



Five Simple Safety Tips for Host Families

Inviting an international student into your home is an exciting experience that thousands of host families enjoy every year. It is a time to share your culture, learn about someone else's, and develop strong bonds along the way. As you begin this challenging adventure, don't forget that your newest family member comes from a very different background. What you may consider 'obvious' might be unfamiliar and foreign to him/her. By keeping these Five Simple Safety Tips in mind, you'll be sure to create a happy and safe environment for your host child, both in your home and community.

1. MAKE SURE THAT YOUR EXCHANGE STUDENT LEARNS YOUR TELEPHONE NUMBER AND ADDRESS as soon as possible. Remind him/her that this information should not be given out to anyone they don't know, including and especially over the internet. They should always check with you first.

2. HELP YOUR STUDENT TO GET TO KNOW THE SURROUNDING AREA.

Take your exchange student on a walking tour of your neighborhood. Help him/her learn the surrounding streets and main roads by name and landmark. Determine some public places where he/she can go for assistance if he/she is ever lost or in trouble.

When you get home make a map with your student of the routes to school, the store, and other locations that they may visit.

3. KNOW YOUR STUDENT'S FRIENDS. Once your student has made new friends at school or in the neighborhood, remind him/her to check with you first before going out with somebody new. This includes accepting rides or visiting other homes.

4. PLACE REASONABLE LIMITS ON YOUR PHYSICAL INTERACTION.

Remember that many exchange students come from cultures in which affection is not openly displayed. Respect your student's wishes regarding physical contact, including his or her right to reject displays of affection when it makes them uncomfortable.

5. ASSURE YOUR STUDENT IS AWARE OF THEIR SUPPORT SYSTEMS.

Reassure your exchange student that there is a strong network of support in place for him or her, including yourself and the local coordinator.