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SCHOOL ORGANISATION

The Head of School is responsible for the running and management of the School. The Head is responsible for educational compliance and policies overseen by the Board of Directors. Specific tasks may be taken up by mandate groups authorised by the Board of Directors and report to the Head or the Board for their work.

The Hosting Co-ordinator (Paul Pillai) is responsible for finding suitable Hosting Families and to implement and supervise all necessary boarding arrangements.

The Pastoral Care group, made up of the Head of School, Head of Boarding and the House Parent reviews recommendations and issues for improvement arising from the Ofsted Inspections and reports to the Board of Directors. The Pastoral Care Group also deals with difficulties and concerns but if a formal complaint is made this is dealt with by the Board of Directors.

REMIT OF BOARDING POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

These Policies and Guidelines apply to all Hosted Visiting pupils, irrespective of age, whose attendance exceeds one week.

HOSTING CO-ORDINATOR

The tasks of the Hosting Coordinator are to: -

1. Recruit new Host Families.
2. Inspect current Host Family homes.
3. Place Visiting Students with Host Families.
4. Advise and assist Host Families as to their responsibilities.
5. Liaise with Visiting Students,  parents and Host Families.
6. Ensure that all Visiting Students, parents of Visiting Students and Host Families receive and are aware of the relevant information regarding responsibilities, safeguarding, emergency and complaint procedures, personal records, etc.
7. Receive concerns and complaints from Visiting Students, their parents and Host Parents and dealing with them or passing them on, as necessary.
8. Initiate the DBS checks for relevant convictions on any new Host Families.

RECRUITING NEW HOST FAMILIES

The Hosting Coordinator approaches new Host Parents. The first step consists of an application by the prospective Host Parents followed by an interview at the Host family’s home to discuss biographical and professional aspects of the parents, family structure, and attendance at home etc. An outline of the boarding policies, legal requirements and responsibilities and expected care and support is given. The current facilities of the family home are surveyed.

If both parties decide to pursue the issue, the Hosting Coordinator supplies a copy of this policy and relevant documentation to the prospective Host Parents for implementation of the relevant facilities (accommodation, health & safety, insurance, telephone). Once the Host Family have been able to review the detailed policy and documentation, the Hosting Coordinator will ask the Responsible Adult to sign an agreement stating that they will support the guidelines that have been issued to them. The Hosting Coordinator will ensure the necessary statutory checks of the Host home are made and reviewed as appropriate.

ACCOMODATION, HEALTH & SAFETY, INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

To qualify as a Host Family Home, the following minimum requirements and standards must be available and continuously maintained. A Health and Safety Checklist is made available to the prospective Host Family and is used by the Hosting Coordinator during the home inspection.

Accommodation

1. Bedroom, adequately lit and heated, in certain cases this can be a twin bedroom (two separate beds), sharing only with one other visiting pupil of similar age and the same gender.
2. Bedroom not shared with any member of the Host Family.
3. Suitable bed, bedding &storage facilities for personal clothes and belongings.
4. Access to usual and adequate facilities for personal hygiene in private.
5. Adequate facilities for doing homework, i.e. desk or table and chair in bedroom or other  quiet room.
6. Use of telephone located in such a way as to enable the Visiting Student to make and receive  call in private - ‘at cost’ payment only for calls made.
7. In general, Visiting Students should be able to enjoy all facilities of the house within the limits  of respecting everyone’s need for privacy and quiet.
8. Access for the Visiting Student to enter and leave the lodgings at all reasonable  times, without being ‘locked out’ at any time they would be expected by the school  to be at their lodgings (e.g. after school).
9. Adequate private sitting and studying space for each pupil, either in a ‘bed-sitting’  room or in a room for pupils’ use separate from the host family’s own rooms.
10. A satisfactory level of general hygiene, decoration and cleanliness.
11. A responsible adult present in the home every night when the Student(s) are  sleeping there.
12. Adequate provision for laundering of pupils’ bedding and clothing, either by the ‘host  family’ or by the pupil.
13. A First Aid Box must be easily accessible

Fire

1. Smoke detectors in hallway and landings.
2. Fire extinguishers (powder) or fire blanket in the kitchen.
3. Regular testing of all fire detecting and fighting equipment.
4. Designation of and instruction about alternative fire exits.
5. Instruction of Visiting Students and other new members of the household on fire procedures and the handling of fire fighting equipment within the first days after arrival.
6. Chimneys should be regularly swept.
7. Window and door keys must be easily available in the event of a fire

Gas & Electrical

1. All gas installation in the home must be in good working order.
2. Installation and maintenance of main electric systems must be carried out by a qualified person.
3. Any signs of unsafe electrical equipment must be followed up and, if necessary, rectified (worn cables, loose connections, contact problems, overloaded sockets etc.)

Flooring

1. Any loose or protruding floor tiles are to be rectified.
2. Carpets (particularly stair carpets) must be well secured.

Hygiene in the Kitchen

1. Particular care must be taken concerning hygiene in the kitchen in order to minimise the risk of food poisoning.
2. Food must be appropriately stored and the fridge kept at the correct temperature.

Insurance

1. The school carries public liability insurance which extends to cover the risk related to the residential aspects of hosting families.
2. Hosting families need to ensure that they are covered for third party risks in connection with their Visiting Student and also check with their insurers that their contents policy also provides personal liability. Optional medical and/or accident insurance for the Visiting Student is the responsibility of the parent of the Visiting Student.

Emergencies

1. Emergency telephone numbers (999 for Fire and Ambulance, G.P., School, Host Parents’ home and work etc.) must be readily available by the phone.
2. In an emergency call the Hosting Coordinator’s telephone number on 0117 9339990 0r 07833 146576 or the Class Guardian responsible for the Visiting Student.

PLACEMENT OF VISITING STUDENTS

The Basis for the matching of a Visiting Student with a Host Family is:-

1. The Hosting Coordinator’s familiarity with type and life style of the approved Host Families.
2. Information on the child gathered from school reports and admission interviews. For  overseas students: information on the application forms is supplemented by telephone  conversations with parents and teachers as felt necessary.
3. The School requires all medically and socially relevant information concerning a  pupil in order to place the pupil with an appropriate family. This includes special dietary needs, allergies, medication, etc. Prospective Visiting Students and their parents are required to complete a form detailing these aspects before they can be accepted into the School’s care.

Host Families are approached by the Hosting Coordinator in view of placing a particular child. As much information on the Visiting Student and their family circumstances are provided. If the Host Family agrees, the Hosting Coordinator offers the placement to the pupil and their parents.

We request contact between the Visiting Student’s parents and the Host Family to be initiated, in writing and/or telephone or by email or video/ online chat, to establish a direct relationship.

The aim of a placement must always be good, constructive co-operation between parents, Host Family and Visiting Student.

Within the two weeks of a new placement the Hosting Coordinator will review the progress of the hosting situation and keep in regular touch with the Host Family, the Visiting Student and the Visiting Student’s parents.

Written records will be kept of all such reviews and significant issues that arise regarding the boarding placement.

INSPECTIONS

All Host Family homes are visited at least once a year by the Hosting Coordinator.

CARE PRACTICE

General

For some aspects of a Visiting Student’s living situation in the Host Family, only guidelines and minimum requirements can be laid down. Parents and Host Parents will often need to negotiate together specific practices appropriate for the Visiting Student and the Host Family.

It is expected that a Visiting Student be welcomed into the Host Family’s home as a member of the family. It is hoped that the Visiting Student reciprocates this by showing his/her respect for the Host Family’s way of life. The relationships which thus develop can prove to be mutually enriching.

It is essential that all Host Parents uphold and support the educational and social aims of the School (punctuality, homework, dress etc.). Visiting Students should not be allowed to attend parties without the permission of the Host Parents, who should at all times know the whereabouts of the children they have in their charge. The Host Parents are legally responsible for their Visiting Students. Therefore, adult supervision at the Hosting Home is essential

Parents of full-time Visiting Students are asked to make arrangements directly with the Host Parents if they wish their child to return home, or visit relatives for a weekend during the term. Visits to take children out for the day can also be arranged directly with the Host Parents and it is requested that the parents of the Visiting Student give adequate notice of their wish to visit their child. Should Visiting Students wish to visit other homes and stay overnight, the Host Parents must satisfy themselves about such arrangements and is held responsible for them. If the home concerned is not already known to the Host Parents, the parents of the Visiting Student should give their permission in writing to the Host parent in order for such a visit to take place.

Educational

Host Parents should contact their Visiting Student’s Guide over any pedagogical matters in the same way, as they would for their children. Host Parents are invited to the class Parent evenings for the children in their care. The Host Family needs to provide an environment which is conducive to fulfilling the demands of evening study.

Coming- in and bed times

Boarding families are expected to establish times for their Visiting Students to return home after school and for going to bed in the evening. It is imperative that the Host parent can contact their Visiting Student when they are away from both school and their Host home and for this reason we ask that the Visiting Student keeps their mobile phone switched on so that this contact can be maintained.

It is the responsibility of the Host parent to oversee the safe return of their Visiting Student to the Host Home on Friday evenings. This might involve the Host parent needing to oversee arrangements whereby another school parent collects the Visiting Student together with their own children or they arrange to collect their Visiting Student themselves at the appointed time. Alternatively, the Host parent may need to make arrangements for a taxi to collect their Visiting Student.

It is of utmost importance that the Host parent needs to see that the Visiting Student has safely returned to their Host home at the agreed time. Once again it needs to be stressed that the Visiting Student needs to have their mobile phone switched on at all times so that contact can be maintained between the Host parent and the Boarding Student. Should this rule be ignored by the Visiting Student sanctions will be placed which will involve restriction of their right to socialise outside the Host home in the evenings. The Hosting Coordinator is available for guidance and consultation and should always be contacted in cases were concerns about a student have arisen. (Please refer to Missing Student Protocol in Appendix A).

ICT and Media

Given the ethos of the school, it is expected that TV and video viewing and internet use is age appropriate and should be minimal/restricted for younger children. (Please refer to the School’s E Safety Policies.) The Host parent is expected to exercise responsible judgement, and consult with the Hosting Coordinator and other parents if concerns arise about this matter. Host Parents are expected to be aware of the time that our older students spend on the internet and vigilant as to its use although it is expected that students will need to use the internet to complete school projects and keeping in touch with friends and family.

Health and Welfare

The School is not responsible for general welfare such as check-ups, but the Host Parents are expected to display the same concern for the general health of the child as for any other member of the family. The Host Family should keep a record of any medication given to their Visiting Students and any such medication should be administered with the knowledge and permission of the parent of the Boarding Student. If a child needs emergency medical care they will be treated by the local doctors as a ‘temporary resident’.

When applying for a child to board the parent signs a loco parentis form authorising the Host Parents to act on their behalf. Naturally every effort should be made to contact the child’s parents before any decision is taken but, in cases where this is proving difficult, this authorisation allows emergency treatment to be carried out. At such times the Host parent is advised to contact either the Hosting Coordinator or the Guide so that they can take over the task of trying to make contact with the boarding child’s parents.

Children should visit the dentist during the holidays, and only emergency treatment should be dealt with during term time.

Smoking

Smoking is an unhealthy and socially undesirable habit and The Montessori Place is a non-smoking zone. It must be noted that our Host Parents do not allow smoking to take place in the Host homes.

Meals and Nutrition

It is expected that all evening meals are taken as a family with adequate adult supervision and companionship. It is recognised that on rare occasions it may be necessary for the Visiting Student to eat alone but these must be the exception.

A good standard of nutrition must at all times be offered in the Host homes and allowances made for a Visiting Student’s individual diet.

Privacy

The School recognises that there is a need for privacy for all pupils and students staying with Boarding Families. The Visiting Student should be allowed to have visitors to their room but before taking a visitor to their room the Visiting Student should inform the Host parent that they have a friend with them in the house.

The Visiting Student should not abuse the privacy afforded to them by their room and should comply with the rules outlined by the School and confirmed by the Host parent, i.e

1. No Alcohol to be consumed
2. No Smoking
3. No Use of Illegal Substances
4. No Sexually Intimate Relationships to take place

Although it is recognised that the Host parent should respect the privacy of the Visiting Student’s room, in certain circumstances, and in matters giving rise to concern, the Host parent has the right to enter the Visiting Student’s room. Other members of the Host Family do not have the right to enter a Visiting Student’s room uninvited.

All personal mail addressed to Visiting Student is their own property. It must not be opened by anybody except the Visiting Student. The same applies to mail addressed to members of the Host Family.

There must be a room in which the Visiting Student can meet with his family, relatives, or friends privately. In many instances the Visiting Student’s bedroom will be adequate. At times a room such as the family living room will be appropriate;

However, the Visiting Student will need to acknowledge that such a room is also part of the communal space and it is not the right of the Visiting Student to demand that space under any circumstance.

Relative & parental contact

It is essential that parents maintain regular contact with their child and that Host Parents encourage such contacts. This is particularly important for overseas students.

It is expected that Visiting Students receive a number of phone calls during a term from parents, relatives and friends. The School requests that families and friends do not ring the Visiting Students on the landline between 9.30pm and 9am. This is out of consideration for the rest of the family. Very frequent calls can be disruptive. Naturally in the case of an emergency these guidelines do not apply.

Phone calls made by the Visiting Student from the Host Family’s landline are to be negotiated between the Visiting Student and the Host parent and the cost of such calls are the responsibility of the Visiting Student. Calls by the Visiting Student exceeding twenty minutes are discouraged in order to limit the lengthy blocking of the Host Family’s landline.

Religious Observance

The School upholds the right of all children to practise and observe their religious beliefs. If there are any serious issues arising out of a pupil’s religious practices, or beliefs, and the general ethos of the School, this question will be taken up by the Pastoral Care Group and if necessary referred to the Board of Directors.

The Host Family must ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to allow the observance of their Visiting Student’s religion. Host Parents will be required to complete training on ‘The Prevent Duty’.

Sanctions and Discipline

The Host Family must make all efforts to share an attitude of co-operation and goodwill so that difficult behaviour and the imposition of punishment do not arise. This means that the Visiting Student is clear from the start that s/he is joining a family home with its routines, mealtime rhythms and daily duties. The Host Family needs to display an attitude of openness and flexibility to allow for necessary adjustments.

The following disciplinary measures are not permitted.

1. Any form of corporal punishment.
2. Any deprivation of food and drink
3. Restriction of contact with parents or adults with parental responsibility.  The Visiting Student must be aware that entertaining friends in the Host Family’s homes is a privilege and not a right. The same is true for a Visiting Student’s access to friends’ homes. Restricting access to friends as a disciplinary measure may at times be appropriate.

Disciplinary guidance by the responsible Host Parents is to be exercised with the co-operation of the Visiting Student’s parents and, if appropriate, with their Guide.

Bullying

Although the school tries at all times to provide a warm, caring environment for its pupils, especially if they are boarding, it is inevitable that there are occasions when cases of bullying occur. Should the Host parent become aware that their Visiting Student is experiencing any incidents of bullying they should immediately contact the Guide, Hosting Coordinator, or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Rob Gueterbock).

All incidents of bullying are looked at and worked on under the guidance of teachers who have special training in this field. (Please refer to Anti bullying policy).

Out of School activities

Such activities are to be encouraged inasmuch as they are in tune with the general ethos of the school, in accord with any guidance given by the parents and do not create a conflict with required homework (see bedtimes & coming-in times). Should the Host Parents have difficulties or questions in this area, they should consult with the Hosting Coordinator and/or the parents.

Musical instruments and music lessons

Should the Visiting Student bring his own instrument then the parents are responsible for its insurance. Practice times can be arranged either in school or at the discretion of the Host Parents.

Travel arrangements

Travel arrangements are the responsibility of the Visiting Student’s own parents. However, the School reserves the right to check the suitability of these arrangements. When they can, the Host Family will arrange to undertake the transport of their Visiting Students to and from local stations. Visiting Students will be financially responsible for their own transport to and from school. The host family discuss this with the student and inform the parents of any fares that need to be paid.

Holidays and Half-terms

During the whole of the main holiday periods a pupil becomes the responsibility of her/his family once again. At such times Host Parents must be advised in advance when a child is going to stay elsewhere than with his or her own family. During the Half term breaks, the Host Family will usually undertake the care of their Visiting Student subject to alternative arrangements and agreement made with the students’ parents. If the Host Family takes the Visiting Student away during the holiday break, the Visiting students family may be asked to make a financial contribution to the Host Family costs.

Exeat Arrangements

The parents of the Visiting Student need to notify the Host parent of any plans made for an Exeat Weekend. Should the parents of the Visiting Student live abroad their permission needs to be given in writing before their child can visit a home that is not known to the Host parent.

Should a Visiting Student wish to stay overnight with school friends at the weekend the Host parent needs to make contact with the parents of the home where the Visiting Student is planning to stay in order to confirm these arrangements. No Visiting Student should stay overnight with friends without a consultation taking place between the Host parent and the home where the Visiting Student is planning to stay.

Pocket Money

Personal arrangement should be made with parents as to the amount of pocket money allowed. If there is any doubt, advice could be given by the Hosting Coordinator.

RECORDS

Personal Records on Boarding Student

In general, Visiting Students and their parents have the right of access to any records that are kept relating to them. If a report has been received in confidence, then the written permission of the author is required before release.

The School keeps the following records:

1. Details on Visiting Student’s home family (family constellation, siblings, parents’ work, religious persuasion, etc.)
2. Medical and dietary records provided by parents.
3. Records on Visiting Students’ interests and hobbies.
4. Copies of previous and current school reports.
5. Notes on reviews with the Visiting Student.

Personal Records on the Visiting Student kept by the Host Parents

1. Details of the Visiting Student’s family address and contact numbers
2. Copies of the Medical and dietary records provided to the school by the Visiting Student’s  parents
3. Notes of Visiting Student’s interests and hobbies
4. A record of the Visiting Student’s general physical and emotional wellbeing
5. Details of any concerns that may arise in connection with the Visiting Student and how  those concerns are dealt with

Records on the Boarding Families

1. The Hosting Coordinator keeps records on the Host Family
2. Home Details of students who have stayed with the Host Family over the years
3. Any points of concern that may have arisen in connection with a boarding student.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Fees

Term-time weekend boarding is paid for by the school at a pre-agreed rate per night.

Notice

The School cannot guarantee a continuous supply of Visiting Students to a school family, nor can it devise a system of a term’s notice for a Visiting Student who leaves at short notice as such claims cannot generally be legally enforced.

Tax

Please check the current Inland Revenue policy allowing an amount of money that can be received tax-free to cover the cost of having a Visiting Student in your home. Please note that this amount is over and above an individual’s Personal Allowance. Anything above that amount must be declared for income tax purposes. Proper tax accounting is the responsibility of the Host Family.

Expenses

Host Parents are financially responsible for heating, meals, lighting and laundry. The Visiting Student’s parents are responsible for expenses such as bus fares, hair cut, medication, expenses through medical and dental treatment, dry cleaning, personal toiletries and phone calls made by the student from their Host home. Extra costs through special diets requested and agreed between parents and Host Parents will also be the parents’ responsibility.

WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICES

Students visiting The Montessori Place who are full-time pupils at the school, and under the age of 16 years old, come under the care of the Wealden District Council. Our Hosting Coordinator liaises with the Children’s & Young People’s Services Team to ensure that all standards of care for our Visiting Students are in place and maintained at all times. A member of Children’s & Young People’s Services Team will contact the host homes of all students under 16 years old, may meet members of the Host Family and the Visiting Student, and may maintain contact with the Visiting Student until they reach the age of 16.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR VISITING STUDENTS

Concerns and complaints should be made in the first instance to the Host Parents. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, any pupils may bring their concern/complaint to the Hosting Coordinator, their Guide, the House Parent, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or the Headteacher.

INDEPENDENT LISTENER

An ‘Independent Listener’ is appointed to act as an independent person outside the main school structure and is available to be contacted by anyone who may have either complaints or concerns they would like to share. Details of how to contact our Independent Listener are provided to all Host students and parents and are available from the school office/ Hosting Coordinator.

All concerns or complaints relating to the welfare of Visiting Students will be fed back to the Hosting Coordinator. Questions that are not resolved at this point should be referred to The Pastoral Care Group in order to bring about a speedy conclusion. If the area of concern or complaint is in need of urgent resolution, one member of the Pastoral Care Group may be chosen to act on behalf of the Group in order to bring a speedy conclusion.

Should any complaint include a safeguarding concern, the school Safeguarding Lead, or another member of the Safeguarding team should be contacted immediately through the School Office.

Appendices/ References

Missing Hosted Pupil Procedure

See also

* + Anti-Bullying Policy
  + First Aid Policy
  + Child Protection Policy
  + Behaviour & Discipline Policy
  + Whistleblowing policy
  + Complaints Policy
  + E -Safety Policy

Appendix A: Missing hosted visiting student

1. As soon as it is noticed that a Visiting Student is missing, the responsible adult makes enquiries to locate the young person. This should include a search of the premises and the immediate vicinity.
2. In an indoor venue, the responsible adult would contact the venue’s security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
3. In all other situations, the responsible adult would contact the Guide on their mobile phone (Paul Pillai, 07931 390 455), or the Head of School (Rob Gueterbock, 07713 167 148) to inform them of the missing child. Details should be provided such as what time the young person was expected, what he/she was last wearing, where they were going to or coming from, medical updates etc.
4. If there is no result within 30 minutes the responsible adult should contact the police and report the child as missing.
5. They then inform the child’s parents.
6. They then inform the Head of School that they have done these two things (police, parents).
7. They continue to support the ongoing search and investigation until the missing student is found.
8. They participate in a review of the incident.

Appendix B - Checklist for Host Family Visit and Inspection

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Y/N |
| Accommodation |  |
| 1. Bedroom, adequately lit and heated, in certain cases this can be a twin bedroom (two separate beds), sharing only with one other visiting pupil of similar age and the same gender. |  |
| 1. Bedroom not shared with any member of the Host Family. |  |
| 1. Suitable bed, bedding &storage facilities for personal clothes and belongings. |  |
| 1. Access to usual and adequate facilities for personal hygiene in private. |  |
| 1. Adequate facilities for doing homework, i.e. desk or table and chair in bedroom or other  quiet room. |  |
| 1. Use of telephone located in such a way as to enable the Visiting Student to make and receive  call in private - ‘at cost’ payment only for calls made. |  |
| 1. Able to enjoy all facilities of the house within the limits  of respecting everyone’s need for privacy and quiet. |  |
| 1. Access for the Visiting Student to enter and leave the lodgings at all reasonable  times, without being ‘locked out’ at any time they would be expected by the school  to be at their lodgings (e.g. after school). |  |
| 1. Adequate private sitting and studying space for each pupil, either in a ‘bed-sitting’  room or in a room for pupils’ use separate from the host family’s own rooms. |  |
| 1. A satisfactory level of general hygiene, decoration and cleanliness. |  |
| 1. A responsible adult present in the home every night when the Student(s) are  sleeping there. |  |
| 1. Adequate provision for laundering of pupils’ bedding and clothing, either by the ‘host  family’ or by the pupil. |  |
| 1. A First Aid Box must be easily accessible |  |
|  |  |
| Fire |  |
| 1. Smoke detectors in hallway and landings. |  |
| 1. Fire extinguishers (powder) or fire blanket in the kitchen. |  |
| 1. Regular testing of all fire detecting and fighting equipment. |  |
| 1. Designation of and instruction about alternative fire exits. |  |
| 1. Instruction of Visiting Students and other new members of the household on fire procedures and the handling of fire fighting equipment within the first days after arrival. |  |
| 1. Chimneys should be regularly swept. |  |
| 1. Window and door keys must be easily available in the event of a fire |  |
|  |  |
| Hygiene in the Kitchen |  |
| 1. Are there good practices of hygiene in the kitchen in order to minimise the risk of food poisoning? |  |
| 1. Is food stored well, and the fridge kept at the correct temperature? |  |
|  |  |
| Flooring |  |
| 1. Are there any loose or protruding floor tiles? |  |
| 1. Are the carpets (particularly stair carpets) well secured? |  |
|  |  |
| Gas & Electrical |  |
| 1. Are all gas installation in the home in good working order? |  |
| 1. Has installation and maintenance of main electric systems been carried out by a qualified person? |  |
| 1. Are there any signs of unsafe electrical equipment (worn cables, loose connections, contact problems, overloaded sockets etc.)? |  |
|  |  |
| Insurance |  |
| 1. Is the Host Family covered for third party risks in connection with their Visiting Student? |  |
| 1. Does their contents policy also provide personal liability? |  |