



**St Edward's  
School**

Unity - Achievement - Faith

# Foreign Exchange Visits Policy

**Reviewed and Approved by the Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Curriculum Committee**

**On: 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

**Reviewed and Ratified at the St Edward's Full Governing Body**

**On: 11<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

**Next review date: Summer 2026**

## **Mission Statement**

**May we be one**

**In purpose – educating for life in all its fulness**

**In faith – encountering God who lives among us, calling us to unity**

**In dignity – nurturing confidence and maturity**

**In community – striving together for love, justice and peace**

Exchange visits offer a wonderful opportunity for our students to develop their whole being and to understand and embrace peoples and cultures other than their own thus helping to ensure that our global community can learn to live together in love, peace and harmony. By welcoming students from another country into their own homes, students have the opportunity to demonstrate hospitality, to share meals and experiences and to practically live out of the gospel message of love.

## **Policy for the running of Foreign Exchange Visits**

The single most effective way of understanding a different country, culture or language is to experience it first-hand. Given our dependence on a global economy, an understanding of the wider world has never been more important. 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.

Such experiences help young people to develop self-esteem, self-confidence and independence, while developing their knowledge base and broadening their horizons. 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.

**Exchange visits differ from other visits in that young people are not directly supervised by their leaders whilst they are with host families. This necessitates careful planning by those leading the visits and an understanding by parents of exactly which precautions we do and do not take to ensure that risks are managed appropriately during the visit. Clearly leaders will take all sensible measures to ensure that students have an enjoyable and valuable experience but it is important parents and carers are aware of the specific nature of exchange visits and the procedures we undertake.**

We currently offer 2 exchanges each year, one visit to Cherbourg, France for students in Years 9 and 10 and one visit to Speyer, Germany for students in Years 9-13.

This document was first developed in 2015 to take account of the latest guidance from the LSCB Safeguarding in Education group and Keeping Children Safe in Education, and is updated regularly based on learning from our annual exchanges. The policy is reviewed by governors on an annual basis.

Please be aware of the following aspects relating to organisation of exchange visits at St Edward's.

**Organisation of Exchange visits:**

1. All students studying the relevant language in years involved are given an opportunity to take part in the exchanges.
2. Students may be refused permission to take part if their conduct in school or other factors lead us to the conclusion that their participation is not in their best interests, presents increased risks to their own safety or that of others, or if the school or other agencies have concerns as to the suitability of accommodation for students from abroad.
3. Where the school or other agencies are aware of potential issues in the home that may make it difficult for a family to host a student, we will speak to the family concerned and in some circumstances may agree with other agencies that participation in an exchange is not appropriate.
4. Where there are more applicants for an exchange than places, priority will be given to students in older year groups, with lots drawn between remaining students.
5. To comply with the latest safeguarding guidance we now require all participating families in the UK to undergo an enhanced DBS and barred list check. The main carer in each household must be checked, with this person responsible for the care of the student from abroad whilst they are in the UK.
6. No equivalent criminal records checks are possible abroad. Instead we rely on our partner schools to have appropriate safeguarding procedures in place, to know the families involved, and to confirm that those taking part are, to the best of their knowledge, appropriate hosts for our students.
7. All host families in the UK and abroad are asked to complete a Homestay Information Form that identifies who lives in their home and provides some details regarding accommodation.
8. We do not visit homes either in advance, or during the visit to assess suitability of accommodation and neither do our partner schools abroad.
9. Parents and carers agree to indemnify and hold harmless the releases from any loss, liability, damages or costs, including court costs and legal fees that may be incurred due to their child's participation in this activity, whether caused by negligence of releases or otherwise but requesting a place for their child on a foreign exchange visit. My consent for my child to participate confirms this undertaking.
10. Wherever possible we will try to match students with a partner of the same gender.
11. Where mixed-gender partnerships are necessary it is required that students are accommodated in separate rooms.
12. It is always preferable for students to be accommodated in their own room, however it is acceptable for students to share with a partner of the same gender.
13. A matching form is issued to participants to collect contact details, plus information about their interests, family, motivation for taking part and any other information that may be relevant to helping us to match the students.
14. We work with our partner school to match students to someone appropriate.
15. Matchings must be checked carefully by parents/carers to ensure there are no obvious issues.
16. The matching forms are shared with our partner schools.
17. This document is also shared with our partner schools and they are asked to share its' detail with their parents.
18. A code of conduct must be signed by all parents whose children are taking part in the exchange through Evolve, our online trips system, in advance of the exchange.

19. A medical form is also required to detail any relevant medical issues. These forms are taken abroad in case of any problems and any pressing concerns are shared with host families if parents would like us to do so.
20. Students on the exchange are responsible for managing existing medical conditions themselves, including the taking of medication, as they spend most of their time in families and away from staff.
21. All students are required to have a valid passport and EHIC/GHIC card.
22. An information evening is held prior to each visit to ensure that parents/carers are given the opportunity to ask questions relating to their child's participation in the exchange.
23. Full Risk Assessments are prepared in advance of the visit and parents can view these by contacting organising staff at St Edward's.

#### **Whilst students from abroad are in Poole:**

1. All families will be given contact telephone numbers for St Edward's staff, including the Group Leader. As staff from partner schools stay with us this means staff from both schools can easily be reached.
2. Families are expected to look after and provide for the visiting student whilst they are here.
3. Students should always be supervised overnight by a responsible adult whilst they are in the UK.
4. Careful consideration should be given by host families to transport arrangements whilst hosting students from abroad, including appropriate drivers and insurance.
5. Students should not be taken far from the Poole locality during their time in families without the permission of the Group Leader.
6. Unless there is an emergency situation, staff from St Edward's and our partner schools will not visit students at home with their host families during the period of the exchange.
7. Host parents should carefully consider "appropriate" activities whilst hosting students from abroad. If adventure sports or potentially hazardous activities such as skiing, horse-riding or swimming at the beach are to take place during unsupervised time in families, consent from the exchange students' parents should be sought in advance of the visit.
8. Any questions or concerns regarding "appropriate" activities either in the UK or abroad should be shared with staff at the relevant school so that consent can be sought.

#### **Whilst St Edward's students are abroad:**

1. Host families abroad will be given contact telephone numbers for staff in their schools during our stay.
2. All St Edward's students and their parents will be given a 24-hour contact number to reach teachers whilst abroad, plus emergency contact details in the UK should they for any reason be hard to reach.
3. We will ask partner schools to ensure that parents abroad are briefed on the need for sensible transportation precautions where our students are with host families, including appropriate drivers.
4. Group Leaders will see all students daily apart from at the weekend. Young people will have an emergency contact number and be given an agreed "keyword" that they can use if a Group Leader needs to visit them immediately.
5. All young people are encouraged to bring a mobile phone with them to use if they need to contact Group Leaders. It is the responsibility of their parents/carers to ensure the phone works abroad

and has adequate credit. Parents should ensure that students' numbers are provided to organising staff in advance of the trip so that these can be issued to all staff for use in case of emergency.

6. Our partner schools will brief host families that our students should not be taken far from the exchange school's locality during their time in families without the permission of the Group Leader.
7. Unless there is an emergency situation, staff from St Edward's and our partner schools will not visit students at home with their host families during the period of the exchange.
8. Our partner school is asked to brief host families regarding "appropriate" activities whilst hosting our students. If adventure sports or potentially hazardous activities such as skiing, horse-riding or swimming at the beach are to take place during unsupervised time in families, we ask our partner schools to ensure consent is gained from parents in the UK in advance of the visit.
9. Students must understand that consumption of alcohol, smoking and drugs are strictly prohibited and that the school's standard behaviour policy applies whilst we are abroad. If students breach this code of conduct then they risk being sent home at their parents' expense or parents may be asked to collect them from abroad.
10. Students are not under any circumstances allowed to purchase items abroad which are restricted in the UK, for example loud fireworks or bangers which are freely available in France but prohibited in the UK, any type of knife or other weapon, alcoholic drinks or cigarettes. If students are given alcohol by their host family to bring home as a gift for their parents this should be given to the Group Leader before our departure for the UK.

#### **Specific arrangements for 6<sup>th</sup> form students on the German Exchange**

1. Where 6<sup>th</sup> form students join the German Exchange, they do not take part in the full exchange. No German student will visit them in Poole, but they are offered the chance to accompany the main group on the visit to Germany.
2. Our German partner school is asked to find appropriate host families for our 6<sup>th</sup> form students, applying the same safeguarding procedures they use when finding hosts for the main exchange.
3. As there is no matching process, we rely entirely on our partner school to find an appropriate host student and family.
4. As 6<sup>th</sup> form participants have usually taken part in the exchange in the past, we will endeavour, should they request this, to place them with a former host family. Where this is not possible, the German teachers will find an appropriate alternative host.
5. 6<sup>th</sup> form students are asked to complete a shorter version of the matching form so that German host families are aware of basic details about our students before they host them.
6. We will gather name, address and telephone contact details for the German host family and share them with UK parents, and vice versa.
7. Clauses 6-12 and 14-23 of the "Organisation of Exchange visits" section and all clauses in the "Whilst St Edward's students are abroad" apply.
8. Whilst in Germany 6<sup>th</sup> form students are welcome to accompany the main group on trips where bookings allow but are encouraged to remain with their partners at school, attending lessons. This is to give them the greatest possible exposure to the language and life of students in Germany.
9. 6<sup>th</sup> form students will be asked whether they intend to join each trip after we have arrived in Germany and they are able to check with their host families.

10. Where students remain in school whilst the main group is on a trip, we will endeavour to ensure that one member of St Edward's staff will remain in Speyer itself in case of emergency, however, this will not always be the case.
11. 6<sup>th</sup> form students and their parents are particularly strongly encouraged to ensure that they have a working, charged mobile phone with them at all times when in Germany so that they can easily contact the Group Leader. It is the responsibility of their parents/carers to ensure the phone works abroad and has adequate credit. Parents should ensure that their son or daughter's mobile number is provided to organising staff in advance of the trip so that these can be issued to all staff for use in case of emergency.

## St Edward's School

### Policy for the running of Foreign Exchange Visits

Once you have read this policy document in full, please sign below to indicate that you fully understand the procedures adopted by St Edward's, agree to all clauses contained within this document, and on this basis, would like your child to be involved in the relevant exchange programme. For data protection reasons we also ask you to confirm that you are happy for your contact details to be shared with our partner school and the host family for your child. Please complete the relevant section below to confirm your consent.

Please detach this page from the rest of the form so that you retain full details of our policy and processes and return this page to the MFL Department.

If you have any questions about the content of this document or in general about the Exchange visit that your son or daughter is taking part in, please don't hesitate to contact the visit leader, the Subject Leader for MFL or a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team.

I confirm that I have read the document entitled "Policy for the running of Foreign Exchange Visits", understand the school's processes and agree to all clauses within. On this basis I consent for my child to take part in the Exchange.

Exchange visit to: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Exchange (dd/mm/yy – dd/mm/yy): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Sharing of personal information

For data protection reasons we need your consent to share your information. Please complete the information below, ticking to confirm that you are happy for your details to be shared with our partner school and your son or daughter's exchange partner's family.

Please tick this box to confirm that you consent for the contact details below, as well as those written on the Exchange Matching Form, to be shared with our partner school and the family of the foreign student.

Your name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_