

The Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel



Young People's Exchange Visits

A guide to current good practice to help inform exchange visit groups and agencies concerned with visits involving host family placements.

Contents

1 Introduction	
1.1 Preface	3
1.2 Key Principles	4
1.3 Summary of Key Guidance	4
2 Preparation and Planning	
2.1 LEA Notification	5
2.2 Internal Notification	5
2.3 FCO Travel Advice	5
2.4 Passports	6
2.5 Health	6
2.6 Insurance	7
2.7 Legal & Cultural Differences	7
2.8 Risk Assessment	8
2.9 Pre Visits	9
3 Staffing	
3.1 Ratios	9
3.2 CRB Checks	9
3.3 Emergency Procedures	10
3.4 Leader and Staff Competence	10
4 Preparation of Young People, Parents and Staff	
4.1 Host Families	11
4.2 Parents Evening	12
4.3 Downtime Activity	12
4.4 Personal Safety	13
4.5 Issues Relating to Privacy, Taste & Judgement	14
5 Work Experience	14
6 Additional Considerations	
6.1 Young People with Special Needs	14
6.2 Monitoring and Evaluation	14
7 Appendix	
7.1 Checklists	14
Headteachers, Youth Service Managers & EVCs	
Visit Leaders	16
Young People	16
Parents	17
Host Families	18
Governors	18
7.2 Behaviour and Sanctions	19
7.3 Bilingual Help Cards	19
7.4 Resources	20
7.5 Acknowledgments	20
Host Family Form	22
Generic Risk Assessments	23
Useful Websites	25

1 Introduction

1.1 Preface

“Our vision is that the people of the UK should have the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to fulfil themselves, to live in and contribute effectively to a global society and to work in a competitive, global economy. It means, in short, putting the world into the world class standards to which we aspire.

This begins with understanding the world in which we live, the values and cultures of different societies, and the ways in which we are increasingly dependent upon one another. One cannot truly educate young people in this country without the international dimension being a very significant and real part of their learning experience. In a fast-paced international environment, technology such as the Global Gateway can make the global village a reality for schools, linking children across the world.”

Charles Clarke, Secretary of State for Education, December 2004

The single most effective way of understanding a different country, culture or language is to experience it first hand. An exchange visit involving the placing of young people in a family home stay setting has traditionally been seen as one of the best ways of enabling this. Exchange visits, like most worthwhile and creative activities, involve hard work, responsive leadership and good anticipation from leaders and mature qualities from the participants. This document is intended to encourage all those with an interest in this area to sustain exchange visits.

Ian Park, Chair Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel, May 2005

1.2 Key principles

- The Secretary of State for Education and the DfES launched the 'Global Gateway' initiative in December 2004 encouraging every school to establish a twinning relationship with other communities worldwide.
- Exchange visits are seen potentially as a valuable part of such twinning relationships.
- The Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (hereafter referred to as 'the Panel') affirms that Exchange Visits provide valuable and often unique experiences for students.
- Such experiences help to develop self-esteem, self-confidence and independence. They also give the students the opportunity to experience other cultures, meet and develop new friendships and thus broaden their horizons and knowledge.
- Staying with a host family gives young people both an insight into the culture and a first hand opportunity to use their language skills in a real context.
- All schools and Youth Services have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people (Section 175 Education Act 2002)
- By following national best practice and these guidelines it should be possible to establish, manage and maintain safe and productive exchange visits.

1.3 Summary of key guidance

- This guidance must be read in conjunction with the relevant LEA's generic guidance for Educational Visits.
- Expectations and assurances should be established for all parties involved, students, teachers, host families and schools and these must be fair and reciprocal as far as is reasonably practicable.
- Specific guidance should be provided for host families about our expectations.
- Specific guidance should be provided for students covering personal safety.
- Exchange visits differ from other visits in that students are not directly supervised by teachers whilst they are with host families; exchanges thus require thorough and carefully planned risk management that addresses the issues relating to indirect supervision
- Careful matching of exchange partners is central to successful visits.
- Exchanges and visits abroad generally can take place without staying in host families homes and may be arranged for a variety of reasons; some of the information in this document will still be of relevance for these types of visit.
- This guidance is based on a colour A3 MindMap – copies can be downloaded from the OEAP website. Reference in appendix

2 Preparation and Planning

2.1 LA Notification

- Visits abroad usually fall into the category where most LAs state in their general guidance for educational visits that they need prior notification for this type of excursion.
- LEAs set a minimum time for this notification, however, schools and youth organisations are strongly advised to inform the LA **well in advance** of such an excursion and before any financial commitment is made.

2.2 Internal Notification

- It is recommended practice that each school/youth service should have an Educational Visits Coordinator, and most establishments have sent the EVC to an LEA training day. The EVC will be able to help with planning, risk assessment and liaison with the LA. Where schools or youth services have not appointed an EVC nor sent a member of staff for training, **then the functions of the EVC rest with the Headteacher / Head of Youth Service.**
- In Schools, the Head and the governing body in due course will need to be informed of the visit. The school/LA policy for visits will normally outline this procedure. Schools also hold vital information regarding any child protection concerns relating to pupils at the school and should therefore be given a list of all students involved in the exchange. This will alert staff to young people that are on the child protection register and may indicate that the family would not be a suitable host for a visitor. These principles also apply to Youth Services
- Each school/youth service will have a member of staff identified as the Child Protection Officer. They will have up to date information of relevance to exchange visits within the context of their establishments.
- Many LEAs within England and Wales will have a designated lead officer for Child Protection who should be able to advise leaders where there are concerns regarding host family suitability.

2.3 Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice

- The Foreign and Commonwealth Office website should be visited both in the early stages and at regular intervals whilst planning a visit to countries that are further afield or that have experienced disasters, conflicts, terrorism or civil unrest problems in recent years.
- Information regarding safety of tourists is available on the site and is often the basis upon which insurance companies decide whether or not they will cover visits to such countries.
- Cancelling visits at a late stage may incur major financial penalties. These costs may be outside of insurance cover.

2.4 Passports

- Some countries have an immigration requirement for a passport to remain valid for a minimum period (usually at least six months) beyond the date of entry to the country. Therefore leaders will need to ensure passports are in good condition and valid for at least 6 months at the date of return. This is a requirement of the country concerned, not the UK Passport Service. Any questions should be addressed to their Consulate or Embassy.
- Personal identification is required in many countries and for visits this is usually in the form of an individual passport. Group passports may not satisfy authorities in other countries in this regard.

2.4.1 Visas

- If travel is planned outside British territories, there may be a requirement for a visa to enter particular countries. Check visa requirements with the travel company or contact the Consulate or Embassy of the country to be visited.
- If there are students/young people that are British Dependent Territories Citizens, or a British Overseas Citizen, British Subject, British National Overseas, or a British Protected Person, they may need a visa that is not required by British Citizens
- If there are students/young people with non British passports, they also may require a visa not required by British Citizens. More than one party has had to leave a young person and member of staff behind at Dover having failed to check this prior to the visit.
- An emergency plan for the visit should consider action in case a member of staff becomes incapacitated or has to leave the visit. If the country visited requires a visa, has a back up member of staff possession of a visa prepared?
- It is recommended that at least 2 photocopies of all passports, visas and other important travel documents are made, one set kept by the home base emergency contact another with the party but separate to the original documents.

2.4.2 Customs and Excise

- Restrictions on certain goods apply on entry and exit to most countries. These restrictions differ from country to country and there are also variations at UK customs for some goods depending on whether they were purchased inside or outside of the European Union. Age restrictions will apply on some goods such as alcohol and tobacco. Alcohol may not be taken into some countries.

2.5 Health

2.5.1 Reciprocal European Health Insurance

- UK residents may be entitled to free medical treatment or at a reduced cost, when temporarily visiting a European Union (EU) country, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland. Only treatment provided under the

state scheme is covered. However to obtain treatment, students will need to take a completed Form E111 with them. These are available, free of charge, from their nearest post office. Not all UK residents are covered in Denmark, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland.

- As a result of recent changes to European law a new E111 form has been introduced to replace the old one. If students are planning to travel to the countries concerned during 2005 they should apply for the new E111, as the old ones were only valid until 31st December 2004.
- The new E111 form will be valid until 31st December 2005.
- The second major change is that during the course of 2005 the UK will be adopting the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). This will be automatically issued to those who apply for the new E111 form and tick the box to receive the new card.
- Refer to the NHS Direct and FCO websites for up to date information

2.5.2 Vaccines and Innoculations

- If in doubt as to whether vaccination is required, consult a GP at least 6 weeks prior to the visit. The Department of Health and Foreign and Commonwealth Offices are also useful sources of information.

2.6 Insurance

Travel insurance is vital for all visits abroad and is usually available via the tour company with whom travel is arranged or through the LA. However, there should be a close examination of what is covered and what is excluded in the 'small print'. For example;

- Leaders are advised to check the level of existing insurance cover provided by the Local Authority or the school.
- Is repatriation included or just treatment in the country concerned? Air Ambulances can cost in excess of £30,000 in remote regions.
- Are the costs of parents covered if they need to come out to stay with students in hospital or accompany them home?
- Are personal belongings, baggage and money covered?
- The LA insurance department may be able to offer advice.

2.7 Legal and cultural differences

The legal definitions of what constitutes a 'child' and a 'criminal offence' vary across European countries, not to mention global differences in such definitions. Crossing the road without using pedestrian crossing points, dropping litter and inappropriate dress are examples of offences punishable by spot fines in some countries, behaviour which some young people would think of as acceptable in the UK. Students must be made aware of these differences and the consequences of such actions abroad.

Research prior to the visit in this respect will pay dividends whilst in the host country. A consideration of what constitutes good manners will help with acceptance in host family homes.

The most secure exchange visits take place with partners and locations where knowledge and understanding have developed over some years. If the exchange or location is a new venue, a pre-visit by the home leader(s) is strongly recommended.

2.8 Risk assessment

It is good practice to involve all leaders in this process; risk assessments produced by one person are rarely read or understood by others on the visit, thus it is a collective responsibility even if one person is the author. Opportunities to involve the young people themselves in this process should not be overlooked. It may be productive to think of a risk assessment as the minutes of a meeting where significant issues relating to the health, safety and well being of students and leaders were discussed. Leaders should follow the generic advice and format provided by their employer, for most school and youth service groups, this will be their LA. Best practice nationally suggests that students themselves are involved at some stage in the risk assessment process.

In addition to assessing risks inherent in any educational visit, there are additional risks relating to exchange visits that will require extra consideration. In order to reduce the possibility of harm it will be necessary to consider additional control measures, some of which may be considered best by answering the following following questions;

- Are families and students carefully matched with due regard to gender, diet, religious belief, special needs etc?
- Are families known to the host school/establishment, have they been affirmed as suitable and is there a hosting agreement form which includes a question regarding criminal convictions or other contra-indicators?
- In case it is necessary to move a pupil at short notice, are contingency plans in place?
- Has consideration been given to the safety and well-being of the students during travel, and does this include appropriate drivers and transport whilst with the host family?
- Students and host families are aware of a 24 hour contact number and are fully briefed as to procedures should problems arise.
- Do leaders have daily contact with all students and do students have an agreed '**keyword**' that they can use which means '***I want you to visit me immediately***'?
- Will students have access to a phone and/or can they use a mobile phone to call or text messages if necessary to staff?
- Have students been briefed about personal safety and have they been issued with written guidance on this topic? (Child Safe produce a useful leaflet titled 'Travel-Safe . . . Advice for Children and Young People).

- Does work experience feature as part of the exchange and if so, has an assessment been made by an appropriate person about any significant hazards the work environment may present? See section 5.
- Have acceptable and unacceptable activities on 'family days' been discussed and has parental agreement been sought prior to the visit if necessary? For example is there an opportunity to go skiing, cycling or horse riding with the host family, or a visit to a beach and thus swimming? If so, parental consent is required.

2.8.1 Generic- See example in appendix

2.9 Pre-visits

Where a visit is arranged for the first time or involves a significant number of new staff, a preliminary visit may reassure all parties and provide details and photographs for a parents' presentation. It is a control measure in itself as well as being an opportunity to consider a specific risk assessment first hand. A pre visit is thus strongly recommended. The issues raised above in section 2.8 should be considered during a prelim visit and discussed with colleagues on both sides of exchange and will form the basis of any agreement between the exchange partners to ensure commonality of aims, objectives and activities. As a minimum, any agreement should include a commitment to the health, safety, wellbeing and welfare of the young people involved.

3 Staffing

3.1 Ratios

Ratios should be informed by the risk assessment process and the LA guidance. Many LAs will recommend a ratio of one member of staff to ten students and a minimum of two staff per visit also reflecting the gender balance of the party. Consideration should also be given to the ease with which a substitute member of staff may be dispatched during the visit, should they be required to cover an incident, emergency or to replace a member of staff.

The group leader will be an employee of the LEA and normally a teacher or youth worker, some staff accompanying may however be adult helpers/volunteers and if this is the case the follow points should be considered:

- All helpers must be thoroughly briefed and understand their role in relation to the visit.
- Those that have substantial unsupervised access to students, must have an enhanced CRB check.

3.2 CRB checks

- The DfES guidance 'Health & Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits' (HASPEV 1998) states that 'Group leaders need to be clear about relevant procedures for vetting the suitability of host families including criminal background checks insofar as these are available'.
- Leaders should be aware that it is the possibility of being CRB and list 99

checked that is a real barrier to potential offenders. Given that the 'Child-Safe' initiative came about as a result of a failure to carry out any form of CRB check on a UK home with a known offender, sample CRB checking of potential host families within the UK should be regarded as good practice.

- 'If the host school or placing agency does not have appropriate measures in place for carrying out checks to ensure the health, safety and welfare of exchange or home stay pupils, the group leader should seek further assurances and/or reconsider whether the visit should take place.' (HASPEV 1998)
- The exact equivalent to CRB checks are unlikely to be available in all countries, therefore the group leader in this case must ensure that the host school or agency has a vetting procedure in place to assess the suitability of home placements.

3.3 Emergency Procedures

- Schools/youth service hosts must have an emergency or critical incident plan for educational visits.
- This plan will normally outline actions in case of emergencies including the following:
 - Contacting staff back at school/youth service, including in holiday periods and at weekends.
 - Whole group evacuation/repatriation
 - Contingency funding arrangements
- Most LAs will have an established Critical Incident Response Team ready to support in times of trauma; refer to the LA guidelines for details or contact the relevant education office.
- An emergency plan for the visit should consider action in case a member of staff or a young person becomes incapacitated or has to leave the visit. If the county visited requires a visa, has a back up member of staff possession of a visa prepared?
- Contingency plans should include alternative accommodation arrangements, for example if it becomes necessary to move a young person from their host family.

3.4 Leader and Staff Competence

Language capability

- The majority of the exchange visits involving schools are language based and thus normally include language staff as party leaders.
- In the case of visits further afield or with visits for reasons other than language, it is important that there is someone who can act in the interests of the party who is available 24 hours and able to communicate fluently. Visit leaders should ensure this is in place prior to the visit.

3.4.1 Experience

- Host family visits are usually led by colleagues with considerable experience and expertise and it is important that this experience is shared.
- Teachers and group leaders may be promoted, move schools or retire and thus a wealth of experience and expertise may be lost. It is important that visits include 'succession planning' and any future party leader has the opportunity to learn as much as possible as an assistant leader in the first instance.
- Visit leaders should ensure that 24 hour access is available to a competent person that has all necessary background knowledge of the host culture.

3.4.2 Training

- LAs have a legal responsibility for Health and Safety. To meet the requirements of good practice as defined the Does, this includes the responsibility to provide Educational Visits Coordinator training.
- In addition, it is recognised good practice to provide leader training days for teachers and youth workers. The Leader training course, endorsed by the Panel is an example of this type of training.

3.4.3 Monitoring of arrangements

Throughout the visit, leaders retain full responsibility for their pupils even if the pupils are remotely supervised within the host family context. This will require suitable and sufficient procedures in place to monitor the home stay on a sample basis, including arrangements for effective communication with students and hosts, together with observation of accommodation, work placements and other locations used during the visit.

4 Preparation of Young People, Parents and Staff

4.1 Host Families

There is clearly a need to take every reasonable step to ensure the safety and well being of the visiting children when they stay with the family of our pupils. The vetting of host families is crucial to ensuring the safety and protection of pupils.

The vetting of host families should include,

- CRB Checks (refer to 3.2 CRB checks under staffing)
- Verification of family structure
- Code of Conduct
- House rules
- Home visit checks
- Information sharing and gathering
- Sleeping arrangements
- Family activities
- Transportation including drivers

4.2 Parents Evening

- It is important that parents are fully apprised about the visit in order to make informed decisions including 'plan B' arrangements.
- Expectations regarding behaviour of students, including circumstances in which parents should be prepared for their children to be sent home early, or to be responsible for the collection of their children. (See Section on 'What happens if Young People break The Rules?')
- As detailed a programme of the entire visit as is possible, including family days and acceptable activities that may be provided by host families. e.g. skiing, swimming, night clubs, etc.
- An explanation of to what extent pupils may, or may not be directly supervised by accompanying staff and how they can communicate with those staff.
- Expectations regarding, downtime, 'curfew' times, bed times, alcohol, smoking, etc.
- Procedures in case students are not happy in their host family homes.

Frequently asked questions at parents' evenings include the following:

- Who is hosting my son/daughter and what checks have been made on the accommodation?
- Have the family hosted before and what assurances or checks have been made on their suitability?
- What is the policy regarding alcohol, smoking, drugs, videos, curfews, bedtimes etc?
- Can I contact my son/daughter and can I contact the group leaders if necessary?
- Can they contact me?
- If my child has a problem, how do they contact leaders and how long would it be before they were visited?
- What experience do the leaders have of this particular visit and visits in general?
- What are the travel arrangements and what are the supervision details during travel periods?

4.3 Downtime Activity

- Acceptable and unacceptable activities should be discussed with students and may form part of a behaviour contract/code of conduct.
- Statistically, 'downtime' accounts for a disproportionate level of accidents and

mishaps. It is recommended that the amount of downtime is thus reduced to a minimum and considered carefully.

- The use of the term 'downtime' rather than 'freetime' is a control measure in itself.

4.4 Personal Safety

4.4.1 Staff

- Staff should also be aware of issues relating to personal safety, and personal and professional protection, especially in order to avoid situations which could lead to accusations of improper conduct.
- Staff should be encouraged to read the following documents (details in appendix):
 - Developing Safe Working Practices for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings, Does/IRSC 2003 (para 24 in particular)
 - NEOST Guidance on Conduct for Teachers, Education Staff and Volunteers (para. 1.8 in particular).

4.4.2 Young People

- It is strongly recommended that young people have a copy of the Child Safe Leaflet 'Travel-Safe ...Advice for Children and Young People' 2001 and that they and their parents read it.

4.5 Issues relating to Privacy, Taste and Judgement

4.5.1 Mobile Phone protocol

Although mobile telephones can provide a vital link between pupils and their parents, they can also create difficulties particularly camera telephones. There have been occasions when pupils have taken indecent photographs of other pupils and careful consideration therefore needs to be given to this issue.

All schools/ youth services should have a policy for the use of mobile telephones by young people and this should be considered. Clear instructions should be given to pupils if the decision is taken for them to take telephones abroad, and included in the Code of Conduct.

4.5.2 Home Entertainment

Visit leaders will need to establish clear policies regarding acceptable internet usage, DVD and video usage

4.5.3 Theatre and Cinema Visits

Related issues to those outlined above should be considered in the event of young people visiting the theatre, cinema, or similar.

5 Work Experience

Any exchange visit that includes work experience should refer to and be considered in the context of the LA's own policy. Where this does not cover work experience abroad, special arrangements may need to be made, in which case, organisers are recommended to contact the relevant LA officer at the earliest possible stage of planning.

6 Additional Considerations

6.1 Young People with Specific Needs

It is now widely recognised that young people with special needs are more vulnerable to abuse than others and therefore face additional risks whilst visiting abroad. These individuals however also have the right to have their horizons expanded through travelling abroad. In order to make such exchanges possible, the same general guidelines apply but in addition the group leader will have to put into place more stringent checks and balances. The following additional procedures and advice are recommended over and above those detailed in the previous section;

- An advanced planning visit is essential for trips involving children and students with SEN.
- A higher ratio of adults/carers is required and there must also be an appropriate ratio of male/female adults. As part of the risk assessment process, it should be considered whether an appropriately trained person be part of the staff team.
- All teachers/youth workers supervising visits should be aware of young persons' medical needs and medical emergency procedures.
- Check whether travel insurance covers pre-existing health conditions. If not, insure with a company which specialises in policies for these children and young people.
- Assess suitability of host family - ramps, lifts, wide doorways, adapted toilets etc.
- Housekeeping arrangements for disposal of soiled dressings, pads etc.
- In some cases bunk beds may not be appropriate.
- Contact to be made with student/s and Young People whilst with host family.
- Availability of interpreter, leader trained in Macaton, signing or other appropriate communication medium.
- A social area should be available for group meetings etc.

6.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

After any visit it is good practice to ensure a system of feedback and review. In the

case of exchange visits, there is a particularly strong case for ensuring this takes place and includes the consultation of the young people concerned, the parents, host families, the leaders and the partner organisations. Such a process will help in the celebration of success as well as feeding in to the general planning and risk assessments for future visits. Any significant issues should be shared with the EVC, the headteacher and the LA.

7 Appendix

7.1 Checklists

7.1.1 Headteachers, Youth Service Managers and EVCs

Am I sure that:

- The appropriate risk assessments have been completed and the visit formally approved and notified to the LA?
- The trip has been carefully planned by competent staff and all arrangements comply with the LA's Guidance?
- The EVC has been involved in the planning from the outset?
- Appropriate numbers of teachers/youth workers/group leaders/supervisors will accompany the party?
- A person has been designated as 24 hour home contact who will have immediate access to all the information relating to the trip? Are all staff are aware of this?
- All staff and volunteers are specifically competent, appropriately vetted and CRB checked?
- All host families have been checked and assurances provided that they are suitable hosts and homes?
- All group members have been informed of their roles and responsibilities during the visit?
- Appropriate training has been given to relevant staff including issues relating to child protection?
- All group members and leaders are equipped to deal with emergencies and sensitive issues?
- All relevant documentation including a list of group member's names, together with their host families' address and contact number is lodged in a designated place provide 24/7 access.
- An appropriate member of staff is available 24 hours a day and has a copy of the above documentation?

- Parents and guardians of young people involved in the trip have full details of where their son/daughter is staying, a full itinerary of the trip and emergency telephone numbers?
- Appropriate training / briefing has been provided for staff, pupils and parents?
- The group leader has sufficient funds and an effective means of communication in case of an emergency? (E.g. mobile phone/satellite phone in remote venues).
- Students/Young People have been provided with "Child Safe" advice?
- Staff and young people are suitably and sufficiently aware of the cultural and legal differences and sensitivities of the host country?
- Review/debrief on return?

7.1.2 Leader (Visit leader/Visit Organiser)

Am I sure that:

- All group members are adequately briefed about their responsibilities during the visit and know what actions to take in case of emergencies?
- All staff, supervisors, parents and volunteers have been briefed as to their specific roles and responsibilities?
- Host families have names and contact numbers in case problems arise?
- Host families are aware that teachers/youth leaders may home visit to check on welfare of guests and this applies to both sides of the exchange?
- The Educational Visits Co-ordinator has been involved at every stage of this visit and has ensured that the visit arrangements follow both the schools/youth services policy and meets national best practice?
- The Child Protection officer for this establishment has been consulted in respect of this exchange and that I have followed any recommendations they have made?
- I have details of the 24 hour contacts and emergency arrangements at both ends of the exchange and this information has been shared with key staff?
- I have made copies of relevant documents, passports etc and these are kept separate to the originals?
- I have organised sufficient contingency funds should the need arise for extra expenditure?
- Parental consent forms, medical details and contact details have been copied and shared with relevant staff and host families?
- I understand the insurance arrangements

- My contact person /partner with the equivalent role to me in the exchange has met our expectations relating to assuring the health, safety and well-being of the young people involved? These expectations have been matched and reciprocated for the return visit?
- I am satisfied that my counterpart in the host country is fully appraised regarding the details and arrangements for this exchange?

7.1.3 Young People

Consider the following:

- Do I know who my host family will be?
- Do I know the address and telephone number of where I will be staying?
- Have my parents/guardian been given this information?
- Do I have a valid passport and photocopies of these?
- Do I know the 24-hour emergency contact number for my group leader in case of a problem?
- Do I know how to alert the group leader if I am not happy?
- Do I know who will be responsible for me on the journey?
- Do I know who will be responsible for me on the visit?
- Do I know where I will be sleeping and who I will be sharing a bedroom with?
- Do I know what to do if I get lost?
- Do I know of any legal and cultural differences or sensitivities of the visiting countries?
- Do I understand all necessary road safety issues.
- Do I know what is expected of me with regards to my behaviour and the implication of me agreeing to the code of conduct/contract?
- Have I been told about using my mobile telephone/ taking pictures/internet access/video/DVDs etc?
- Am I aware of the extent of control I have over what films/DVDs/videos I watch?

7.1.4 Parents

Have I ensured that:

- I have completed all the requested documentation, including medical details?
- My son/daughter fully understands his/her responsibilities while abroad?
- I know who to contact if there is an emergency?
- I have a complete itinerary and timetable of the visit and understand the purpose of the visit?
- I know of all the activities my son/daughter will participate in and have given consent?
- I know and have agreed to the Code of Conduct, which applies to the visit?
- I understand my responsibilities in relation to the code of conduct including my specific in the case of the early return of my son/daughter?
- I believe my son/daughter is fully prepared to participate in the trip?
- I had the opportunity to attend a parents' meeting?
- As parent/guardian I am contactable throughout the duration of the visit and when necessary I will be available to support the code of conduct?

7.1.5 Host Families

This section may require translation into the host language.

- I have supplied the relevant information to the school / youth service to provide assurances as to my/our suitability to act as a host household and I agree to any necessary but confidential checks being completed (signed copy held by school/youth service)
- I have completed and returned the host family form which includes details of other family members.
- I have received details of my /our guest/s which includes their diet, any medical concerns, any learning difficulties, and religious or cultural issues and any parental concerns.
- I have been informed about 24 hour emergency contact details and who to contact regarding routine problems.
- I am aware of the code of conduct for this exchange and will brief my guest and my family on curfew, bed times, alcohol, smoking, privacy, acceptable TV/DVD/Video viewing and acceptable behaviour in general.
- I am aware of the issues that relate to transporting my guest
- I am aware of suitable/unsuitable activities for family days / leisure time and have the consent of both the parents of my guest and the group leader should I/we wish be considering any 'higher risk' activities.

- I am aware of the dates, duration and itinerary for the visit.

7.1.6 Governors

- Are you aware of the outline details you require to fulfil the governors' role in monitoring to assure yourself that the visit is being organised in accordance with school and LA procedures?
- Has the visit been planned in accordance with the LEA Guidelines?
- Are you satisfied that emergency procedures are in place?

7.2 Behaviour and sanctions

What if the young person breaks the rules?

- Young people participating in a trip should also be briefed on the behaviour code. Such codes should be drafted in consultation with the young people participating in the trip and should be realistic. Banning all smoking may be unrealistic, depending on the age of the young people involved. Banning smoking in rooms, or during the time that the group is taking part in an activity or visit, is realistic. Banning a young person from smoking outside on their own, or during their leisure time, may not be. It is not a criminal offence to smoke, however undesirable parents or youth workers may regard smoking! Similarly, banning all alcohol consumption, even where there is free leisure time in the evening, may not be realistic in relation to older members of the youth organisation.
- Although the organisation may have discussed all the rules to be followed during a trip, including no smoking, alcohol or time away from the group, young people may break a rule while away. Some organisations state that if one of the rules is broken, the young person will be sent home. Such a policy may present both legal and practical difficulties, and the circumstances in which this policy will be implemented, and the practical arrangements, need to be carefully considered.
- If the young person is to be sent home, the organisation will have to consider how that is to be accomplished. First, the staff will need to contact a parent and obtain their permission to send a child home. The parent may refuse to co-operate or not be available to receive the child. Second, consideration will need to be given as to who will pay the return fare, particularly if the child is abroad. Even if the parent has signed an agreement that he or she will pay for an early return ticket if the child misbehaves, a decision will still need to be made as to who purchases the extra ticket. Further, the organisation may not get the money back from a dissatisfied parent who disputes the organisation's reasons for returning the child without taking legal proceedings. Third, thought will need to be given as to whether the child should be accompanied, particularly if the young person is abroad or the parents cannot collect him or her. Can the organisation spare a member of staff to accompany the child, and who will pay? Fourth, there may be an issue as to breach of contract. Where there has been a payment for the trip, the young person should only be sent home if there is a clear and serious breach of the rules by the young person. (The Children's Legal Centre, Working

with Young People – Legal Responsibility and liability by Carolyn Hamilton, 5th Edition)

7.3 Bilingual Help Cards

Small pocket sized laminated card with bi-lingual information to include for example:

- The young person holding this card may need help
- Please contact their leader on the following number
- Or at the following address . . .
- They are staying at , phone number , etc

7.4 Resources

“The Protection of Young People in the Context of International Visits”

City of Edinburgh Education Dept – obtainable from:

Wendy Laird
Publications Unit
City of Edinburgh Education Department
Level 2
Wellington Court
10 Waterloo Place
EDINBURGH EH1 3EG

Price £6.50

Tel: Wendy Laird, 0131 469 3328

E-mail wendy.laird@educ.edin.gov.uk

“Advice for Schools” (Child-safe Travel-safe) www.child-safe.org.uk

“Advice for Host Families” –as above

“Advice for Parents and Guardians” – as above

“Advice for Young People” pamphlet

Obtainable through website, or tel: 01737 812727, or by post from:

Child-safe Travel-safe
Avon and Somerset Constabulary
c/o Boffin Book Services
24 Walton Street
Walton on the Hill
SURREY KT20 7RT

7.5 Acknowledgements

- DfES Investigation and Referral Support Coordinator Cluster 22 - North West Region
- Isle of Wight, Youth & Community Services
- MFL Dept Rivington & Blackrod High School, Bolton
- West Midlands and North West Regions of the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel
- Hampshire, Wirral and Buckinghamshire LEA Guidance
- City of Edinburgh Council Education Department
- Cheshire, Worcestershire, Nottinghamshire, Thurrock, Isle of Wight, Bedfordshire and Birmingham City Outdoor Education Advisers
- Child Safe Publications



Host Family Stay Information Form

Name of Host Family:	Name of Guest:
Address:	Address:

Telephone Number:	Telephone Number:
Mobile:	Mobile:

Who lives at this residence?	Names and relationship to host partner
Male Adult/s	
Female Adult/s	
Males under 18 (state ages)	
Females under 18 (state ages)	

Are there any regular visitors likely to have significant contact with your guest? Please give names, gender, relationship to household and ages if under 18	Yes/No

I confirm that:	Our guest will have their own bedroom	Yes/No
	Or will share with their exchange partner who is of same sex and similar age	Yes/No
	Our guest will have access to private toilet and bathroom facilities	Yes/No
	If our guest is vegetarian, vegan, has a nut allergy or dietary needs this can be accommodated	Yes/No
	When a private family vehicle is used to transport a young person, this will only take place when the vehicle is:	
	Roadworthy	Yes/No
	Appropriately insured	Yes/No
	Driven by a driver approved by both sides	Yes/No

Names of specified drivers:	

I confirm the statements made above are correct and I accept responsibility/duty of care for caring for this student in a safe and secure environment. I agree to any necessary checks.

Signed:	- 22	Date:
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EXCHANGE VISITS	GENERIC RISK ASSESSMENT
HAZARDS HOW SOMEONE MIGHT BE HARMED (EXAMPLES)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child Protection issues, psychological and physical • Abuse / inappropriate contact with strangers • Abuse/ inappropriate contact with host family members or visitors • Road Traffic Accident as pedestrians and as passengers • Getting Lost • Injury during 'downtime' • Injury whilst on activity on family days • Health/Medical Hazards
RATIOS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:10 dependent on the risk assessment process. • Staffing to reflect special needs and gender balance of group. • 2 staff minimum
QUALIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current First Aid recommended • Able to communicate effectively in the relevant host nation language • Group leader training recommended
CONTROL MEASURES (EXAMPLES)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careful matching of young people and host families • CRB checks or similar assurances in place • Random visits to host families during exchange visit • Assurances and evidence that these are suitable hosting homes and families • Sleeping arrangements are confirmed and privacy provided for showering/toilets etc • Thorough pupil briefing on issues relating to personal safety • Parents fully informed and have opportunity to raise issues with staff and with their children • Issue 'Travel Safe . . . Child Safe' pamphlet to each young person • Young people use 'keywords' to alert staff to problems i.e. 'I need help! Visit me!' • Briefing about differences in road traffic and driving standards eg: look left first! • Particular care with UK coaches abroad with exit doors into the traffic • Prior agreement about who exactly may and who may not drive young people around • Code of Conduct and expectations shared with all parties • Briefing as to acceptable and unacceptable activities on family days • Avoid higher risk activities; eg open water swimming with no lifeguards etc • 24 hour contact numbers available at both ends of the exchange • Bilingual 'Help Cards' prepared and distributed with contact names, numbers and key phrases etc • Reputable coach company with seat belts on coaches and drivers experienced in driving abroad • Full consideration of medical and health issues, including appropriate vaccinations, medical insurance, European Health Insurance Cards etc 	
NOTES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The charity Child Safe has conducted research into incidents on exchange and foreign visits and has produced guidance based on this research. Particularly useful is the leaflet for young people and they should be encouraged to read this carefully with their parents prior to the visit. Details from the Child-Safe.org.uk website • The Edinburgh document 'The protection of Young People in the Context of International Visits' is highly recommended and gives a summary of the differences in laws, age of consent etc. in different European countries. 0131 469 3328 wendy.laird@educ.edin.gov.uk <p>Always consider transport/ site/ environment/ group/ special or medical needs/ staffing/ competence/ activities arrangements when compiling the specific risk assessment.</p>	

GENERIC RISK ASSESSMENT FOR PUPIL EXCHANGE VISITS INVOLVING HOST FAMILY PLACEMENT

Identification of hazards and risks

Consider:

Transport/ site/ environment/group/staffing competence/ activities arrangements

1. Specific hazards relating to natural disaster/war/terrorist threat/medical hazard
2. Travel and transport hazards
3. Health/medical hazards
4. Hazards particular to family home stay, including those related to accommodation, diet, gender, religion, special needs, abuse and poor treatment, basic welfare and negative relationship with hosting family
5. Hazards relating to any planned work experience
6. Hazards arising from host family activities such as transport in family vehicles; higher risk activities such as swimming, cycling, skiing etc and inappropriate use of down-time
7. Hazards relating to getting lost

Control measures – managing the risk

1. Updated information from Foreign & Commonwealth Office web site
2. Knowledge and understanding of LEA guidance relating to the transport of young people, including use of coaches, minibuses and management of groups on ferries and aircraft (including terminals)
3. Full consideration of medical and health issues, including appropriate vaccinations, medical insurance, European Health Insurance Cards etc
4. Knowledge and understanding of LEA guidance/OEAP guidance “Pupil Exchange Visits”. Visit planned and executed by specifically competent staff. Preliminary visit or appropriate assurances. Assurances relating to CRB issues. Appropriate matching of young person to host family. Emergency procedures to include “key word” call for help and alternative accommodation. Briefing and training for staff, young people and parents with check lists for heads/managers, leaders, young people, parents, host families and governors
5. Knowledge and understanding of standards required by LEA guidance discussed with hosting partner with appropriate assurances
6. Appropriate discussion and agreed assurances with parents and hosting partner
7. Appropriate briefing and training of staff and young persons, including use of telephones and Help Cards

Useful Websites	
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/breakfast/4012173.stm	December 04 BBC interview with Charles Clarke
http://www.globalgateway.org.uk/	
http://www.fco.gov.uk/	Foreign & Commonwealth Office
http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAdviceForTravellers/	Good advice re health
http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/	Good advice re health
http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/	'Safeguarding Children in Education' Sept 2004 DfES/0027/2004 plus other relevant documents
http://www.lg-employers.gov.uk/conditions/education/allegations/conduct_for_working_with_young_people.html	Guidance for codes of conduct for staff with students
http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/familyandcommunity/childprotection/otheragencyroles/irsc/IRSC_Guidance_Documents/	Raises awareness of illegal, unsafe and unwise behaviour
http://www.leargas.ie/youth/publications.html	Irish Youth Organisation with advice for Exchanges
http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning-ie-youth-exchange.htm	One of many relevant pages of information on youth exchanges
http://www.cyec.org.uk/	Commonwealth Youth Exchange website
http://www.murge.com	Information re. Mind Manager software used to create the map
http://www.youthcouncil.ni.org.uk	Youth Exchange Guidelines for Good Practice

