

GUIDANCE NOTES

SCHOOL EXCHANGES AND VISITS TO PARTNER SCHOOLS

TOOLKIT - MAKING IT SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL

ORGANISING A VISIT TO A PARTNER SCHOOL ABROAD

The Secretary of State for Education said, when announcing a new funding package for pupils to take part in visits to partner schools abroad:

“I want every child to have a world-class education, and that includes the opportunity to experience other cultures and go to places they wouldn’t normally visit – whether that’s practicing their Mandarin in China or learning about American history in the US.

School exchanges are so valuable, bringing subjects such as modern languages and international history to life as well as helping pupils develop into confident, independent and well-rounded young people.

As Britain leaves the European Union, it’s more important than ever to show how much we value international opportunities, language-learning, and ensuring our young people have a global outlook.”

A visit to a partner school in another country provides young people with a tremendous opportunity to experience another culture, practise language skills and to explore issues of common interest with a different group of learners. They must be well planned, managed and conducted. (See Appendix 1 for what makes a good exchange visit to a partner school).

All schools have agreed procedures when it comes to organising off site educational visits and staff should refer to their own Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) for guidance. You may also wish to consult the national guidance provided by the Department for Education - Keeping Children Safe in Education

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits>

This toolkit provides information to incorporate into visit preparation material, which takes into account the unique nature of a visit to a partner school and which can present both extra risks and require a higher level of risk assessment.

It contains:

- Description of role of education visit coordinator and visit leader,
- A timeline to help group leaders know what to do and when
- A step by step checklist
- Sample letters to parents and carers
- Model forms
- British Council safeguarding checklist

Role of the educational visit coordinator

Schools should appoint an educational visit coordinator (EVC) and make sure they have the training they need. The headteacher has this duty if there is no coordinator. Find out how to appoint and train coordinators through your local authority, academy trust or local outdoor education adviser. The school's education visit coordinator (EVC) works to help their colleagues in school to assess and manage risks. They will act on behalf of the headteacher and be the principal contact for the group leader. The EVC is not always the main group leader, they could be separate roles.

The school's designated safeguarding lead will be the principal contact for all safeguarding issues. The coordinator should:

- be an experienced visits leader,
- have the status to be able to guide the working practices of other staff,
- be confident in assessing the ability of other staff to lead visits and agree the correct staff: pupil ratio,
- be able to advise headteachers and governors when they approve visits,
- have access to training, advice and guidance,

The EVC makes sure their school has an emergency response plan that covers what to do if there is an incident away from school. They should also have a communications plan that covers how routine communications should be handled, including regular check-ins and calls to reassure people. Visit leaders should be also familiar with these plans.

Pupil Ratio

This is not prescribed in law. It must reflect the nature of the individual visit. The NUT guidance is that there must be a minimum of two staff; one of whom should be suitably first aid trained and at least:

- 1 adult for every 6 pupils in school years 1 to 3
- 1 adult for every 10-15 pupils in school years 4 to 6;
- 1 adult for every 15-20 pupils in school year 7 onwards.

NUT also suggests that:

- With a mixed party it is desirable that there should be teachers or other responsible adults of each gender accompanying the group.
- Newly qualified teachers should not normally lead school parties in their first year of teaching.

Schools should consider the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's detailed guidance when organising adventure visits abroad: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safer-adventure-travel-and-volunteering-overseas>

Role of the group leader

The group leader must gain approval from the EVC and headteacher for the visit to go ahead. They also inform parents/carers about the nature of the visit and gain their consent. The group leader is responsible for undertaking a robust risk assessment and continually assessing risk during the visit to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils.

A working timeline

9 – 12 months before the visit is to take place

Consult with the partner school and agree scope and theme for visit. You should also use this discussion to determine where the pupils will stay, what costs may be involved and to share information about safeguarding. If homestay, you will need to explain safeguarding arrangements as set out in KCSIE and ASCL guidance (Appendix 2).

Permission will need to be granted for the visit by the school's headteacher; with input from the school's EVC and with due regard for the school calendar. Many teachers' trade unions require the calendar to be agreed one year in advance.

A risk assessment should begin to be prepared to answer questions raised by the EVC.

6 – 9 months before the visit takes place

Inform pupils and canvass support for the visit. Using a draft programme can help with explanations at this stage, to show an expectation of the visit.

Inform parents of the opportunity and invite expressions of interest (use the example in Appendix 3). You will need to include:

- Purpose of visit and destination
- Details of accommodation
- Programme
- Costs – covered by grants, and other expected contributions - including fundraising.

Confirm participation and arrange for signature of form of consent and indemnity (example in Appendix 4).

When you receive these forms, the disclosed medical conditions, allergies and dietary requirements need to be factored into the risk analyses. Share these with homestay hosts and other accommodation providers.

Regard will need to be given to also arranging necessary travel documentation:

British nationals under the age of 18 and travelling to a destination in parts of Europe can currently travel on a collective travel document at a low cost. <https://www.gov.uk/collective-group-passports>

Some passport holders may need a visa to travel to a partner school and you will need to check with the Embassy of the country to be visited. Applying for visas can take some time – factor in the needed time frame for applications, visits to embassies etc.

Looked-after children will require a letter of authority allowing them to travel abroad.

Some children may require a letter confirming their place of residence in the UK.

If staying with host families, pupils should complete a separate pro forma (Appendix 5), which can be shared with hosts and for which parents/carers have given specific authority for this information to be shared.

Appropriate travel insurance must be secured. Attention should be given to whether or not the insurance provides cover for delay, travel cancellation or disruption at ports and airports due to delay or strike action.

You need to agree how payments will be made. This can be via Parentmail/Parentpay or similar, or directly with the school office. Most trade unions will not agree to teaching staff taking direct payments for visits and exchanges.

3 – 6 months before the visit takes place

All parents/carers and pupils will have received confirmation of where the group will be staying and be in contact with host families, if applicable. A meeting will be held for all parents/carers and pupils.

An expectations agreement (example Appendix 6) will be signed by all parents/carers and pupils.

The risk assessment will be updated and passed to the EVC taking into account the travel advice provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

Any accompanying adult not employed by the school must have a DBS criminal background check completed.

Set objectives and learning outcomes of the visit and prepare how these will be evaluated during and after the project.

One week – 3 months before departure

A cultural briefing note will be provided to all pupils explaining how to get the most out of the visit (example Appendix 7). This is particularly important when travelling to countries where cultural norms are often quite different to those in the UK.

Kit list shared with pupils – what they should take will be dependent on destination, activity, weather and programme.

Emergency contact details shared. Pupils instructed to put these numbers into their own telephones. (Example Appendix 8).

All vaccinations should be organised if required.

Pupils briefed on what to do in emergency situations; In case of becoming lost, being distressed or in case of trouble with police or authorities.

Reiteration of school behaviour code and any further visit expectations; including use of social media (Example Appendix 9).

Set up a parents' group (social media, WhatsApp etc) for communication during the visit.

Group leaders will need to understand how to report any incidents of concern with the school safeguarding lead and any accidents using the school's reporting guidance.

During the visit

Reiterate behaviour expectations.

Provide guidance about any free time – make sure that pupils carry emergency contact cards.

If pupils are in families, suggest nightly check in by text and suggest a curfew.

Listen to what pupils tell you about free time activities and intervene if appropriate.

Mindful of issues with social media, suggest regular updates about visit to a parents' group on twitter/WhatsApp.

Regular review of risk assessment; including terrorist threat (see Appendix 10). Encourage reflection and learning through the visit, from participants and group leaders.

Post visit

Evaluate the project, measuring outcomes against project objectives

Plans should be made to share the project's learning outcomes with the whole school and with parents/carers.

Follow-up the learning with the young people, providing support for future opportunities and next steps, to capitalise on the exchange.

Promote the visit to local press, and report back to school.

Reciprocal visits

If your partner school plans to travel to the UK, you will need to give as much attention to the arrangements for the incoming group.

You must also follow the government's advice on criminal background checks for families which host visiting pupils (See appendix 2).

Toolkit appendices

The toolkit contains a number of appendices which offer practical advice and sample letter templates and forms which schools may wish to use.

They are listed below

- Appendix 1 Planning checklist
- Appendix 2 What makes a good visit?
- Appendix 3 ASCL guidance on homestay visits
- Appendix 4a Sample letter to parents/carers – visit to residential centre
- Appendix 4b Sample letter to parents/carers – homestay
- Appendix 5 Example form of consent
- Appendix 6 Sample form of introduction to host family
- Appendix 7 Expectations agreement
- Appendix 8 Cultural briefing note
- Appendix 9 Emergency contact detail advice
- Appendix 10 Social media guidance
- Appendix 11 Emergency situation protocols and advice
- Appendix 12 British Council safeguarding checklist

Appendix 1

Planning checklist

Once you have agreed project objectives and dates with your partner school, you may find it useful to make use of the checklist below to keep track of your project's progress.

	Action	Date completed	Further actions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Permission for visit to take place requested and given		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Risk assessment begun and reviewed at regular intervals		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Invitation for expressions of interest (from students?)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	School visit risk assessment and visit details submitted to EVOLVE system or similar for approval		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Travel and accommodation arranged, and providers checked for compliance with health and safety legislation		
	If homestay.... (what should they do extra/different?)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Information evening for parents/carers arranged		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Form of consent and indemnity collected		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Record of medical conditions/allergies/dietary requirements compiled and shared where appropriate with partner school		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Information compiled about pupils' passports and nationalities		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Collective passport applied for, if applicable		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Information about need for visas for travel shared with pupils and families, if applicable		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Letters of authority sought for any looked-after children to enable them to leave the UK		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Information shared with partner schools and with potential host families, where applicable		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Travel insurance arranged and medical information disclosed to insurance company		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Expectations agreement completed by pupils and their carers		
<input type="checkbox"/>	All accompanying staff to have satisfactory DBS checks completed and recorded		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cultural briefing note shared with pupils and accompanying staff		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Information about need for vaccinations shared and record of completed vaccinations taken		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emergency situation briefing held for pupils and accompanying staff and emergency contact details shared with parents/carers		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Information about how to react in emergency to be given to all pupils		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Share kit list with all pupils		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Up to date contact information to be collected from all pupils		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social media account established to share information with parents/carers		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emergency cash/access to credit arranged with school office		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Post visit report any safeguarding concerns to school safeguarding lead		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepare post visit report and invite pupil reflection		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sharing of learning and development within school, and with others in local community		

Appendix 2

What makes a good visit to a partner school?

There must be clear communication with your partner school and an agreement about how the project will be organised.

Some schools wish nothing more than to have whole classes of pupils shadow their partners during a normal school week or fortnight. You need to be confident that your pupils have the necessary subject knowledge and language skills for this type of programme to be a rich and meaningful experience for them. For some pupils, a lack of focus may encourage restlessness or poor behaviour.

A joint curriculum focus, which allows both groups of pupils to contribute fully to a discussion or investigation often provides context and motivation for collaboration. Examples include:

Work on creation of artwork linked to study of conflict in Europe,

How to find a job in another country,

What are our common roots; family history project,

Access to education for all.

Wherever possible, pupils ought to work together and there should be use of both mother tongues.

Contact with the host school pupils should not be limited to time spent in the family home. Excursions linked to the project should be undertaken by both groups of pupils.

Sports tournaments and music tours provide opportunity for travel to another country. Pupil to pupil collaboration moves educational tourism into a different realm where pupils become engaged with a different culture and language rather than view is as a spectator. Pupils can teach each other traditional games, practise together or work on a joint performance – all of which enriches the experience for our young people.

Likewise, charity missions or volunteering projects at schools in the Global South should involve substantial contact with local young people to build understanding of interests and attitudes rather than be seen solely as a destination for humanitarian aid.

Appendix 3

Homestay visits (taken from ASCL guidance)

“Placing students with host families raises safeguarding risks. Key to managing that risk is good preparation with the partner schools, as well as preparation of the pupils to educate them how to manage situations as they arise. Before the exchange takes place, it is important to work closely with your partner school to ensure that the suitability of the families to host has been considered and that the hosts are known to the partner school or college. The types of background checks available to schools and colleges will vary depending on the partner country.

It is vital you have regular communication with your partner organisation and you share this information with pupils’ parents and carers.

The government’s statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education September 18 refers to homestay and states: “It is not possible for schools and colleges to obtain criminality information from the DBS about adults who provide homestays abroad. 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 agreed arrangements.”

Germany: there is no legal obligation for host families to provide an equivalent of a DBS check. German schools have no authority to request parents to apply and pay for the polizeiliches Führungszeugnis or the erweitertes Führungszeugnis (for working with children or young people) under German law.

France: there is no law in France which requests DBS checks for host families. The French extrait de casier judiciaire which proves whether a person has already been convicted or not, cannot be requested by the schools who have no authority to check the morality of its pupils’ parents.

Spain: since 2015, it is mandatory for anyone with a profession or participating in an activity which regularly involves contact with children under 18 to hold a Certificado de Delitos de Naturaleza Sexual. This certificate is issued electronically (free) by the Ministry of Justice and includes a confirmation code which allows anyone to verify its validity and authenticity online.

Therefore, the visit leader must ensure that the host school has a procedure in place to assess the suitability of home stays and obtain confirmation of this in writing. This should then be communicated to parents and carers with their written agreement obtained to confirm they are satisfied with the hosting arrangements and the way in which the hosts have been identified.”

https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/guidance_paper_international_school_exchanges_and_visits_homestays.pdf

Appendix 4a

Sample letter to parents/carers (residential centre)

Dear Parent/Carer,

Our school has a strong link with x school in Germany. Working with our teacher colleagues at (Name of partner school), we would like to organise a project to involve pupils from both schools in collaborative working and investigation.

We would like to take a party of up to 20 pupils from Year 10 to the partner school from ... to This represents a great opportunity for our pupils to work in partnership with children from another country and develop important life skills. The pupils will also be able to experience a different culture and practise the language, which they have been learning in school in real life situations.

Travel to Germany will be by luxury coach and by Eurostar. The journey will take approximately 12 hours.

Once in Germany, the group will be accommodated in a residential centre called The full address and weblink is shown below:

Address

Weblink

Pupils will share single sex multi bedded rooms, with an average of four beds per room. There will be private single sex washing facilities and toilets for the pupils to use.

We will also organise a cultural programme for our pupils and a draft outline is attached.

The cost of the visit; including travel, insurance and visits programme is £..... and can be paid in instalments. The final payment for the balance is Payment for the visit can be made by Parentmail.

I will be holding a meeting for all parents/carers and pupils to answer any questions which you may have and to share our approaches to risk and safeguarding.

To request a place for your child, please return the attached pro forma.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on

Appendix 4b

Sample letter to parent/carers (Homestays)

Dear Parent/Carer,

Our school has a strong link with x school in Germany. Working with our teacher colleagues at (Name of partner school), we would like to organise a project to involve pupils from both schools in collaborative working and investigation.

We would like to take a party of up to 20 pupils from Year 10 to the partner school from ... to This represents a great opportunity for our pupils to work in partnership with children from another country and develop important life skills. The pupils will also be able to experience a different culture and practise the language, which they have been learning in school in real life situations.

Travel to Germany will be by luxury coach and by Eurostar. The journey will take approximately 12 hours.

Once in Germany, the group will be accommodated by the families of pupils who attend our partner school and with whom we will work during our time there. The families have been selected by our German partner school, which is satisfied that they have no reason to doubt their suitability to host a child from our school. Pupils will be partnered with a child who shares similar interests wherever possible. There will be one UK pupil per German household. With your permission, we will share dietary and other requirements with the host family. Pupils will be able to contact the group leader at all times by telephone if they are unwell or are troubled or distressed.

We will organise a cultural programme for our pupils and a draft outline is attached.

The cost of the visit; including travel, insurance and visits programme is £. Payment for the visit can be made by Parentmail.

I will be holding a meeting for all parents/carers and pupils to answer any questions which you may have and to share our approaches to risk and safeguarding.

To request a place for your child, please return the attached pro forma.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on

Appendix 5

Example form of consent

Visit to Delhi – 10 – 17 May	
Name of pupil	Date of birth
Home address	Home telephone (landline)
Name of emergency contact 1	Contact number
Name of emergency contact 2	Contact number
Name of family doctor, address and contact telephone number	

Dietary requirements	Medical conditions and medication used
Allergies	Mobility issues
Other considerations; including religious observance	
<p>Consent and agreements</p> <p>Please tick each applicable box and sign where indicated</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> I consent to my child taking part in the visit detailed overleaf.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I consent to my child receiving emergency medical or dental treatment; including anaesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by a medical practitioner.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I will ensure that my child will carry two sets of certain medications; epipens, inhalers etc. and that he/she is confident in their use, storage and care.	

I will inform school of any prescribed medications being taken by my child and give these to the group leader for safe keeping in clearly marked containers which shows prescribed dosage. (Only medicines prescribed by a doctor can be carried by the staff member).

I will provide school with certificates of all vaccinations, which are considered necessary for the visit.

I consent to my child being photographed during the visit for school use and in line with school photo policy.

I consent to school sharing information about my child with the partner school where appropriate.

I give permission for my son/daughter to take part in water-based activities and confirm that my child can swim without flotation aids.

I agree to meet any costs and expenses reasonably incurred by the school on behalf of my son/daughter which cannot be covered under the terms of the insurance policy (policy excess, emergency care, damage to property belonging to a third party etc.).

Name of pupil _____

Name of parent/carer _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix 6

Form of introduction to a host family

My name is I am a year old boy/girl.

At home, I live with
.....

I have (pets)

In my spare time I enjoy

.....
.....
.....

I am most looking forward to doing the following things in (name of country)

.....
.....
.....

I have been learning (language) for years and am confident/not confident when speaking and listening.

I suffer from the following allergies which may need to be considered: (Pets/feathers/pollen)

.....
.....
.....

I like to try new foods, but I must have the following diet:
(Vegan/vegetarian/pescatarian/halal/kosher/gluten free/lactose free/nut free)

.....
.....
.....

I am really looking forward to meeting my new friends and promise to try my best, to always follow instructions and to keep your home clean and tidy.

I give my permission for this information about my child to be shared with our partner school.

_____ Signature and name of parent

Appendix 7

Expectations agreement

This agreement sets out the expectations of everyone involved in your visit.

Young people and parents/carers can expect the following:

a member of staff can be contacted at any time should you have a problem or concern;

parents will be able to contact the group leader if they have any concerns whilst the group is abroad.

the school's first and foremost concern is the safety of the participants, therefore all activities carried out will comply with current health and safety regulations;

transport organised by the school for use during the visit will be checked to ensure it meets stringent health and safety regulations;

participants are comprehensively insured by the school's insurance policy whilst taking part in the visit.

The school expects the following:

young people, who take part, will follow all instructions given by the group leader, teachers, accompanying adults and in case of homestays, by the host family's parents;

young people and their families/carers will inform the group leader immediately of any concerns about their welfare;

behaviour of the young people will be exemplary; young people who are in breach of our behaviour policy may be sent home at the expense of their parents/carers;

no pupil will consume alcohol, smoke or engage in inappropriate or criminal activity;

a contribution of £xx per pupil towards travel and accommodation will be made by (date).

Signed:
Participant Parent/Guardian Group leader

Dated

Appendix 8

Cultural briefing note

Dear Pupil,

I know that you are looking forward to our forthcoming visit to our partner school in

To make sure that everyone gets the most out of this experience, we must all agree to follow a sensible and respectful code of conduct.

We respect everyone; our classmates and teachers, the partner school staff and pupils, host families and all those people whom we may meet during our project.

Travelling is an exciting experience. It is an opportunity to recognise things, which are similar but also it gives us the chance to learn about new things, try new foods and become part of a different culture. Being different does not mean being strange or odd or that something is better or worse than what we might be used to at home. It is good to note down all the things which strike you as being different, in order that we can talk about these when back at school.

Do let me know if you have any questions or concerns about the project or the country we are to visit.

Below is a list of issues, which you may wish to brief pupils about:

- Importance of saying Hello, Please and Thank You,
- How to greet people; with or without kissing/touching people of opposite/same sex,
- The way pupils speak to school staff/adults,
- What you are and are not allowed to do at school,
- The way in which boys and girls learn together or learn apart,
- School uniform/what to wear at school,
- How to stay safe at school,
- Meals and which foods might be served and how they ought to be eaten,
- What to say before you eat,
- How to dress in public (short skirts/ bare shoulders/ shorts for boys etc.),
- Whether or not it is acceptable to take photos.

The above list represents only a fraction of what you may wish to discuss with pupils.

Partner school relationships are built on trust and prosper on respect. It is important that pupils understand the cultural norms in the country to be visited in order that they do not cause offence or are perceived as being rude or disrespectful.

Appendix 9

Emergency contact details

Pupils should enter the emergency contact number of the group leader into their mobile device. They should also take a laminated card with them, which would have details in English and in the language of the host country. This information should explain what to do if lost and how to call the group leader. There should be a foreign language translation which would allow a responsible person to call the partner school leader in their language.

An example is shown below. The Hungarian text asks the person to whom the card is presented to call the Hungarian group leader as the child has become lost and is visiting Hungary with his/her school class:

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

You **must**:

- listen to all instructions,
- arrive in good time at all meeting points,
- never go off on your own – your group should be at least 4 strong,
- always make sure that someone in your group has a watch,
- always be clear where the meeting point is,
- call the group leader on 0044 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx if you are distressed or in difficulty,
- show this card to a policeman, shopkeeper or responsible person if you cannot reach your teacher. Always remain in a group when asking for help.

Kérem, segítsen!

Magyarországi látogatáson vagyok az iskolámmal, és sajnos eltévedtem. Kérem, segítsen! Hívja Mészárosné Tóth Annamáriát (xxxxxxxxxxxxxx), és mondja meg neki, hol vagyok.

Nagyon köszönöm.

Appendix 10

Social media guidance

Young people use mobile technology to communicate with friends and family and as a source of information.

During an exchange visit, mobile telephones can be a very good way to keep in contact with pupils and for the young people to be able to reach their group leader.

The posting of photographs and associated comments on social media sites can, however, create distress for some members of the group and their families as well as causing reputational damage for the school.

Schools may already have guidance on the use of social media, which should be brought to the attention of pupils and their parents/carers.

Good, sensible advice would be:

- Not to share social media contact details with strangers,
- Never to post images of anyone in the group without asking their permission,
- To contribute to a group blog or twitter feed, which is moderated by the group leader rather than to individual social media accounts,
- Only to use appropriate language and content,
- To consider the impact of any comments posted if they were to be read by host families or the host school, (this could cover quality of food, technology, buildings or even the weather),
- To agree to take down any material which is deemed to be inappropriate and brought to the attention of the group leader.

Appendix 11

Emergency situation protocols and advice

Schools will have an emergency procedure in place and the group leader should be familiar with this and understand whom to contact in event of an emergency situation (normally EVC).

Visit leaders should follow this agreed emergency protocol at all times and consider both potential threats and their remedial solutions.

There is understandable anxiety on the part of staff, pupils, parents/carers when travelling abroad; especially following any terrorist incident. However, this needs to be kept in perspective and sensible and commensurate actions can mitigate against risk.

The UK Government identifies five level of terrorist threat; from low to critical. Since 2006, it has never been below substantial – level 3.

Keep up to date with travel advice published by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

When visiting busy places popular with tourists and when travelling at your destination:

- Brief pupils about what to do in event of an emergency,
- Tell all members of the party to remain vigilant and report anything they consider suspicious to the group leader,
- Identify a safe area to be used as a meeting point in the event of an emergency,
- Make sure that all pupils and staff can be in touch with each other,
- Ensure that staff have emergency contact details with them,
- Each child should have a contact card with them,
- Make sure that there is a qualified first aider in your party,
- Avoid queuing for long periods of time; pre-book admissions where possible.

Staff and pupils ought to be familiar with the Government’s strategy in event of attack – **RUN, HIDE, TELL.**

Staff must know how to contact emergency services in the partner school country.

Appendix 12

British Council school exchanges safeguarding checklist

Preparation and Planning:		
Designated Safeguarding Lead (or equivalent)	Visit leaders have met with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or equivalent) and have considered which arrangements need to be in place in both countries to ensure the wellbeing of all pupils.	
	The safeguarding arrangements include a clear referral pathway for any welfare concerns or allegations of abuse.	
School Staff	All staff and volunteers engaged in regulated activity with children as part of the exchange has undergone an enhanced DBS check.	
	Ratios of staff to students have been agreed and consideration given in respect of the age of the children, whether any of the	

	children have special needs, the nature of the visit and activities, the experience of those accompanying pupils, duration of the visit and overnight stays	
	All accompanying staff members have been informed of their roles and responsibilities during the visit	
Pre-Visit and Planning	The appropriate risk assessments have been completed and the local authority notified of the visit	
	Work has been carried out with partner schools overseas to ascertain the nature of any safeguarding policies and procedures and details provided of the expectations they have of host families and confirmation obtained of this in writing	
	When feasible and where a visit is being arranged for the first time, or involves a significant number of new staff members, a preliminary visit has been carried out.	
	Where students age 18 or over are taking part in the exchange, this has been risk assessed and additional consideration has been given to the age of their partners. These students are no longer legally categorised as children and school should consider whether it is appropriate for them to be partnered with a child.	
Children with Disabilities	All planning for educational visits and excursions fully take into account any child or young person with a disability (as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act). However, it may be thought inappropriate for students with certain types of disability to be offered a homestay situation. If they are integrated in a group with children who do not have disabilities, and they are staying with families, then it is important that those who are staying in a hotel or hostel as part of the programme, are able to visit their partner's family.	
Information for Parents/Guardians	Information has been provided to parents about how welfare concerns or instances of abuse can be reported and how these will be managed.	
	Parents and guardians of children involved in the trip have full details of where their child is staying, a full itinerary of the trip and emergency contact telephone numbers	
	Expectations regarding behaviour of children (Code of Conduct) have been communicated to parents.	
Host Families: Every reasonable step must be taken to ensure the safety and well-being of children when they stay with families. Selection and management of host families is crucial to ensuring the safety and protection of children.		
Procedures for selecting host families	The visit leader has ensured that the host school has a procedure in place to assess the suitability of homestays and obtained confirmation of this in writing	

	<p>The selection of host families includes:</p> <p>Police Checks (where possible)ⁱ</p> <p>Self-Declaration forms (where possible)ⁱⁱ</p> <p>Code of Conduct</p> <p>House rules</p> <p>Home visit checks</p> <p>Verification of family structure</p> <p>Suitability of sleeping arrangements</p>	
	Selection procedures have been communicated to parents and carers and their written agreement obtained to confirm they are satisfied with the hosting arrangements and the way in which the hosts have been identified	
	Families and children have been carefully matched, and consideration given to particular aspects, including gender, diet, religious belief, and additional needs.	
Accommodation	All pupils have his or her own bed in a room of someone of their own gender, or a separate bedroom.	
	All pupils have privacy whilst dressing, washing, and using toilet facilities.	
Reporting of Safeguarding Concerns:		
Reporting concerns	Specific guidance has been provided for children on how to report any risks or situations which make them feel uncomfortable	
	Children and host families are aware of a 24-hour contact number and have been fully briefed as to procedures should problems arise. Staff agree to respond to any concerns immediately and to be available to answer any messages or calls straight away	
	Contingency measures are in place if a child needs to move from the host family	
	Any child protection incident which reaches the threshold that the safeguarding lead or head teacher is alerted must also be communicated to the British Council child protection team (childprotectionteam@britishcouncil.org) This is to enable the child protection team to provide support and to ensure due diligence is followed regards risk management procedures.	

ⁱ In some countries, schools are unable to request police checks. If a police check is not possible, the UK school needs to use their professional judgement to assure that there is a way that homestay families are sufficiently checked. This could be done through a self-declaration form (see Appendix one). If a self-declaration form is not feasible/legal then another means of robust assurance must be sort. The agreed process for doing this check needs to be documented and agreed and communicated to UK parents.

In Germany, schools have no authority to request parents to apply for the polizeiliches Führungszeugnis or the erweitertes Führungszeugnis (for working with children or young people). In France the Extrait de Casier Judiciaire which proves whether a person has a conviction or not cannot be requested by schools.

ⁱⁱ Example of self-declaration form

I declare that I have never been convicted of any offence involving any type of harm to a child or children, nor have I ever been warned or cautioned in relation to such a matter. I also declare that there are no civil or criminal proceedings of any nature pending against me at the date of this declaration relating to any allegation concerning any type of harm to a child or children.

Name	
Signed	
Date	