



# Code of Conduct for Au Pair Organisations

February 2009

## **Code of Conduct for Au Pair Organisations**

The International Au Pair Association aims to implement a system of self-regulation and introduce a certain level of standardisation in the au pair industry. The Code of Conduct for Au Pair Organisations and its corresponding Guidelines set standards for "au pairing", including basic criteria for the selection of both au pairs and families, and establish rules for the conduct of business between members, thereby allowing for practical co-operation between au pair organisations .

Each Member of IAPA must abide by the current Code of Conduct for Au Pair Organisations and all Guidelines, and must submit a statement of acceptance of that Code of Conduct and those Guidelines.

## **Dissemination of Information**

- 1 The Sending and Receiving Organisations shall ensure that au pairs and host families understand that an au pair arrangement is a cultural exchange and not a contract of work. Both parties are to be fully informed of the programme rules and guidelines.
  - 1.1 The Sending Organisation shall provide a potential applicant with detailed information about the programme. They shall emphasise that an au pair's tasks in particular taking care of the children - require a high degree of responsibility.
  - 1.2 The Receiving Organisation shall provide a potential host family with detailed information about the programme. They shall emphasise that an au pair must be treated as a member of the family and not as hired help.
- 2 The Sending and Receiving Organisations shall ensure that any information given to au pairs does not contradict information given to host families, and vice versa.
  - 2.1 The Receiving Organisation shall provide the Sending Organisation with details of the conditions of their programme, including but not limited to: age and nationality restrictions, tasks, working hours, free time, pocket money, vacation time, insurance, transportation costs, procedures for rematches and "resignations", and all fees charged, etc.
  - 2.2 The Receiving Organisation shall also provide the Sending Organisation with a list of support services they offer to the au pair.
  - 2.3 The Sending Organisation shall provide the Receiving Organisation with a brief overview of the information it sends the prospective au pair including but not limited to: age and nationality restrictions, tasks, working hours, free time, pocket money, vacation time, insurance, transportation costs, and procedures for rematches and "resignations", and all fees charged, etc.
  - 2.4 The programme conditions of the Receiving Organisation take precedence over those of the Sending Organisation.
- 3 Both the Sending and the Receiving Organisation shall inform its respective partner organisation of their screening procedures.
  - 3.1 The Receiving Organisation shall provide the Sending Organisation with information about their placement procedures.

## **Screening Procedures**

- 4 The Sending Organisation shall carefully screen the au pair.

- 4.1 IAPA requires all au pairs to be interviewed and references checked. Ideally interviews should be carried out in person by the Sending agency, or an agency representative; if this is not possible then a video conference or telephone interview is required. The Sending Organisation must complete an Au Pair Interview Report, which is to be submitted to the Receiving Organisation. The Guidelines for Au Pair Organisations Appendix 'A' contains an example Au Pair Interview Report.
- 4.2 The Sending Organisation has the responsibility to ensure that the au pair is completely honest when completing the application and must advise the Receiving Organisation when the application has not been completed by the applicant.
- 4.3 The Sending Organisation shall carefully review all application forms. Only complete, thorough, neat, suitable applications should be sent to the Receiving Organisation.
- 4.4 The Receiving Organisation reserves the right to reject any application which is incomplete or deemed unsuitable. In such cases the Receiving Organisation shall provide the Sending Organisation the reasons for this decision.
- 4.5 The Receiving Organisation must operate a host family screening procedure and notify the sending Organisation of the screening method used:
  - a) a personal Interview with the host family at the family home,
  - b) a personal interview with the host family not at the family home,
  - c) a telephone interview with the host family,
  - d) reference(s) from the Receiving Organisation.
- 4.6 The Receiving Organisation must submit to the Sending Organisation, a host family report and the application form completed by the host family. The Guidelines for Au Pair Organisations Appendix 'B' contains an example host family report.

## **Placement Procedure**

- 5 The Sending Organisation shall send the application to only one Receiving Organisation at a time.
- 6 The Receiving Organisation shall send written confirmation to the Sending Organisation upon receipt of the application.
- 7 The Sending Organisation shall notify the Receiving Organisation immediately should an applicant no longer wish to take part in the programme or if any changes need to be made to the application .

- 8 The Receiving Organisation shall send written confirmation to the Sending Organisation upon the placement of the applicant.
- 8.1 The Sending Organisation has the responsibility to ensure that the au pair does not travel to the host family until the Receiving Organisation has confirmed the placement.
- 9 Upon placement, the Receiving Organisation shall send the au pair details of the host family as in accordance with guidelines agreed between both organisations.
- 9.1 The Sending Organisation has the responsibility to provide the au pair with the name, address and telephone number of the Receiving Organisation and the name and office hours of the contact person.
- 10 The Sending Organisation shall notify the Receiving Organisation immediately, in the event that the au pair decides not to accept the host family.
- 11 The Receiving Organisation has the prime responsibility for communication with the host family. The Sending Organisation shall not contact the host family directly without prior consent of the Receiving Organisation.
- 11.1 The Sending Organisation has the prime responsibility for communicating with the au pair prior to her arrival in the host country. The Receiving Organisation shall not contact the au pair directly in her home country without prior consent of the Sending Organisation.
- 12 The Receiving Organisation shall provide the au pair with orientation materials.
- 12.1 The Sending Organisation shall ensure that the au pair receives the orientation materials.
- 13 The Receiving Organisation shall provide the host family with orientation materials.
- 14 The Receiving Organisation shall provide the au pair with support services throughout her stay and, when necessary, act as mediator between the au pair and the host family.
- 15 The Receiving Organisation shall immediately notify the Sending Organisation should any serious problems arise between the au pair and the host family.
- 15.1 The Receiving Organisation shall immediately notify the Sending Organisation of any change in the au pair's host family or status.
- 15.2 The Receiving Organisation shall provide the Sending Organisation

with an explanation if the au pair does not stay with the host family for the agreed period of time.

- 16 The Receiving Organisation shall provide the au pair with an appropriate contact list.

## **General**

- 17 Both the Sending and the Receiving Organisations shall provide services in a professional manner: All IAPA members shall have designated and published hours of business and make known their emergency procedures and support arrangements.
  - 17.1 All members of IAPA shall provide emergency contact details that are available to their business partners and to programme participants.
- 18 Both the Sending and the Receiving Organisation must be able to correspond via the most accessible, modern form of communication (eg, email).
- 19 All Documents and correspondence between IAPA members shall be presented in a professional manner.
- 20 The Sending and Receiving Organisations shall establish clear terms of business in a written agreement.
- 21 The Receiving and Sending Organisations shall comply with all legal requirements in their countries.
- 22 It is recommended that in the event of a placement with a non-IAPA member organisation, the Sending or Receiving IAPA member organisation shall ensure that IAPA's standards (eg, codes of conduct and guidelines) are maintained.