

Student Environment Evaluation

U.S. Department of State regulations state that an organizational representative, other than the person who conducted the in-home interview, must visit the exchange student/host family home within the first or second month following the student's placement in the home. Student Environment Evaluation (SEE) visits must occur within 30 days of student arrival in the home if the placement is not permanent and within 60 days if the placement is permanent.

The in-home host family interview allows a YFU-trained representative the opportunity to observe the family's physical surroundings and familiar relations. The SEE visit is part of YFU's support structure which is based on checks and balances, with the primary purpose being to observe how the family has accommodated the student and to ensure there have been no changes since the interview.

SEE Visit Notification

If the Area Rep did not conduct the host family in-home interview, my.yfu.org will generate and send a SEE visit notification e-mail to him/her. If the Area Rep conducted the in-home interview, the e-mail notification will go to the Field Director or Community Development Manager instead, to be assigned.

SEE Visit Evaluator

The SEE visit evaluator can not be the same person that performed the in-home host family interview, nor the spouse of the interviewer. The evaluator does not have to be a YFU volunteer or employee. The Area Rep, Area Coordinator or another local YFU volunteer or host family may be ideal as it serves as a means of strengthening the local YFU community. If the Area Rep did not conduct the in-home interview, the SEE visit can double as the first face-to-face monthly support contact for the student and/or host family.

SEE Visit Requirements

The purpose of the SEE visit is to evaluate the physical condition of the home, inside and out. The person conducting the visit, using the SEE visit checklist should look at the student's bedroom and bathroom as well as the condition of the home's common spaces inside and out.

Conducting a SEE Visit

Once you receive the SEE visit notification e-mail, you will need to make an appointment to visit the home to conduct the evaluation and report it by the deadline noted in the initial notification e-mail. The student does not need to be home at the time of the SEE visit if it is not combined with the monthly contact visit. No specific host family member needs to be home either, though it is important that you have made the appointment with a host family member, so that they are aware that you will be visiting the home.

Let the family know that you are in their home to be sure that it continues to be a safe and healthy environment for both the exchange student and family, not to critique their home and lifestyle. This isn't to say that it can't be a social visit too. They will understand that YFU has great responsibility to assure a safe experience for all students and will also appreciate an opportunity to talk with a YFU representative in person just as their exchange is getting underway.

SEE Visit Reporting

The person who conducts the See visit must complete the SEE visit checklist on-line at my.yfu.org. An example of the SEE visit checklist is provided later in this chapter. An Area Rep who did not conduct the SEE visit can review the SEE visit report in the student's record once it has been submitted.

SEE Visit Tips

Because the U.S. Department of State requires that we evaluate the physical condition of each host family home with a second set of eyes and after the student joins the household, being direct with the family and student about the reason for and purpose of this visit is the best policy. Of course looking at the home does not have to be the only purpose of the visit; the visitor can focus as much or more on visiting with the family or student.

All host parents agreed to permit the SEE visit as part of the Host Family Agreement, and were reminded of the requirement at the interview. If you are uncomfortable about asking to come to the home to perform the evaluation, we think honesty is the best policy. YFU volunteers who have inspected hundreds of homes during the in-home interview process, all agree that simply telling the family about the new U.S. Department of State requirements is the most direct and comfortable approach to take.

So while the U.S. Department of State regulates this home visit, YFU embraces it! Consider this visit as an opportunity to:

- thank the family for hosting;
- strengthen the local YFU community;
- conduct the monthly support contact face-to-face;
- engage new people to volunteer with YFU - the person conducting the SEE visit does not have to be an active YFU volunteer;
- bring a YFU calendar outlining the orientations and events in your field or area;

There are more detailed tips and instructions on how to conduct a SEE visit on my.yfu.org.