



## **HOST FAMILY HANDBOOK**

**2018-2019**

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## Message from Chris Michelmore, Director



### Welcome to Quest Guardians!

Founded by my mother in 1993, **Quest** is a family-run business, offering parents from overseas a professional guardianship service for their children when they are away from their home, studying at boarding schools in the UK. The most important responsibility we have is the accommodation of the students in safe, caring and responsible host families when the school closes for short holidays, such as Half Terms and “Exeat” weekends, or at other times when a student has to stay away from school for any reason.

I have run **Quest** for the last 15 years. I grew up in a home surrounded by international students, worked in a language school and also attended an English boarding school between the ages of 8 to 18. I can understand, therefore, the importance of offering a professional guardianship service to our international students, and our reputation relies very heavily on the support we receive from and care offered by our host families.

**Quest** is a member of  (the Association for the Education and Guardianship of International Students), and as such we strive to offer and maintain the very best standards of host family care for our students. This handbook gives you the information needed to meet and exceed the AEGIS standards, and importantly contains the main guidelines and policies we adopt to help you in the care of your student guest.



**Chris Michelmore**  
MD, Quest Guardians Ltd

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# 1. Introduction to Hosting Students from Overseas

**Quest** has a network of Host Families with whom we place our students when schools close for Half Terms and fixed “Exeat” weekends. These guidelines have been produced for these Host Families, rather than “Homestay Families” where the student stays as a day pupil for the whole term time, going in to school daily.

**We try to match the family to the student in terms of interests, location and outlook on life. It is our aim to arrange for our students to return to the same host family for all their stays**, as this gives students a more consistent “home from home” experience, but changes can occur, especially where requested by the parent, student or the host family.

**Frequently, more than one student of a similar age will be staying with a host family at any one time (but please note, our guideline is for no more than three students in a household).** In our experience, students prefer this as it offers them additional company and friendship during what is essentially a holiday period. Some students form long-term friendships with other students and indeed with the Host Family themselves. Students are expected to respect their host family’s home and way of life in return for being accepted as a family member. Some hosts will apply house rules to help in the understanding of routines.

## Cultural and Religious Differences

The role of host family and the relationship with students can be a delicate one on both sides with a responsibility on both parties to understand and respect some cultural or religious differences. Patience and understanding may be required when there are **language barriers**, and although we love our **pets**, this is often not shared by people from China and the Far East. Sometimes the students have had very little contact with any dogs or cats and consider them unhygienic and frightening. Please be sensitive to this, particularly when the student first arrives. They often leave loving pets as much as we do!

## Arrival

**When your student first arrives at your home it is important to be welcoming, show them your home, their room, and explain any routines you may have, such as wearing outdoor shoes, when your family needs the shower, meal times and when you expect the household to be asleep! But be sensitive, the student is also looking to relax away from school, and staying in an unfamiliar environment can be an anxious time for a young person whose family lives many thousands of miles away.**

# 2. Your responsibilities as a Host Family

Who is the student’s guardian?

**During the times that you are hosting, your responsibilities are to protect, care for and provide full board and lodging for your student on a day-to-day basis. All the while, the overall guardianship responsibility remains with Quest, whom you should contact whenever a situation arises in which you are uncertain as to the appropriate action to take. Untoward occurrences, such as hospitalisation, unexplained student absences or other situations affecting student safety, should be reported to Quest immediately.**

**Specifically, should a student we have booked in with you not arrive within 2 hours of when you are expecting them, it is your duty to advise us of this matter and we will follow up immediately** (see Missing Persons Policy).

### **What school contact is required?**

You will not normally be expected to instigate contact with a student's school or to attend school occasions, which is a role undertaken by the **Quest** Coordinator. If there was a need for the Host to contact or visit the school, it would be at the instigation of **Quest** and with the agreement of the Host.

### **What other safety measures are required before I can accept students into my home?**

**The Quest Guardians Regional Coordinator will visit you each year and will ask to see each room in the house. In addition, if in the intervening period there is any substantial change in the circumstances or make up of your household, it is your responsibility to let us know.**

**It is imperative that insurance cover is maintained** (Household Buildings and Contents, and fully comprehensive motor insurance) at all times whilst you are hosting **Quest** students, and you will be asked to show us the relevant documents.

**It is also essential that your gas boiler and any other gas installations are serviced annually and that you provide Quest with a copy of the Gas Safety Certificate by post or email.**

**It is your responsibility to forward on to Quest office a copy (scanned, photographic or printed) of all DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) certificates as soon as you receive them from the issuing bureau since Quest will not receive a copy from the DBS bureau.**

## **3. What a student can expect from you**

### **Bedroom**

Each student should have his or her own room or share with someone of a similar age and of the same sex. Sensible precautions should be taken if hosting students of the opposite sex, such as separating with rooms on different floors. **Quest must be made aware of all students' sleeping arrangements in your house, so please confirm these to us, particularly if there are students from alternative organisations.**



**guidelines** suggest a maximum total of three students in a Host Family. It is essential that we are made aware of other guests or students staying in your home at all times. Hosts should not have lodgers or be running a B&B whilst providing care for school aged students.

The students need to have:

- ✓ A comfortable bed with clean, warm bedding and a bath towel
- ✓ Somewhere to put their belongings
- ✓ A table/desk and chair (with lighting) for working, ideally in their room
- ✓ Bedding for longer term students should be changed weekly

### **Bathroom**

In an ideal world, students would have their own bathroom for privacy and safeguarding. However, this is often not possible, so simple common sense rules should be introduced for there to be adequate privacy for students and your own family.

Most students are used to taking at least daily showers in preference to a bath. Discuss suitable times for them to use the bathroom, and make sure your student knows how to use the shower

(e.g. shower curtain!), toilet facilities, and where to put any rubbish. If appropriate, make sure you explain the arrangements for disposing of sanitary items.

It might be prudent to suggest a maximum time for a shower – say, 5-7 minutes - as at home they are often used to unlimited hot water. Ask them to leave the bathroom clean and tidy. It is occasionally necessary to discreetly monitor the student's personal hygiene in order to maintain good health; so daily showers, regular teeth cleaning, hair washing and regular changing of clothes should be encouraged.

## Meals

Talk to your student about mealtimes, as **food is probably the BIGGEST area of comment** by students! Although they may not express it, good home-cooked food is hugely appreciated! Food in schools nowadays is of a good standard, plentiful, varied and nutritionally balanced. Host families will have been informed of any food allergies and in some cases, of dislikes. This means hosts can pre-plan food menus, which in turn allows some purchasing of food in advance. We also suggest you speak to the student on their arrival about mealtimes and the types of food that they particularly enjoy. We can supply some menu suggestions if this would help so please don't be afraid to ask.

Students are paying for **full board accommodation**, and as a guide will expect the following:

**Breakfast** Teenage students are often ready for a lie-in in the mornings and therefore a late breakfast is common. At school, a cooked breakfast will be available daily, so the offer by a host of an egg and/or bacon (perhaps a bacon sandwich) and/or baked beans is usually appreciated. As an alternative, offer some combination of fruit, yogurt, cereal, toast and muffins.

**Lunch** in school is the main meal of the day. That said, for most UK households lunch is a lighter meal. A compromise between these two is for a lunch such as jacket potato with cheese; pizza with salad; pasty; BLT; pasta with sauce; soup and a sandwich or hotdogs. When a sandwich is offered, it should have plenty of filling with perhaps salad and/or crisps on the side. Fruit, cake or something sweet should also be available.

**Dinner** should ideally be taken with the family, and consist of at least two courses e.g. a main course of chicken, fish or red meat with vegetables and a dessert/fruit. Chinese students eat less red meat but rice, noodles and pasta are popular. Popular main courses would include roast chicken with potato and vegetables; pork cooked with a jar of Chinese-style sauce with rice or pasta; stir fry of vegetables with noodles and prawns; lasagne with salad and garlic bread; fish fillets with chips and peas, or bangers and mash with vegetables. Dessert might be a fruit pie or crumble with custard; fresh fruit salad with ice cream; choc ices; chocolate cake, or jam doughnuts with custard. Most students enjoy a BBQ! Ask what they would like, and they may even like to cook a meal!

**Snacks** Students should not expect to help themselves and 'snack' in between meals, but encourage them to ask. If hungry (teenagers are often growing fast!) something like biscuit or cake or some fruit should be available. A hot drink and a biscuit before going to bed would be appreciated, especially if the dinner is early.

Sometimes, the student's **table manners** cause a little concern. Remember, for some of them, they have only just become accustomed to using a knife and fork (they may have only used chopsticks before). Please respect this difficulty and we would also ask you to appreciate that slurping food, talking with mouth full etc., is broadly common and acceptable in China, but at the same time try to offer some sensitive guidance if you feel it is necessary. The Student Guidelines ask them not to leave the table until everyone has finished and to carry the plates out to the kitchen at the end of the meal.



Students now expect **wireless access to the internet**, preferably unlimited. All schools provide this but do limit use and monitor it carefully. The internet is used for academic work and also to stay in touch with their family and friends during the holiday period. It is impossible to place students in host families who have no internet access. Students are told not to download large files, such as films, games and music, as this can lead to problems with your normal access but it is very difficult to monitor this. **Host families should feel free to switch off the internet if it is being used excessively or at unsociable hours.** (Please see the Computer & Internet Safe Policy Statement at the back of this handbook.)

**Students should not need to use your telephone landline, although some have pre-payment cards to ring home to their parents. They should always ask for your permission.**

### Laundry

Particularly over a half-term, students will have some laundry, please let your student know where they can put their laundry and the days that you use your machine. Culturally, female students from China and Hong Kong expect to hand-wash their underwear daily so please advise them where it is acceptable to place the items to dry.

## 4. What you can expect from the student

Students have **guidelines** on staying in a Host Family, and although they are paying guests and don't have particular duties or chores, they are expected to be polite and courteous, and you should give them friendly guidance on this if required. It is likely that your student will have a lot of school work and possibly revision to do during the holiday period, so they may spend more time in their bedroom than you would expect.

Please also be aware of cultural and background differences; most Chinese live in modern apartments in big cities, sometimes with maids; they normally prefer to play computer games rather than walk in the countryside!

### Times to be Home

**Both students and host families should exchange mobile telephone numbers** so that they are known to all parties, as well as landline and any other useful contact numbers. **To comply with regulations, the host should know where the student is at all times and to be able to contact him/her if required.** Return times should also be agreed and respected by the student. The student should keep their mobile phone switched on, charged, and to notify you if there is a change of plan. Overnight stays are forbidden (see below).

### Quest has guidelines on times to be home as below.

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Aged under 14 | <i>Must be accompanied by an adult member of host family</i> |
| Aged 14-15    | Home by 9.30pm or before dark, whichever is the earlier      |
| Aged 16       | Home by 10pm   |
| Ages 17-18    | Home by 11pm   |

## **Not Allowed!**

**Staying away overnight** is forbidden unless specific permission has been given in advance by Quest Guardians, normally with the consent of the student's own parents.

**Friends of students are not allowed to stay** with you unless Quest Guardians has approved temporary guardianship in advance. This is for legal and insurance reasons.

**Students are not allowed to smoke** and students over the age of 18 may only drink **alcohol** with your express permission and under your supervision. **Hair dyeing, body piercing and tattoos** are also forbidden.

If you have any other concerns about the student(s) you are hosting, please contact us immediately either during office hours on **01202 882299** or out of office hours on **07545 502255**. Please also see our Missing Child policy at the back of this booklet.

## **Departure**

**We recommend that just before a student leaves your home, you visually check out the bedroom together to ensure no items (such as chargers) have been forgotten or damage caused.** This inspection also helps eliminate any awkwardness, accusations or denials should any damage be identified retrospectively.

# **5. What you can expect from Quest Guardians Ltd**

## **Coordinator Visits**

Our Regional Coordinator will visit initially, and thereafter annually. The purpose of the visit is to check the accommodation is suitable, check documents such as gas safety, DBS, and insurance, but particularly to explain our policies and procedures.

## **Contract**

After an initial satisfactory coordinator visit, you will receive a contract letter from our office. This document also requires you to provide the account details for whichever bank you wish payment to go into and also asks you to sign your agreement to the terms within. This constitutes the **contractual basis** of our partnership, so please read the terms within carefully.

## **Communications**

**All travel and accommodation arrangements regarding the student, school and transfer times will be confirmed to you in writing, (by email and by post) prior to arrival. As part of this, we will provide a profile of your family and household, a description of the property and student accommodation.**

We aim to repeat successful arrangements to maintain continuity for both Host Family and Student. However, we cannot guarantee bookings as changes do occur due to parents making alternative arrangements.

## Support

Our policies on safeguarding, internet use and missing persons can be found in the Appendix of this booklet. You will be asked to sign your acceptance of having read and agreed to adhere to these policies when the Coordinator visits you. In the case of extreme emergencies, which should be escalated when a situation arises that needs to be resolved prior to the next working day, please phone **07545 502255**. This service is available and manned by a member of the Administration Team 24 hours per day. Otherwise you should ring the office on **01202 882299**. Normal office hours are 09:00 to 17.30 Monday to Friday. An answer phone service is available on this line outside of office hours.

## Payment

**Housekeeping Allowance** We have a standard rate per night, which will be clarified with you at the time of booking. Normally we are able to confirm in advance, and in writing, the amount you will be paid for the student's stay.

**Cancellation** Should there be a cancellation, we will do our best to find another student for you but if not, we have a cancellation policy which pays up to 75% of the full payment.

If you have a student booked in just for the day time, a different rate applies – you will be made aware of this when we make the booking.

**Expenses** Quest Guardians will pay your return mileage if you collect the student from school (currently 45p per mile). If the student has no pocket money we can also cover the cost of the student's entrance for activities such as swimming, cinema or a visit to an attraction or National Trust property (to a maximum of £25, but please ring if in doubt). **All Expense Claims should be submitted by email to [office@questguardians.co.uk](mailto:office@questguardians.co.uk)** Claims should be supported by itemized receipts and sent to the office within 2-3 days of the student's departure, as expenses are added to the parents' account.

**Payment** is made direct to your bank, using the BACS system. The payment will normally arrive in your account on the **Friday after** the end of the event (i.e. Exeat or Half Term).

## Legal Contractual Arrangements

Please note that due to the guardianship contractual arrangements between Quest Guardians and you the host family, as well as our contract with the students and their parents, **ALL ARRANGEMENTS must be done through the Quest Guardians Head Office. It is essential that you contact us if any of our students contact you directly, for two reasons – if we do not know about the arrangement, then we simply cannot pay you; also, the responsibility of guardianship would fall to you and this is very different to being simply a host family where we support you.**

## 6. Other Information



### DBS Checks

All resident members of your family as well as regular visitors to your home aged 16 or over (even those away at University or on a gap year), will need to give permission for **Quest** to submit an application for a criminal records check through the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS). We will normally reapply for a new DBS check every three years.

## Health and Safety

It is your responsibility to make sure all electrical appliances are safe, particularly in the student's room and we recommend PAT testing each electrical appliance annually. All gas appliances are to be inspected annually by a Gas Safe registered plumber, and a **Gas Safety Certificate** provided to **Quest** Head Office. **Smoke and Carbon Monoxide alarms MUST be fitted in the house. Medicines and/or chemicals must not be stored unlocked in the student's bathroom. Explain basic fire escape routes, access to the outside doors, and the location of any necessary keys. Please also ensure that they know to dial 999 for Police, Fire or Ambulance should any such emergency arise whilst they are staying with you.**

## Updating Host Details

Please note that it is also your responsibility to update Quest Guardians if any changes occur in your contact details or host profile, and to notify us of any changes in the household residents, such as family members, lodgers or long stay guests arriving or leaving.

## Emergency Student Illness

In case of student illness or accident, take the same precautions as you would with your own child. If in doubt, your first course of action should be to contact your family doctor in the usual way. The student will have been registered with the NHS by the school. If the illness becomes more serious or hospitalisation ensues, or treatment at your local A&E is necessary, you should immediately contact your regional **Quest** Coordinator or ring the appropriate **Quest** telephone number: 01202 882299/07545 502255. We will liaise with the parents, agents and school on the most appropriate course of action.

## Household and Car Insurance

Quest Guardians Ltd has professional liability and indemnity insurance, but host families must have household contents insurance. Standard policies include cover for accidental damage by visitors and third party liability insurance. Please inform your Insurer that you will have a student visitor in your home. Standard comprehensive car insurance policies cover the holder for a minimum of third party claims whilst the car is being used for domestic, social and pleasure purposes, but not for business. If in doubt, you should consult your insurer. Copies of all insurance policies and Gas Safety Certificate will be required by **Quest** head office and will also need to be seen by your Regional Coordinator on each visit to ensure that sufficient cover is in place.

Please also note that we regard it as your duty to ensure the use of car seat belts when you are transporting students in your car.

# 7. Quest Guardians Policies

## Missing Child

Unexplained student absences or other situations affecting student safety, should be reported to Quest Guardians immediately, either via the landline (01202 882299) during office hours or on the out of office hours (urgent) line (07545 502255). Specifically, should a student who is booked with a host family not arrive within 2 hours of when they are expected, it is the duty of the host

family to advise us of this matter and we will follow up, taking all necessary actions to locate the child.

## **Complaints Procedure**

Complaints are treated seriously and with high priority. Should there be any cause for complaint either regarding the service we have provided, the students or any other aspect of the Guardianship Organisation, in the first instance email or telephone your Office Administrator (or the 24 hour 'on call' line in an emergency). You can also contact your Regional Coordinator, the Operations Manager (Henry Michelmore) or the Managing Director (Chris Michelmore) should you remain concerned. Each and every complaint will be thoroughly investigated and a response supplied at the earliest possible opportunity.

Email: [office@questguardians.co.uk](mailto:office@questguardians.co.uk) – office hours 01202 882299 or out of office hours 07545 502255.

## **Behaviour**

All students are provided with a Student Handbook at their first meeting with their Regional Coordinator and the Coordinator will go through the Handbook with the student to ensure that it is understood. Clear guidelines are given on conduct and behaviour whilst staying with a host family and reflect the policies in this Host Family Handbook.

If you have unresolvable concerns about behaviour, please phone the office.

## **Abuse**

It is the clear responsibility of any member of staff or host family to immediately report any suspicion or allegation of abuse of any kind to the Child Protection Officer (Mr Chris Michelmore) using either the office landline (01202 882299) during office hours, the emergency 'on call' number out of hours (07545 502255) or Mr Michelmore's mobile number (07831 876416).

## **Use of Computers and Internet**

Since the development of responsible, considerate and independent use of computers and the internet is important for a student's education, but it is essential to outline appropriate computer use and provide guidelines as to their safe use. Some material accessible via the internet may be illegal, defamatory, inaccurate or potentially offensive.

When staying with a host family, a wireless internet connection is normally available but speeds can be slow in some parts of the UK, especially in rural areas. Internet download is often limited and can be very expensive, so students are not allowed to download large files, such as films, games and music. Students should not need to use the host's telephone or computers. Students should also be aware of the routine of the household and therefore should not be using their computers to Skype, Facetime or otherwise disturb the household between the hours of 23.00 and 08.00 hours or as the host dictates.

Students should ensure memory sticks or other storage media are free from computer viruses and any software on personally owned machines is legally licensed.

Students are not allowed to use the internet for any illegal activity, this includes accessing sites meant for adults or 18 years or older such as pornographic or gambling sites. Students must not search for, or browse through, any sites that contain offensive, obscene, violent, dangerous, inflammatory, racist or extremist material. Downloading any unlicensed material such as music, video, TV programmes, games and PDF files is illegal and therefore not permitted.

Whilst use of social networking sites has brought about a communications revolution that gives young people unrivalled opportunities, it also brings risks. It is important that students understand these risks, know how to stay safe in this environment and how to avoid making themselves vulnerable to a range of issues including identity theft, bullying, harassment, grooming and abuse. They also need to learn how to avoid the risk of exposing themselves to subsequent embarrassment due to an inappropriate personal profile or inclusion on another's profile. The Child Exploitation and Online Protection body (CEOP) provides some useful guidelines and advice for parents, guardians, host families and students (thinkyouknow.co.uk is the CEOP's online safety centre).

Any type of hacking (defined as attempt to gain access to folders, databases, or other material on the network to which one is not entitled) is considered to be an extremely serious offence. To comply with the Computer Misuse Act 1990, any student who indulges in hacking or is found with hacking software/paraphernalia on their computer can expect to face serious consequences. Likewise, physical interference with any other computer is not tolerated.

We are aware that many past students become friends of the family and keep in touch with the host family when they have returned home. In times of social media sites and the internet, this contact needs to be both thoughtful and appropriate.

Quest Guardians will not accept liability for the loss or damage to any computers owned by the student or borrowed from anyone.

## **Safeguarding Child Protection and Safeguarding**

The safety and welfare of children, or Child Protection, means protecting children from physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect. Quest Guardians is committed to the protection of all children in its care. We aim to ensure that the students in our care experience at all times a caring and secure environment in which they feel safe, respected and valued. If you have any concerns, Quest Guardians' **Child Protection Officer** is Chris Michelmore, mobile 07831 876416. He is fully conversant with the action required to receive complaints of abuse, to investigate those complaints and to record and report them to the appropriate authority. Liz Davies is the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) for **Quest** Guardians and Henry Michelmore is the Deputy DSL. **Quest** also undertakes the following:

1. To make all guardianship personnel and the students in our care aware of the need to report allegations and suspicions of child abuse to the CPC;
2. To promote a policy of trust, openness and clear communication between students, school and Quest Guardians staff and our Host Families, so that student welfare is the top priority;
3. To investigate any reported allegation or suspicion of child abuse in accordance with the principles and guidelines set out in the Child Protection Policy of the Association for the Education and Guardianship of International Students (AEGIS);
4. To maintain links with the appropriate governmental authorities with jurisdiction in matters pertaining to child welfare;
5. To support the student's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence;
6. To provide an environment in which students feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident, and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulty, believing they will be effectively listened to.

We recognise that a child who is abused or witnesses violence may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, or find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth, so we recognise that all matters relating to safeguarding are confidential. However, all staff – including host families - must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. All staff and host families must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing.

Our procedures will be annually reviewed and updated. Any deficiencies or weaknesses in the procedures will be remedied without delay.

The 24-hour Childline Service continues to be available on 0800 1111. All calls are free and confidential, and trained counsellors will help any young person with any problem.

## **Safeguarding and SAFE CARE PLAN advice for Host Families**

As a host family, you will be expected to protect the students that you host and you will be required to have a valid Enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check for each member of the household or regular visitors aged 16 or over who will be present whilst students are staying with you.

- Be even handed in relationships with **Quest** students – avoid the appearance, or the reality of, favouritism
- Be unambiguous in your behaviour towards guest students
- Avoid secrecy and understand confidentiality
- Respect students' rights and privacy
- Share concerns and worries with **Quest** staff
- Avoid being misinterpreted
- Understand issues concerning physical restraint
- Avoid inviting a **Quest** student to 'friend' you on Facebook or other social media sites

SAFE CARE PLAN - You should have due consideration for the safe care of both the student and your family. A **SAFE CARE PLAN** should be adopted (particularly for long stays in excess of 28 nights) and may consider the following:

- Entering the Student's Bedroom (appropriate, respectful, knocking and allowing privacy)
- Bathroom Conduct and Routines (All need to be able to lock the door, and be given times if necessary)
- Medication locked away
- Smoking by both family, friends and possibly students (although it is banned at all boarding schools)
- Drinking alcohol, plus storage of alcohol both with family, friends, and the impact on students
- Friends visiting and their conduct towards students
- Internet and telephone use (see policy)
- Car driving – Who is allowed to drive the student and in which car?
- Bedtime routines and respect for privacy
- Sexual conduct and demonstrating affection towards both the student and within the family

- Rules that may be non-negotiable or guidelines. These may include:
  - Parent rooms are out of bounds
  - Adult males should avoid being alone in the bedroom or bathroom with a female student and should be appropriately clothed
  - Bathroom routines
  - Breakfast (if late, may be DIY) and other meal times

## **Data Protection**

**Quest Guardians Ltd** collects and uses personal information about staff, students, overseas parents, host families and other individuals who come into contact with the organisation. This information is gathered in order to enable it to provide a guardianship service and other associated functions. In addition, there may be a legal requirement to collect and use information to ensure that Quest Guardians complies with its statutory obligations.

**Quest** is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) detailing the information held and its use. **Quest** has a policy which is intended to ensure that personal information is dealt with correctly and securely and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and other related legislation. It will apply to information regardless of the way it is collected, used, recorded, stored and destroyed, and irrespective of whether it is held in paper files or electronically. The full policy is available from the office, or visit our web site [www.questguardians.co.uk](http://www.questguardians.co.uk).

## **Common Q & As**

### **Should I worry that my student is spending so much time in his room?**

Students from China and Hong Kong, particularly, often tend to spend a lot of their time, working, 'chilling out', lying in or playing computer games. School life can be very busy, and some relaxation time is often what is needed. Don't worry, but it is good to try and involve them in helping around the house, setting the table etc.

### **Should I take my student out on activities?**

There is a lot of variation, with some students very keen to learn the language, culture and history of the UK, whilst others less interested. Most students from Asia enjoy shopping and town/city centres – they mostly live in very large cities at home. Festivals like Halloween, Chinese New Year can be an opportunity to get the student to engage in activities.

### **My student is up very late at night. What should I do?**

With the time difference, some students try and speak to friends and family at home. Midnight here is 08:00 hours in China. Others game late at night. It is best to calmly explain the consequences to the rest of the household, especially if family members are up early. Some host families resort to switching off the internet router.

### **Can I ask the student to help clear meals?**

We explain to students that they are staying in Host Families, not B&Bs or hotels, and they should treat you as such. Therefore, although some come from very wealthy backgrounds with family help, it is reasonable to ask them to take their plate to the dishwasher etc.

**Why do the students shower so often, and late in the evening?**

Many come from tropical, humid climates, and are brought up to shower frequently, sometimes several times per day. Often they live in apartments with unlimited hot water. Our advice is to explain that water is more limited, and late showers impact on the family. Maybe introduce a time for the last shower!