

## **Q & A / HOST FAMILIES DBS**

### **What is a DBS check? What will it reveal?**

A DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check is a record of an individual's unprotected convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings and can also include intelligence held by the police and/or the DBS that relates to that individual and their suitability to undertake a particular role.

### **Why is Abingdon School checking host families?**

We are checking host families as a result of legal, Government and Local Authority advice to do so.

### **What will I have to do in order to be checked?**

Each applicant will need to present evidence of their identity and current address in person, or, if there are exceptional circumstances, provide certified copies. The enclosed "DBS List of Valid Identity Documents" gives further information. Typically, where it is possible to do so, most applicants provide their passport, driving licence and a utility bill/bank statement (dated within last three months). Care should be taken to ensure that any documents provided meet the validity requirements.

In order to complete a DBS check, all supervising adults will need to make a 15-20 minute appointment to come into school to see the HR team. The normal working hours of the HR team are 8.30am - 5.30pm Monday-Friday.

Starting the application process early should help to avoid any undue delays.

### **What if I can't come to be checked at the times specified?**

There may be occasions when the HR Department will be able to verify documents outside of standard working hours. Please contact Heather Campbell, Training and HR Administrator by email at [heather.campbell@abingdon.org.uk](mailto:heather.campbell@abingdon.org.uk) or by phone on 01235 849003 to make an appointment.

### **How long does it take to get a check back?**

Typically, most host family DBS checks are processed within 4-6 weeks of application, however, there can be significant delays and therefore our advice is to begin the process as soon as practicably possible. The DBS statistics show that 95% of applications are processed within 8 weeks.

### **Who will need to be checked at an address?**

All supervising adults (in most cases this will be parents or guardians) who will be resident at the address where the exchange student is to stay at the time of the exchange will need to undertake the DBS check.

### **Are you checking overseas families that my son will stay within the same way?**

We will work with partner schools to ensure that similar assurances are made, if this is possible. Not all jurisdictions have checking processes similar to DBS and Abingdon School is not able to directly check host parents in the same way. We will, however, work with the host school to ensure that any legal obligations in the host country are met.

### **What if one person at an address is not checked in time?**

Starting the DBS application process early should help to prevent the possibility that a supervising adult is not checked in time. Ultimately, the decision as to whether or not an exchange placement can go ahead resides with Mark Hindley, Deputy Head (Pastoral) and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

### **What if one person refuses to be checked? Is the exchange cancelled?**

Yes. If an individual refused to be checked, and the School was to allow an exchange student to stay in the household, then the School would be in contravention of the advice issued by the Local Authority.

### **What will happen if a conviction or other relevant information shows up on a person's record?**

In the event that relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is obtained through a criminal records disclosure, Mark Hindley, Deputy Head (Pastoral) and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), will be notified.

The DSL will be responsible for assessing the individual's suitability to host an exchange and will consider the following factors before reaching a decision:

- whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the exchange;
- the seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed;
- the length of time since the offence or other matter occurred;
- whether there is a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- whether the circumstances of the individual have changed; and
- the circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered.

All information provided will be treated in strict confidence.

### **What records on parents will be kept by the school? How will these be stored?**

Personal data on checked persons will be held on the School's electronic Single Central Register (SCR).

### **What is the DBS Update Service?**

The DBS Update Service allows applicants to keep their DBS certificate up to date and take it with them from role to role, within the same workforce, where the same type and level of check is required.

If you've previously had a DBS check and are signed up to the Update Service then we will not need to complete a new DBS application. We'll need sight of your original DBS certificate and to see appropriate identification.

The Update Service is free for volunteers so we would encourage you to sign up as part of your application.