

Homestays - Where to start!

Like it or not, some of your students will be residing in a homestay environment in order to attend your school.

Perhaps you are reliant on homestays to increase your catchment, enabling students from further afield to attend your school. Or perhaps the homestays undermine your own boarding provision and create blurred lines of a duty of care. Whatever the reason, homestays need to be acknowledged and engaged with as part of the school's safeguarding responsibility of their students

Quick tips for examining the homestay issue in your community:

Know your numbers:

- How many of your day students do not live with a family member?
- Which homestays are known by your school?
- How many of your school students reside together in a homestay?

Identifying a homestay student:

- A sudden transfer from boarding to day
- Staggered, unreliable communication home
- Small groups of students, from different year groups, arriving or leaving school together
- Behavioural change in a student, perhaps more tired or secretive
- Using school facilities beyond what is normally allowed or usual (showers, meals)

Visiting and auditing a homestay

- Are the host adults certified or trained?
- Do you consider the facilities acceptable?
- Do the homestay students consider the facilities acceptable?
- Do students have adequate space, safety, supervision and privacy.
- Does the homestay have appropriate rules and regulations to protect the students from danger?
- Is the homestay willing to be in a threeway agreement between themselves, the school and the parents as to where responsibilities lie and basic expectations.

Training and Education Programs:

- Can you deliver parent information sessions regarding the issues surrounding homestays?
- Can you deliver training sessions for homestay hosts on basic safeguarding principles?
- Can you educate and empower your students to report issues regarding their living situations to the school?

How Encompass Safeguarding Can Help

Encompass provides expert safeguarding solutions for homestay environments, ensuring student safety and well-being. Our support includes:

- ✓ **Safeguarding Policies** – Development and implementation of robust policies covering vetting, codes of conduct, and reporting mechanisms.
- ✓ **Vetting & Inspections** – Working with you to develop a clear plan and process, along with highly focused training for anyone going out to complete homestay inspections to assess suitability and compliance.
- ✓ **Training & Education** – Tailored safeguarding training for homestay hosts, parents, and students on child protection and reporting procedures.
- ✓ **Ongoing Support** – Regular monitoring, communication, and support to promptly address concerns.

For more information, contact us at info@encompass-safeguarding.com