilets in their rooms
- The main resort area is for hotel guests only; students should remain in the vicinity of the outdoor centre
- Boys should not come to the restaurant bare-chested
- The reception computer at the resort is not available for student use

11. Some Pointers for Teachers

- Our instructors welcome teacher involvement in any activity, but ask that during team and leadership challenges teachers take a back seat to allow students to make and learn from their own mistakes

- Please set and enforce a curfew. Suggested latest lights-out: 21:30 (juniors), 22:00 (middle school), 22:30 (seniors). Days are long and tiring; problems usually arise when curfews are not enforced
- Please have students in their rooms by 08:15 each morning for room inspection. Our housekeeping staff find rooms strewn with wet towels and dirty clothes very difficult to clean
- On departure, students should be in their rooms 15 minutes before departure time so staff can check rooms before students move to the meeting point
- Wi-Fi access for students is at teachers' discretion. Please request the password if you wish to allow access
- Air-conditioning in student rooms is opened at approximately 21:00 and closed at around 07:00 — students should be outside their rooms and engaged with the programme during the day. Exceptions are made for students who are unwell

12. Student Mobile Phones

We recommend that visiting schools adopt the policy below towards mobile phones. Ideally we would prefer students did not bring phones at all, but understand this can cause friction with parents.

Experience suggests that phone use during a programme should be carefully limited. A few illustrative cases:

Case 1

A student fell on a steep section of road and grazed her face. Before the instructor could reach her she had already called her mother, who became hysterical on hearing her daughter. The instructor then had to manage a far worse situation.

Case 2

A student feigned illness to avoid a hike, called home, and parents then telephoned the teacher in charge to insist the student be excused — undermining the teacher and the programme.

Case 3

A student turned an ankle on loose ground. The hospital confirmed a mild sprain requiring rest. A call home led the parent to insist on a cast and a return home for further investigation, despite the medical advice.

Case 4

A student called home repeatedly to complain about meals, despite extensive accommodation of dietary needs at the centre. Parents booked early flights home before consulting the teacher in charge.

Case 5

A student became the victim of social-media bullying from others on the same trip — turning what should have been a positive experience into a distressing one.

The vast majority of students get through the week without thinking about home, and we feel that a “no contact with home” week is part of the experience.

Recommended approach:

- Students inform parents on or shortly after arrival that they have arrived safely
- Phones are then collected by visiting staff for safe-keeping, returned shortly before departure

- Parents are informed in advance that, in case of emergency only, they may contact the teacher in charge or the centre directly

In-house rule: phones are not to be taken on activities or brought to the dining area. Centre emergency line: **+66 53 053 628**.

13. Code of Conduct & Policies

Worldwise Edventures maintains a written suite of policies — Code of Conduct, Child Protection / Safeguarding, Outdoor Adventure Activities, Lightning Safety, Excessive Heat & Sun Exposure, Air Quality, and Work Health & Safety. The full document is provided separately. The summary below sets out the essentials.

A. Code of Conduct

Every member of the centre community should be well looked after, treated fairly, and feel valued and respected. In Thai culture this is a central aspect of daily life and so is also central to our philosophy.

Aim — to help all young people who visit the centre to:

- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Stay safe and be healthy

All visitors are expected to:

- Treat others fairly and courteously
- Respect other people's property and the environment
- Move around the centre without disturbing other groups
- Co-operate with other users
- Act in a safe and responsible manner

B. Child Protection / Safeguarding

The centre acknowledges its duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and is committed to ensuring that safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities and current best practice. All staff working with young people undergo a Criminal Record Check and a social-media check. Concerns must be reported immediately to the Head of Centre, who will discuss the matter with the lead teacher.

C. Outdoor Adventure Activities

All outdoor adventure activities are conducted with the safety of students paramount. Instructors hold relevant qualifications and first-aid training. A minimum of two adults including at least one teacher must accompany all activities, and supervision ratios specified for each activity must be followed.

Full text of all policies is provided in the centre's separate Policies document.

14. Health, Safety & Medical

The safety of all students is of paramount importance. A number of simple precautions should be taken.

Health

- Inoculations: visitors should be up to date with tetanus / polio boosters. For others (e.g. typhoid, hepatitis B, Japanese encephalitis), please take medical advice

- Mosquito-borne illness: low risk in this area, but standard precautions are advised — effective insect repellent and long sleeves / trousers in the evenings
- Water: free bottled water is provided in rooms. Tap water is not potable; bottled water should also be used for brushing teeth

Safety

- Activity equipment (climbing wall, ropes, low beams, kayaks, snorkelling gear) is out of bounds unless supervised by an instructor
- Pool / water use: only when staff are present. Please shower before entering the pool. Where applicable, NO DIVING
- Sun and heat: hats, high-factor sunscreen and consistent hydration are essential. Water is provided at all meals, dispensers are around the centre, and water is supplied for all activities
- Fire: alarms are tested regularly. On hearing the alarm, students should leave their rooms via the nearest safe exit and assemble at the designated muster point, where a roll call will be taken

Medical

The resort has a comprehensive first-aid kit and mobile kits accompany all activities. The nearest hospital is at Mae Ai, 8 km away, with a larger hospital at Fang just over 20 km away. Care at both has been consistently impressive: waits are usually under 30 minutes — often as little as 10 — and costs for routine treatment (including X-rays and medicines) are typically below THB 500. Cash payment is the norm. In all but serious cases, students travel to hospital in the centre vehicle accompanied by a Thai-speaking member of staff.

- Mae Ai Hospital, Mae Ai — Tel: 053 459 036
- Fang Hospital, Fang — Tel: 053 451 444

For serious incidents, the local emergency ambulance service will be called and patients stabilised before transfer. Major regional hospitals are listed below where applicable.

- Bangkok Hospital, Chiang Rai — Tel: 053 051 800
- Chiang Mai Ram Hospital, Chiang Mai — Tel: 053 895 001

15. Dietary & Medical Issues

Schools are asked to share dietary requirements and medical issues before arrival. A request-for-information form will be sent several weeks ahead of the trip. Where information is confidential, it can be shared on arrival with the relevant instructors so that students can take part in activities safely.

We can cater for most dietary requirements (vegetarian, halal, dairy- or gluten-free, etc.) given reasonable notice.

16. Risk Assessments

All activities are risk-assessed; assessments are available on request. Climbing and high-ropes elements use only CE-rated equipment, the worldwide industry standard. All equipment is checked prior to use, logged, and replaced on a regular basis. All water-based activities require students to wear buoyancy aids that exceed the minimum buoyancy requirement. Each trip carries a full rescue kit.

All off-site treks and activities are accompanied by guides and instructors equipped with two-way radios or mobile phones. Most trek routes are within a few kilometres of vehicle-accessible tracks. Specific evacuation procedures are available on request.

17. Transport

Transport between the agreed pick-up location and the centre is by 10-seater minibuses, all of which have seat belts. A guide-instructor will meet the arriving group and organise the transfer; an additional vehicle will normally be on hand for luggage. Larger groups may travel by 44-seat coach (also fitted with seat belts).

All vehicles are instructed not to exceed 80 km/h on highways, and at least one adult is present in each vehicle in addition to the driver.

For local transfers, regional taxis (Songthaews / similar) may be used. These vehicles do not always have seat belts; an adult will travel in each vehicle and drivers are instructed to keep below 50 km/h. Schools may request seat-belted minibuses for local transfers at additional cost — please ask.

18. Insurance

Programme insurance: Allianz Ayudhya — Travel Agent NAC policy, covering the entire period on tour with us, including travel, accommodation, and activities, from pick-up to drop-off. Details available on application.

We strongly recommend that schools also secure their own travel insurance to cover flight cancellations, baggage loss and similar risks not covered by the programme policy.

19. Cancellation & Refund Policy

We are aware that the number of students attending may fluctuate from the original booking. Costings are based on the original number, but in certain circumstances we will refund part or all of the payment for individual students:

- Cancellation more than 30 days before arrival: 100% refund
- Cancellation 14–29 days before arrival: 50% refund
- Cancellation less than 14 days before arrival: no refund

Refunds may also be considered on compassionate grounds — for instance, where a student is unable to travel due to serious illness, family bereavement, or comparable circumstances.

Note: the non-refundable booking deposit is excluded from any refund calculation.