



KING EDWARD VI
HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

King Edward VI High School for Girls Exchange Visits and Host Families Policy

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KEHS Exchange Visits and Host Families Policy

1 Background

This policy should be read in conjunction with the KEHS Trips and Visits Policy.

Exchange visits and hosting have always formed a very important part of the learning experience offered by King Edward VI High School for Girls (KEHS). These often take the form of regular, in many cases long-standing, language exchange visits involving partner schools from countries in Europe.

The school recognises that hosting involves a different type of risk from regular educational visits. In order to enable future generations to be able to benefit from such highly valuable activities, the risk involved needs to be mitigated within the context provided by the regulatory environment. Staff are encouraged to seek advice from the Vice Principal Pastoral (DSL) to ensure the highest standards of safeguarding are maintained during the trip/ visit.

2 Regulatory Context

The basic position is that acting as a host family is a regulated activity as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (SVGA). This is because the definition of regulated activity within the SVGA is very broad and includes any form of care for or supervision of children which is carried out 'frequently' by the same person or where the 'period condition' is satisfied; and gives that person the opportunity to have face to face contact with children.

For these purposes 'frequently' amounts to once a week. The 'period condition' covers activity carried out four times or more in a 30-day period, or overnight i.e. between 2am and 6am.

Due to the nature and frequency of most host family arrangements organised by the school, they will nearly always amount to regulated activity and the school will be the 'Regulated Activity Provider'.

Annex D of Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023, (KCSIE) covers the issue of children staying with host families and should be read in conjunction with this policy. Of particular note are the following sections:

School/college arranged homestay – suitability of adults in UK host families

- *When arranging a homestay, schools should consider the suitability of the adults in the respective families who will be responsible for the visiting child during the stay. In circumstances where a school or college arrange for a visiting child to be provided with care and accommodation in the UK (including where they engage a company to make those arrangements) in the home of a family to which the child is not related the responsible adults will be engaging in regulated activity for the period of the stay. In such cases and where the school or college has the power to terminate such a homestay the school or college would be the regulated activity provider.*

A regulated activity provider commits a criminal offence if it knows, or has reason to believe that, an individual is barred by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) from engaging in regulated activity but allows that individual to carry out any form of regulated activity.

- *When a school or college arrange a homestay, it should consider what intelligence/information will best inform its assessment of the suitability of the adults in those families responsible for the visiting child during the stay. It will be for the school or college to use their professional judgement to decide what factors it considers to be relevant. However, to help inform that*

assessment, schools and colleges should obtain a DBS enhanced certificate with children's barred list information. This check will not only establish whether the adults are barred from engaging in regulated activity relating to children, but where criminal record information is disclosed it will also allow the school or college to consider, alongside all other intelligence that it has obtained, whether the adults would be suitable hosts for a child.

- *In addition to those engaging in regulated activity, schools and colleges are free to decide whether they consider it necessary to obtain a DBS enhanced certificate in respect of anyone aged 16 or over in the household where the child will be staying.*

3 Private Arrangements

Private arrangements are those carried out in the course of a family or personal relationship for no commercial consideration. Therefore, if the hosting is arranged by two families without any significant intervention by the school, and provided the school does not exert any influence over the hosting once underway, it is likely it will amount to a private arrangement. No checks would therefore be permitted, or necessary. Please read Section 8 for guidance when a period of UK homestay lasts for more than 28 days.

4 Implication if Hosting by KEHS Families Amounts to a Regulated Activity

If the hosting amounts to regulated activity, checks will be required on the parents in almost all cases. They may also be required on all other family members aged 16 or over who are living in the house if they are involved in the care or supervision of the child who has been placed there. This will require consideration of whether any such family members are likely to be involved in the supervision or care arrangements on a basis that is 'frequent' or satisfies the 'period condition'.

All the above means that those people over the age of 16 in a host family are eligible for an enhanced DBS Check and a Children's Barred List check if they are undertaking regulated activity.

It is therefore the school's policy to undertake these checks on the parents of a KEHS host family and on any over 16s who are regularly involved in the care or supervision of the child. This is unless the hosting amounts to a private arrangement (as highlighted above).

See Section 5 for the process to be followed by KEHS staff organising such trips.

5 KEHS Families Hosting Pupils from a Visiting School

KEHS staff who are organising trips involving the use of KEHS families as hosts for pupils from a visiting school must:

1. Submit the names of those families who apply to participate to the Vice Principal (Pastoral) as soon as they are received. The Vice Principal (Pastoral), in consultation with appropriate colleagues, will review their initial suitability to act as hosts. Should concerns be raised, then the family will not be permitted to participate. In these circumstances, the Vice Principal (Pastoral) will be responsible for communication with the family. Where there are no initial concerns, the Vice Principal (Pastoral) will ask the member of staff organising the trip to submit the names of the family members to the HR department so that the necessary DBS checks can be carried out.

2. Provide confirmed KEHS host families, and the member of the staff at the visiting school who is responsible for the trip, with information about the risks and the support measures in place during the home stay.
3. Ensure that the visiting pupils have contact numbers for their accompanying staff and for the KEHS staff responsible for arranging the hosted stay and **know who to contact and how**, if they have any concerns about their own safety. This should include the number of the school mobile being used by the member of KEHS staff responsible for the exchange.
4. If the hosting arrangement needs to be terminated by KEHS for any reason, the member of staff in charge of the trip will liaise immediately with the Vice Principal (Pastoral) regarding the necessary arrangements and liaison with the partner school.

6 Hosted Visits of KEHS Pupils to Partner Schools Outside the UK

Annex D of Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023, (KCSIE) acknowledges that it is not possible for schools to obtain criminality information from the DBS about adults who provide homestays abroad. It is therefore advised that: *Schools and colleges should liaise with partner schools abroad, to establish a shared understanding of, and agreement to the arrangements in place for the visit. They should use their professional judgement to satisfy themselves that the arrangements are appropriate and sufficient to safeguard effectively every child who will take part in the exchange. Parents should be aware of the agreed arrangement. Schools and colleges are also free to decide whether they consider it necessary to contact the relevant foreign embassy or High Commission of the country in question to discuss what checks may be possible in respect of those providing homestay outside of the UK.*

Where KEHS staff are organising trips involving the use of families outside of the UK as hosts for KEHS pupils, the member of staff must:

1. Arrange for the partner school to provide written details in advance of the trip of what assessments have been made of the suitability of host families and accommodation, and written confirmation that they have no safeguarding concerns regarding their host families. Wherever possible, these written details should confirm that any criminal records checks that are available to schools in that country have been completed. This correspondence must include the specific names of the adults in the host families and must be discussed with the Vice Principal (Pastoral). Where the hosting arrangements are approved by the Vice Principal, the correspondence should be documented and appended to risk assessments.
2. Provide confirmed KEHS families with information about the risks and the support measures in place during their child's time away.
3. Seek written assurance that KEHS pupils will be seen by staff at the partner school on each day that they attend school, and that staff will meet or have a telephone conversation with the KEHS pupils on each day that the pupils are not in school.
4. Seek written assurance from the partner school that they will ensure the KEHS pupils know who from the partner school to contact and how, if they have any concerns about their own safety at any time during their stay.
5. Ensure that KEHS pupils know who to contact from KEHS and how, if they have any concerns

about their own safety at any time during the visit. This should include the number of the school mobile being used by the member of staff responsible for the exchange.

6. Ensure that KEHS staff have the contact details of all host families and the mobile phone numbers of the hosted pupils.
7. If the hosting arrangement needs to be terminated by the partner school for any reason, the member of staff in charge of the trip will liaise immediately with the Vice Principal (Pastoral) regarding the necessary arrangements and liaison with the partner school.

7 Record keeping

Where KEHS families are hosting pupils from another school, the names, details of ID verification and DBS certificate numbers of the host KEHS families will be logged on the Single Central Register under the Host Families tab.

Where KEHS pupils are being hosted by non-KEHS families, then the procedures in section 6 above will be followed, documented and appended to the relevant trip risk assessment.

8 Behaviour

Before the trip the trip leader will meet with KEHS students and parents explaining the expectations of pupil conduct on the trip. For further information see Appendix 1: Code of Conduct.

9 Additional Considerations

Where a period of a UK homestay lasts 28 days or more, for a child aged under 16 years of age (or 18 years of age if the child has disabilities), this may amount to private fostering under the Children Act 1989. In such cases the local authority would need to be notified of the arrangements. Please speak to the DSL without delay if you are aware of any such arrangements being made.

Our **International Exchange programme** offers a small number of students in Year 9 the opportunity to visit countries independently. The exchange is facilitated by liaison with our partner schools in Canada and New Zealand. These are long established links and members of KEHS staff have previously visited the schools. Students are selected very carefully to ensure they can cope with the demands of independent travel. No member of KEHS staff accompanies the students but they always travel in groups of two or more. A dedicated teacher for the student's wellbeing is allocated at the partner school and there is frequent contact between KEHS staff and the student as well as contact between the designated teacher at the exchange school and KEHS staff. The system of checks on host families applies in the same way as any other exchange visit.

Appendix 1

Code of Conduct for Foreign Exchange Visits

Foreign exchanges are exciting opportunities to immerse yourself in the culture and language of another country. Often, they involve staying with local families, away from friends and school staff, which can be really rewarding, but might raise some potential worries.

This Code of Conduct is based on many years of experience and is designed to help to keep all our students safe, well and happy while overseas.

Girls are representing the school at all times and should behave in a way that is appropriate in that context.

- Follow school rules, UK law and the law in the country you are visiting.
- Be polite, responsible, and sensible.
- The host family is responsible for the welfare and safety of the visiting student when pupils are not with King Edward VI High School for Girls staff or at our partner school, so students should respect and pay attention to instructions.
- Pupils should be sure to respect the host family and their home. For example, keep their room and living spaces tidy, engage in conversation as much as possible, ask questions, and respect house rules.
- Mobile phone and social media use must be careful and responsible and abide with school guidance.
- Any interaction with drugs (alcohol, drugs, nicotine, vaping etc) is prohibited.
- Pupils should let King Edward VI High School for Girls staff know of any worries they have regarding any aspects of the trip abroad. For example:
 - A situation that may make pupils feel uncomfortable
 - Something that may be said to pupils (misplaced compliment or reproach)
 - A gesture pupils may judge as inappropriate (though students should remember that people in some European nations, male or female, may greet you with a friendly kiss on the cheeks or handshake)
- You will be provided with a staff contact mobile phone number in case of any problem arising
- While travelling in the UK and abroad, pupils should stay with a group (for example at the airport) and always let a member of staff know where they are going.
- Pupils should always be punctual in the mornings, and for any meeting times.
- If the host family offers to take you on an activity that has some risk, for example swimming or horse riding you need permission from King Edward VI High School for Girls and from your parents.