

Appendix E

EXCHANGE VISITS

Appendix E to the Off-Site and Hazardous Activities recommendations and advice document

1.01 Exchange visits

The success of exchange visits depends on good relationships and communications with the partner establishment.

Establishment exchanges differ from other visits abroad in that participants will spend most of their time with host families and are, therefore, not under the direct supervision of establishment staff.

Host families will not be subject to English law.

Participants must be aware of the ground rules that have been agreed between the party leader and the host family. Many of the considerations, which apply to residential and day visits also, apply here. In addition, the party leader should ensure the following:

- a good personal knowledge of the host establishment and counterpart;
- satisfactory pairing arrangements. The partner establishment should inform the host families of any special medical or dietary needs of their guests;
- participants should be paired with children and young people of similar age and gender;
- matches should be appropriate;
- the head of establishment/OVC and supervising staff should retain a list of all the children involved and their family names and addresses;
- participants living with host families should have easy access to their supervising staff and any information necessary such as telephone numbers;
- parents/guardians, participants and the host establishment should be clear about the arrangements for collecting and distributing participants to families, and for transporting participants throughout the visit;
- **parents/guardians should be made aware that their children living with host families will not always be under direct staff supervision.**

1.02 Vetting host families

Group leaders need to be clear about procedures in the relevant country for vetting the suitability of host families including criminal background checks as far as these are possible.

If the host establishment does not have appropriate measures in place for carrying out checks to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the exchange the party leader should consider whether the visit should take place.