

Applies to: All staff, homestays, volunteers, and contractors involved in the care of students.

1. Policy Statement

This organisation is committed to ensuring the welfare, safety, and protection of all international students placed in homestay accommodation. In accordance with the AEGIS Quality Standards, we take all reasonable steps to ensure that homestay environments are safe, compliant with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) expectations, and suitable for young people.

We ensure that:

- Students live in environments that are safe, well-maintained, and appropriate.
- Homestays understand and meet their responsibilities regarding safety.
- All required checks and visits are recorded, monitored, and reviewed regularly.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy covers:

- All homestay properties used by the organisation.
- Any accommodation used for emergency or short-notice placements, including temporary or alternative homestays.
- All students under our guardianship.
- All staff responsible for conducting property checks and visits.
- The procedures for assessing, monitoring, and recording homestay safety.

3. Legal & Regulatory Framework

This policy is guided by:

- AEGIS Quality Standards.
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE) principles for home safety assessment, as required by AEGIS.
- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Regulations.
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Guardianship Organisation

We must:

- Conduct an **initial in-person assessment visit before placing any student** in a homestay.
- Conduct **at least one in-person annual visit** for every active homestay.
- Maintain detailed written records of all checks, inspections, and safety evidence.
- Ensure all homestays meet the minimum safety standards outlined in this policy.
- Maintain an **Accident Book** for recording any incidents involving students, homestays, staff, or volunteers.

4.2 Homestays

Homestay families must:

- Provide a safe and suitable home environment.
- Cooperate fully with inspections and requests for documentation.
- Report any safety concerns or significant changes immediately.
- Ensure students understand fire safety, evacuation routes, and general household rules.

4.3 Staff Conducting Checks

Staff responsible for visits must:

- Follow the organisation's inspection checklist.
- Note any hazards, concerns, or non-compliance.
- Ensure all follow-up actions are completed and recorded.

5. Initial Homestay Health & Safety Assessment (Pre-Placement)

Before a student is placed in a homestay, we conduct a full in-person assessment that includes:

Safety Items Required by AEGIS

During the visit, we verify:

- **Smoke alarms** on every storey.
- **Carbon monoxide alarm** in rooms with fuel-burning appliances.
- **Annual Gas Safe certificate**, provided by a Gas Safe registered engineer.
- Visual check that **electrical systems are safe** and not overloaded.
- **Evacuation routes** explained to the student and keys accessible if needed.
- If there are fireplaces, a **fire guard** must be in place.
- **Matches/lighters** stored safely.
- A **basic first aid kit** is available.
- **Safe storage** of medication, alcohol, and hazardous materials.
- Appropriate **food hygiene awareness**.

Property Suitability

We check:

- Bedroom suitability and privacy.
- Cleanliness and general condition.
- Adequate heating, lighting, hot water.
- Study space.
- Bathroom facilities with locks.
- No more than three students hosted at any time unless exceptional circumstances apply.

The pre placement visit form is stored in the Homestay File.

6. Annual Homestay Health & Safety Review

At least once every 12 months:

- A full in-person visit is carried out.
- All safety items listed above are re-checked.
- The homestay is asked about any changes since the last visit.
- Updated gas certificates and insurance evidence are collected where applicable.
- A written record of the visit is stored in the Homestay File.

7. Risk Assessment

We undertake and record:

- A simple risk assessment during every visit, as required by AEGIS.
This includes hazards such as:
 - Slip/trip hazards
 - Unsafe storage
 - Pets
 - Household chemicals
 - Potential fire risks
 - Environmental concerns

Any risks identified must be remedied before a student can be placed or continue staying in the homestay.

8. Accident and Incident Reporting

AEGIS requires that guardianship organisations keep an **Accident Book**.

All incidents involving:

- students,
- staff,
- homestays, or
- volunteers

Must be recorded immediately.

This includes injuries, near-misses, medical emergencies, or behavioural incidents.

Actions taken must also be logged and shared with relevant parties (parents, schools, safeguarding leads).

9. Information, Training & Guidance for Homestays

Homestays receive:

A Homestay Handbook.

- Annual safeguarding updates and training provided by the organisation.
- Clear safety expectations (e.g., fire safety, supervision rules, safe household practices).

Homestays must be aware of:

- How to support students in emergencies.
- How to contact the organisation 24/7.
- What to do if safety concerns arise.

10. Monitoring & Compliance

We ensure compliance by:

- Keeping detailed Homestay Files.
- Maintaining a master compliance register.
- Reviewing this policy annually.
- Ensuring all visit forms, gas certificates, DBS checks, and safety evidence are up to date.

11. Review of the Policy

This policy is reviewed:

- **Annually**, and
- Immediately if AEGIS standards or legislation change.