

Notes for Students Under the age of 18 Staying in Homestay Accommodation

Contents

- 1 General information
- 2 Homestay accommodation
- 3 Before arriving
- 4 Your study-bedroom
- 5 Meals and meal-times
- 6 Baths and showers
- 7 Heating and lighting
- 8 Laundry
- 9 Telephone and Internet
- 10 Absences
- 11 Damage and insurance
- 12 Guests
- 13 Medical treatment
- 14 Problems

1 General information

We have arranged for you to stay in homestay accommodation and we hope that you will be happy there. Many people in Britain enjoy having guests from a different country in their house, sharing part of their daily life with them. We like to place our students with people who will talk to them and welcome them as members of the household. However, please be aware that hosts may have a full-time job and/or children, so can be busy at times. We hope you will understand that there will be times when your hosts would like to have some time on their own but they should socialise with you at mealtimes and regularly during the week.

Remember you are staying in someone's home and must respect their way of life, which may be different from what you are accustomed to in your country. Naturally, the hosts should also respect your culture as well. If you have any difficulties or problems with your accommodation, first talk to your host. This often solves any problems, but if you are still unhappy or find it difficult to talk to your host, then please speak to our Accommodation and Welfare officers.

2 Homestay accommodation

Homestay accommodation does not necessarily mean two parents with children. A widow, or two people whose children are away at school or grown up, can make excellent homestay hosts with more time to spare for their student guests. Younger students in particular may feel happier in the home atmosphere provided by homestay.

You can expect to learn English more quickly if you live in a British home and practise English there. The UK is a multicultural country, and not all hosts were born here. However, all our hosts are fluent English speakers and are expected to speak English in the home and in their daily lives.

3 Before arriving

It is very important that you contact your host as soon as possible to confirm your estimated time of arrival. This is to ensure someone is at the house when you arrive.

You can email, telephone or write to your host. If you do not contact your host, it cannot be guaranteed someone will be there to greet you. If you are badly delayed during your journey, try to telephone your hosts to say that you will be late.

4 Your study-bedroom

Depending on the size of your room, it should contain a full size bed, wardrobe or fitted cupboard, chest of drawers or dressing table, mirror, desk or table with a table lamp and chair. You should make your own bed each day and keep your room tidy so that your host can clean it. Your host will provide bath and hand towels and will change bed linen each week. Please bring your own towels for use in sports centres or for swimming.

Please note, TV and DVD are not guaranteed.

Your host will give you a key to the house. In your room you may expect privacy. If you wish to change the arrangement of furniture in your room, talk to your host first. You should not fix your own photographs, pictures or posters to the wall without permission. Be especially careful with hair straighteners, lighted cigarettes, hair spray, and nail varnish, and do not smoke in a non-smoking household.

Do not leave valuables in your room. St Giles cannot accept responsibility for any loss of personal belongings. You are welcome to use the safe at St Giles. Please speak to the Finance Officer in the School, who will be happy to help you with this. Ask your host before using any of your own electrical equipment and note that the normal voltage in the UK is 240 volts.

5 Meals and meal times

You will normally eat with your hosts according to their custom. If you cannot eat or do not like any particular food for dietary, religious or other reasons, tell your host as soon as possible. It is important to be punctual at meal times. If you are going to attend a social programme activity or you are likely to be late for dinner, tell your host in advance.

Half-board accommodation This is the best opportunity to practise English with your host. Your host will give you breakfast and an evening meal each day. Weekend lunches are not included. A typical breakfast may include fruit juice, yoghurt or cereal, toast and tea or coffee. Your evening meal is the main meal of the day.

You should not expect to use the kitchen to cook for yourself. You should be able to make yourself a cup of tea or coffee at any time, but never help yourself to food or drink without permission.

Bed and breakfast accommodation Your host will give you breakfast each day. A typical breakfast may include fruit juice, yoghurt or cereal, toast and tea or coffee. You will be expected to eat your other meals in local cafés or restaurants and not use the host's kitchen.

Self-catering accommodation is NOT permitted.

6 Baths and Showers

You should be able to have a bath or shower at least once every day. Most homestays have only one bathroom, so ask your host how you can best fit in with their routine. Please consider other family members and keep your shower time to a minimum. Do not use the shower late at night. Ask for help if you do not understand how the equipment in the bathroom and toilet works.

Always leave the bathroom clean after use.

7 Heating and Lighting

In England, heating and electricity are very expensive. Switch off electric lights and close windows when you leave the room.

Central heating is usually switched off from about 10.00 p.m. to 7.00 a.m. and during the day when your host is out of the house. Ask for extra blankets if you are cold during the night. Remember to pack warm clothing if you are coming to England during the winter months.

8 Laundry

We recommend to hosts that they include one wash per week free of charge. The host may make a small charge for extra washing, say £5.00 per week. If they cannot do your washing, ask them when and where you can do your own washing, and where to put the wet things. They may suggest that you use a nearby launderette, and they will probably let you borrow the ironing board and iron. Make sure you know the arrangements for washing, drying and ironing your own clothes.

Never leave wet clothes in your room on chairs, radiators, etc.

9 Telephone and Internet

Most students bring their own mobile telephones so hosts generally do not allow you use the house telephone except in an emergency. Students and hosts should exchange mobile phone numbers on arrival.

We expect hosts to offer wireless internet access as most students bring their own personal computers (laptops). Free internet facilities are also available at the college.

10 Absences

It is very important you attend all your classes. Even if you are late, you will be accepted in class.

As you are under the age of 18, if you are not well and going to be absent from your class it is necessary to contact the school.

If you are planning to go on an overnight trip, you need to ask your parents to contact the school (Carla – Accommodation office) and give you written consent to do it.

If you are going on a day trip on Saturday or Sunday you do not need written consent. In any case you should always inform your host with your plans. It is a good idea to give your host your mobile number so they can contact you.

See Terms and Conditions at the end of this document for information about holidays and other absences.

11 Damage and insurance

Always tell your host immediately if you accidentally break or damage anything in the home.

You should offer to pay for any such damage immediately.

We strongly advise all students to take out comprehensive travel insurance before they leave their home countries. The School can arrange insurance for you if you wish. Please contact us before travelling for details.

12 Guests

If you want to invite your friends to your host's house for a visit, ask your host beforehand. Ask what time your guests should arrive and leave the house. If your host provides food or drink, you must offer to pay for this. Try to be sure that your friends are reasonably quiet and do not disturb the rest of the household, especially late at night. Guests should not stay after midnight.

It is not possible for friends to stay overnight with you while you are in homestay accommodation.

13 Medical treatment

If you need medical or dental treatment, please discuss this with the Accommodation and Welfare Office in the School. They will be happy to help you with details of the local medical centre or dentist.

Do not take any medication if it is not prescribed by your doctor.

14 Problems

If you have any problems or are unhappy with your accommodation, please see Carla in the Accommodation Office as soon as possible: they will advise you what to do to help. You may prefer to discuss a problem with a member of your family in your own language, in your own country, or with an agent who arranged your course for you. We can only help if you talk to us in the office when the problem arises.

We hope that you will be happy in your accommodation!

Accommodation terms and conditions

Payment

You must make all accommodation payments direct to the College, who will pay your hosts for you.

Accommodation dates

We arrange your accommodation from the Sunday before the course begins, until 10.00 a.m. on the Sunday at the end of the course, unless you request otherwise. Earlier arrival is not always possible. It may be necessary for you to arrange alternative accommodation until your homestay is available and written parental consent is needed.

Late arrival

If you arrive late during the first week, you must pay in full from the date of arrival given in the accommodation letter. We cannot guarantee that your room will be available if you arrive more than one week late, unless you advise our office in advance.

Departure date

Please note that accommodation has been booked only for the dates stated on the confirmation letter, and you must vacate your room by 10:00am on the Sunday after the end of your course. If you need accommodation beyond that date you must speak to the Accommodation Officer and provide written consent signed by your parents or legal guardians. (See below "Extending your stay").

Extending your stay

In order to ensure continuity of accommodation with the same homestay, we strongly recommend that you book homestay accommodation for the entire length of your course. If you book for only a short period (e.g. 4 weeks), we cannot guarantee that the same accommodation will be available if you later decide that you want to stay longer, and it may be necessary for you to change your homestay. If you want to extend your stay, you must tell the Accommodation office as soon as possible, and they will advise you whether the same homestay is still available and if so they will ask you to pay for a further period. If it is not, the Accommodation office will arrange a new homestay for you.

Note: You cannot arrange this yourself direct with the homestay, because all accommodation placements are arranged by our accommodation office.

Leaving accommodation early

Short-stay students (1-23 weeks) If you want to leave your accommodation before the date of departure given in the letter, you must tell the office and your host at least 7 days before your intended departure from the homestay. If you do not give 7 days' notice you must pay for that week in lieu. You must also give at least 7 days' notice if you extend your original booking by a further period and wish to leave early. As you are under the age of 18, if you wish to leave early, you will need to provide the school with written consent from your parents or legal guardians with dates and details of your departure.

If you have a serious complaint about your homestay at any time, and you wish to change your accommodation, you should discuss the matter with our Accommodation office. If they support your complaint, they will arrange a new homestay as soon as possible.

Long-stay students (24+ weeks)

Students who choose homestays with us for at least 24 weeks qualify for a discount but are charged for the standard rate and then given a refund at the end of their course, if they remain in the same homestay for the full term originally reserved. The price for half-board single and shared rooms is lower for students who plan to study for 24 weeks or more, and who pay all the accommodation charges in advance.

The homestay offers accommodation at the special price because you have arranged to stay for a long time. If you leave your accommodation before the date of departure given in the letter, you must tell the office at least 7 days before your intended departure from the homestay. If you do not give 7 days' notice you must pay that week in lieu. At the same time, if you shorten your stay in the host family to less than 24 weeks, you no longer qualify for the special discount. You will be asked to pay the normal accommodation rate from the time of your arrival until your departure from the homestay.

Christmas

There are no classes in the week when Christmas Day falls. If you stay in your homestay during that week, you receive full board (i.e. all meals) on 25th and 26th December, and pay an extra charge (see the **Course Dates and Fees**). Students on bed and breakfast arrangements can opt for full-board on 25th and 26th December if the host is able to provide it. Not all homestays are available during the Christmas week. It may be necessary for you to move to a temporary homestay.

Absences

As you are under the age of 18, if you want to plan any overnight trips, you must speak to the Accommodation Office as your parents or legal guardians will have to send written consent to allow you to miss school and be away from your homestay. There is no reduction in the weekly accommodation charge if you are absent for six consecutive days or less, or if



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you fail to notify your host. If you are absent for more than six consecutive days, the office will deduct 50% of the weekly charge and refund it to you.

Sharing a room

Shared accommodation can be reserved only for students travelling together. As you are under the age of 18, you will only be allowed to share the room with another student of your age and sex. The school office will require written consent from your parents or legal guardians.