



United States Department of State  
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs  
Washington, DC 20522  
[www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)

March 23, 2010

Dear Secondary School Student Sponsors:

In recent months several concerns regarding the promotion of Secondary School Student participants have been brought to the Department's attention. While there are numerous benefits of widespread access to new information technologies related to the use of cyberspace for promotional purposes, Sponsors must ensure the privacy, safety, and security of its most vulnerable exchange participants.

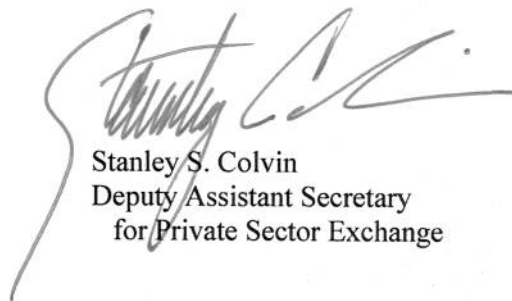
The practice of posting student profiles and permitting general public access to such profiles has been drawn into question by student advocates who suggest that these students may become targets for pedophiles or other persons who may have an inappropriate motivation to host a student. Designated Sponsors who are also members of the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) follow their longstanding program advertising and promotional guidelines ([http://www.csiet.org/publications-resources/docs/CSIET\\_Student\\_Safety\\_Guidelines-Final\\_6-23-09.pdf](http://www.csiet.org/publications-resources/docs/CSIET_Student_Safety_Guidelines-Final_6-23-09.pdf)).

Officials from the U.S Department of Justice and law enforcement officers have advised the Department that providing public (open) access via Sponsor websites, or other venues, to material such as students' photos, names, profiles, contact data, and/or any other *personally-identifying information* constitutes an unsafe business practice. They recommend that on-line information should be password protected and be made available only to potential host families who have been fully screened and vetted.

The fundamental concern for the safety and welfare of foreign exchange students compel me to bring this matter to your attention. If you are currently permitting open access to *personally-identifying information*, either on line or in print form, I ask that you re-examine this practice.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and for your continued commitment to the work of international exchange.

Sincerely,



Stanley S. Colvin  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Private Sector Exchange