Devon Educational Holidays acknowledges that the majority of host families providing care for our students act with professionalism and prioritize the welfare of the student. Nonetheless, interactions between host families and students may occasionally lead to misunderstandings or tensions.

To ensure that such situations are managed effectively and in the best interests of both students and host families, the following guidance adheres to the principles outlined in the Safer Recruitment ‘Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings’ (October 2015). This guidance sets forth expectations regarding professional behaviour, delineates acceptable and unacceptable conduct, and clarifies safe practices as well as behaviours to avoid.

In circumstances not explicitly covered by this guidance, host family members are expected to exercise professional judgement. Any concerns should promptly be reported to a member of staff either via telephone during office hours (07513871084) or on the designated emergency line outside of these hours (07513871084).

To support host families in fostering a safe and secure environment for students, the following best practices must be observed:

• Host family members should consistently demonstrate clear and unambiguous professional conduct.

• Physical punishment or restraint is strictly prohibited unless necessary to prevent harm to the student or others; any such incident must be reported immediately.

• Interactions with students should remain transparent and equitable, with all students treated respectfully and fairly regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief, or sexual orientation.

• The giving of gifts to students should be limited; gifts of significant value and frequent gift-giving are discouraged to prevent misinterpretation.

• Should a host family notice a student forming inappropriate attachments, it is imperative to report any indications or incidents to staff and maintain professional boundaries, implementing and monitoring an action plan that addresses the matter sensitively and respectfully.

• Host families are advised not to share personal contact information with students for non-hosting purposes. If unsolicited contact occurs, host families must refrain from responding and notify their line manager.

• While host families play a supportive role, they are not a substitute for parental physical comfort. Demonstrations of affection should be approached with caution and avoided when possible—verbal reassurance and attentive listening are recommended, especially in cases of homesickness.

• Physical contact, when unavoidable (for example, due to first aid or a distressed young child), should occur only with consent and should always be reported and recorded when it could give rise to concern.

• Any form of sexual behaviour or grooming towards a student by a member of a host family is strictly prohibited and may result in criminal proceedings.

• Photography, video, or images of students require explicit student (and where applicable, parental) consent and must align with the purpose of the visit or trip. Images must not be shared online without consent, and under no circumstances should images be taken without the student’s knowledge. All images should be justifiable and not created during one-to-one situations.

• Host families employing CCTV must comply with the ICO CCTV Code of Practice, ensuring recordings are justified, minimally intrusive, and appropriately protected in accordance with data protection principles, with up-to-date documentation maintained.

• Every precaution must be taken to prevent students from being exposed to inappropriate or indecent imagery. Discovery of such material should be immediately reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

• One-to-one situations in enclosed rooms should be avoided; visual access or open doors are recommended wherever possible.

In situations requiring medical assistance or the administration of medicines, host families must inform staff at once via the provided contact numbers. In emergencies, dial 999 for immediate assistance.

The Devon Educational Holidays Whistle Blowing Policy offers host families guidance regarding procedures for reporting malpractice or safety concerns relating to children. Additionally, the organisation’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies provide comprehensive instructions for documenting and addressing all concerns and incidents appropriately.