



Exchange Visit Guidelines for Grassroots Football

These Guidelines need to be read in conjunction with The FA's Travel, Trips and Tournaments guideline downloadable from the 'Raising Awareness - Best Practice Downloads Section' of The FA.com Safeguarding area [to access these click here](#) or speak to your CFA Welfare Officer.

Introduction

The FA recognises that a cost-effective way to take children abroad on football activities is to have an 'exchange visit' making use of 'host families'. Sometimes these visits are reciprocal – with both the children's families hosting each other's children. Exchange visits are sometimes organised within the UK. This guidance addresses both hosting in the UK and abroad.

NB - Guidance can only ever be general and every host visit will have its own challenges and rewards.

A successful trip is largely due to good preparation. Most hosting arrangements are historical because the club has a long term link with a club at home or abroad. Sometimes links might be through town twinning arrangements. Whatever the link use the checklist and risk assessment form provided to help you plan and ensure appropriate 'Safeguards' are in place.

It may be a good idea if on the first visit abroad the children stay in a hotel or hostel under direct supervision of the Club and hosting can be developed following this. This gives the English Club time to understand the community and its culture.

Selecting a host family

The trip organiser should ask how the other Club chooses host families – for example:

- Are they all well-known to the Club?
- Do they have children of their own in the house?
- Are they known as a child friendly family?

The most important safeguards are to make sure that children and host families share an understanding of acceptable behaviour and that if children are worried at any time they know how to contact the trip organiser.

UK Exchanges

It will be easier to have shared understanding of expectation with other Clubs in the UK. Trip organisers are advised to:

Ensure the hosting Club is affiliated to The FA and knows about and signs up to The FA's Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures

Ask the Club Welfare Officer if they are aware of and adhere to The FA's 'Exchange Visits' guidance

Request that adults hosting children attend The FA's Safeguarding Children workshop (or as a minimum attend a specific orientation evening organized by the Club)

English Clubs should only use families to host that they know and trust - ideally parents of children currently in the Club. It is not advised to use families that are not known to the club.

If a family is being asked to host children or young people with disabilities or other particular needs it's recommended that the adult hosts have an FA accepted CRC. If the exchange is to Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, The FA can still run FA CRC Disclosures on the host families but it may be that the checks will have already be done by the relevant national FA. In the event of cross-border visits within the UK, please contact your CFAWO who will assist with enquiries.

Planning and Preparation

It is important to remember that food, dress codes and behaviour vary from family to family both in the UK and abroad. A 'Checklist' has been developed to ensure the Club, parents/carers, players and the hosting families [whether at home or abroad] are clear about what is expected of them.

Part of the benefit of the exchange comes from seeing and experiencing the differences but there is still a need for shared expectations about behaviour and welfare. Trip organisers need to agree these basic guidelines with the host Club and ask host families to sign up to a simple Code of Conduct whilst they are hosting the child. Codes of Conduct should also be signed by the players and their parents/carers – it's essential everyone understands what is expected in terms of behaviour. It is very important that children are given clear information about what to expect from the trip and the experience of living with another family.

NB – The 'Checklist' is not exhaustive it is intended as a guide and Clubs can add to it according to the needs of the children they are taking. If the host family cannot meet the child's needs then an alternative family or a different form of accommodation needs to be identified. If players are not willing to sign their Code of Conduct then they should not be allowed to participate.