



'QALen members believe that the experience of studying abroad provides the student with the opportunity of gaining not only linguistic skills but also valuable cross cultural awareness. However, it needs to be also recognised that there is the potential for all students of any age to be vulnerable when communicating in a second language and being immersed in an unfamiliar culture. Related to this is the concern that a significant volume of children travel to learn English on short term courses which may not be regulated by mandatory inspection/national requirements. For this reason, the quality assurance procedures of QALen members include safeguards for students and reassurance for parents.

At the recent symposium in Washington QALen members whose scope of accreditation extends to students under the age of 18 shared information with regard to the safeguarding of minors. The below outlines areas of best practice identified during the discussion:

- Safer recruitment of staff, homestay and all accommodation provision
- Accurate promotional material including clear information for parents
- Clearly defined and implemented safeguarding policies
- Effective communications with parents, legal guardians, or residential caregivers of students concerning their well-being and, where appropriate, progress in study
- Effective management of policies
 - Named strategic lead within the organisation leading a team appropriate to the size of the organisation
 - Safeguarding and Awareness Training for Staff
- Effective Supervision and Risk Management for on and off site activities to include appropriate staff/group leader to student ratios
- All rules and guidelines appropriate to the age of the student for on and off site activities communicated to stakeholders
- Accommodation suitable for the age of the student and appropriate separation of adults and children
- Students under the age of 18 to be placed in age-appropriate classes, and where circumstances require a wide age range, the organisation to demonstrate management of risk

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