



Homestay Agreement



(2020 edition)

Homestay Agreement

Information and Guidance for Homestay Providers

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1 Introduction

Accommodation is about providing homes, not just beds. Feeling at home is important if a student is to work effectively and succeed. The student's stay with the homestay provider is an important element in their course and a significant part of their total experience of living and studying in an English-speaking country. We therefore regard our homestays as part of the service we provide to students, and so like to work with our hosts to ensure that the students have an enjoyable stay and improve their English as much as possible.

This agreement has been produced to advise new as well as experienced homestay hosts to provide the best possible accommodation service to our students, and sets out the various aspects of hosting a foreign student which all hosts are required to abide by. Please feel free to contact our Accommodation and Welfare Office if you need any help or advice about St Giles homestay.

2 What is St Giles?

St Giles International was established in 1955. We are one of the largest and most successful private international English language training organisations founded in the UK. We are a family-owned business with a proud history and outstanding reputation for quality and reliability, though most of our senior (non-directorship) management team are not family members.

The St Giles Group now consists of seven medium/large, year-round centres: Brighton, Cambridge, Eastbourne, London Central and London Highgate in the UK; New York City in the USA; and Vancouver in Canada. We also run a thriving Summer Camp operation for 'Juniors' aged 8-18 and last year we ran 10 camps in the UK, USA and Canada. Approximately 10,000 students per year from around 100 countries attend a St Giles centre every year.

All the year-round St Giles centres in the UK are accredited by the British Council and Brighton and London Central are accredited by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). Furthermore, all our UK schools are members of English UK. In 2012 St Giles International UK achieved a '3 star' award from the EL Gazette for being the only UK English Language group to achieve top grades in the ISI inspection scheme. The New York City and San Francisco schools are members of English USA and accredited by the CEA. The Vancouver centre is an accredited member of Languages Canada. In 2015 St Giles International was granted the very prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise in International Trade.

In addition to teaching English to foreign students and business people, the St Giles Group also provides teacher-training courses in English as a foreign language, leading to the Cambridge Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA), many trainees went on to teach at St Giles, or other leading English language schools.

St Giles International aims to deliver high quality courses at competitive prices. It has an active management scheme called the Quality Management Project which runs regular checks on student satisfaction and feedback from staff at all our centres and this data is used to ensure that we are maintaining high quality standards across our group.

3 Accreditation

As mentioned above, all St Giles Schools are accredited by several country-specific accreditation bodies and professional membership associations. In the UK, our schools are members of **English UK**, which is the professional association for schools accredited by the British Council. As a condition of continuing accreditation, the accreditation agencies carry out regular inspections of all members, covering every aspect of the activities of our Schools. An important requirement of our membership of English UK is that all hosts abide by the English UK code of conduct for homestay providers, a copy of which is included in Appendix 1 of this document. The Group operates to these same high standards across all

schools, including in the USA and Canada. Consequently, many of our homestay regulations may be requirements of accredited bodies or professional associations relating to the provision of homestay.

4 Why homestay?

Our students come here from all over the world to study English as a foreign language. They choose homestay for home comforts, a home atmosphere, and a chance to practise their English outside the classroom, and because they are interested in learning about the national domestic life and culture. Integration into a homestay gives them an ideal opportunity for such an experience. We expect our students to join in and to try to adapt as much as possible to the homestay hosts and their family but it is also important for hosts to recognise that being a good host involves a need for both sides to try to compromise and show respect for each other's way of life, their beliefs and personalities. We have found that homestay providers who put the most energy into hosting students also get the greatest satisfaction.

5 Arrival

St Giles is an international group of schools, taking students from many different countries. For many, it is their first time in an English-speaking country and, and lots of things will be new and may be confusing to them. It is therefore important to be helpful and understanding. Being aware of any cultural differences makes it easier for everyone. Please feel free to contact the School if you require any further information on cultural awareness for certain nationalities.

Homestay accommodation is normally booked from Sunday to Sunday unless otherwise requested and agreed. We ask students to contact their hosts before they travel to inform you of their estimated time of arrival, but we cannot guarantee that all students will manage this (apart from other factors, some may lack confidence in making contact in a foreign language). Please contact the Accommodation Office if you have not been informed of the arrival time by the Thursday before arrival.

If you know what time your student is coming, it is your responsibility to ensure someone is at the house to greet the student because it is essential that someone be at home to meet students when they first arrive. We ask you to make appropriate arrangements for someone to be at home all day if students have not given you an arrival time. **Do not call the Emergency Telephone in this instance.**

6 Nationality of students in your home

It is a school policy, and a British Council requirement in the UK, that no students with the same mother tongue are accommodated at the same time, unless a specific request has been made. The School would therefore ask you to notify us if you anticipate accommodating simultaneously two students of the same nationality or mother tongue.

7 Number of students per home

In the UK, British Council regulations state that no more than four students/paying guests should be accommodated with the same homestay at the same time. If more than four are accommodated this will be classed as a private home accommodation. In North America there is no restriction on the number of paying guests but you must inform the school of the maximum number accommodated in your home. This is to ensure that all students enjoy the real benefits of a homestay environment. Homestay providers accepting students from other sources *in addition to St Giles are obliged to maintain this regulation* and to notify the Accommodation Officer in the event of their anticipating a contravention of this rule.

8 The homestay provider's mother tongue

For obvious reasons, it is a requirement that either the host or host's spouse/partner should be fluent in English. Moreover, English should be the main language of communication in the home.

9 The student's room

The student must occupy a room visited and approved by a member of staff from the School. The room should contain a full-size bed, wardrobe or fitted cupboard, chest of drawers or dressing table, a mirror, desk or table with table-lamp and chair, and, if possible, a TV. It is especially important that students have a desk or table, as they will often want to study in the evenings. **Please note wireless internet is essential, and no more than 2 students should share a room.** If there is no room within the bedroom for the table and desk, it is important for students to be shown a quiet space with table and chairs that they can use for their studies'.

10 Heating

Adequate heating should be provided – please bear in mind that many students are used to warmer climates or better insulated homes than ours - and some extra bedding should be offered. If you turn off your heating overnight in the winter, it is important to tell students about this in advance. In NYC, students' rooms are expected to have air conditioning during the summer.

11 Cleaning

Students should understand that they are responsible for making their beds and tidying their rooms. Students should not be prevented from eating or drinking in their bedrooms per se, provided that it is not causing damage or staining to the your property, furniture or fittings, nor represents a hygiene hazard or causes inconvenience or distress to other residents in the home.

They should be encouraged to help you with lighter tasks such as setting the table, clearing the table after a meal, etc. The room should be cleaned regularly - please tell students roughly when you plan to enter their room for this. Bed linen and towel(s) should be changed at least once a week.

12 Bathroom and toilet

A student should have free access to the bathroom in the same way as the rest of the household. However, it is considered acceptable for you to introduce a rota system, allowing at least a 30 minute slot, establishing when students can use the bathroom. Nevertheless, you are expected to exercise reasonable discretion (beyond the rota system) to enable students to take the occasional impromptu shower/bath due to (for example) hot weather or for personal hygiene issues, etc. Ask the student to make sure the bathroom is left clean and tidy after use, and ensure that they know how to use all the facilities.

13 Laundry

Please advise your student about arrangements for washing, drying and ironing clothes. We expect one wash per week to be included free of charge. You can either do this yourself for the student or explain how they can use the washing machine, pointing out features and restrictions. It is a good idea to supervise them the first time they use it. If there is any additional washing, you can ask the student to contribute a small amount, or make clear where to find the nearest launderette facilities.

14 Meals

Students booked as 'self-catering' students are not provided with any food by the host but these students are able to use the kitchen facilities.

For students booked for bed and breakfast, you are not expected to offer a full cooked breakfast every day, but you should offer a substantial breakfast, including fruit juice, yogurt or cereal, toast, and tea or coffee. For students booked with half-board accommodation, the hot evening meal should be substantial, and include meat or fish (or other protein – particularly in the case of vegetarians). In order to give maximum opportunity for English conversation, it is particularly important that half-board students have the opportunity to have their evening meal with the host most days of the week.

Students will expect to have the same meals as your household, and when possible you should eat with them. The School will inform you where possible at the time of booking if the student has any special dietary requirements, but you should still check with the student on arrival if there is any other dietary need for religious or medical reasons (such as allergies).

Students should try to fit in with the mealtimes of the host, although some flexibility is required. On some occasions, it may be possible to adjust the mealtime to suit the student, while on others, for example if a student wishes to stay out some evenings, the host could leave (say) a cold dish in the fridge or a meal that the student could reheat in the oven/microwave. Students should be made aware that they should inform you if they intend to miss a meal.

15 Telephone and internet

Most students will have mobile phones and can be expected to use this as their prime means of communication. However, land-line incoming calls should be permitted for emergencies only.

16 Safety

It is important to explain to students any special safety rules that you may have, e.g. the need to keep pills, cleaning fluids and breakables out of the reach of small children. The use of electrical equipment and any room heaters, water heaters, etc., should also be explained carefully, as should fire precautions. In the UK, hosts are required by law, to carry out a risk assessment on their home.

Please note that in the UK, all households are legally required to have a Gas Safety check on an annual basis.

17 Keys

Students must be given their own house key for the period of their stay. If the student loses the key, they should be expected to pay for a replacement as the School cannot accept responsibility for this.

18 Guests

Students may occasionally want to invite a friend or relative to your home. This should be permitted provided that they do not cause an unreasonable disturbance to you or your family. Please inform students *at the beginning of their stay* if you wish to impose any rules about guests. We feel it is reasonable that students should ask your permission first if they wish to invite a guest, and you are entitled to expect that guests should not stay after 10.00 pm. Bear in mind, however, that our students are mainly adults, and will therefore not expect to be given instructions on morality.

19 Personal privacy

Students are entitled to privacy and you should respect this and should limit your access to students' bedrooms largely for the purpose of maintenance and cleaning. If you wish to enter a student's bedroom, it is best to knock and wait to be invited into the room. You are encouraged to notify students upon arrival when you or a cleaner would normally plan to enter the student's room for cleaning or maintenance purposes. We consider it preferable for you to fit locks to a student's bedroom to enable students to feel secure in their privacy when necessary. There will be times when you yourselves want privacy, and you are entitled to inform the students (gently) about this. However, we expect students to be invited to mix with members of your household at other times beside meal times. Please bear in mind that students have chosen accommodation '*in a home*' or '*with a family*' at least partly in order to practise their English.

We recommend that students should have free access to the living room. Certainly, students will want to talk with you and other members of your household as much as

possible, so please try to make conversation with them. Please note that it is unacceptable to lock the common areas of the house.

20 Students' medical treatment and personal problems

In the UK, if your student needs medical treatment, he/she should register with your GP/physician, as a temporary resident. If this is not possible, please direct the student to the Accommodation & Welfare Officer/s at the School, who will provide relevant advice. In North America, we recommend that you encourage students to talk to you if they are feeling unwell and need to see a doctor. You should advise them about a recommended doctor in your area. If you are concerned about your students' physical or mental health please consult with our Accommodation & Welfare Officers.

Unfortunately, in exceptional circumstances, there may be times when students experience serious emotional problems. We do request information from students concerning whether they are taking medication, and whether they have any special needs, and we endeavour to notify hosts about this wherever possible. Nevertheless, if a student's behaviour is giving you undue cause for concern, please contact us for further advice, and to discuss the best solution available. Please note that, ultimately, we cannot accept responsibility for any unreasonable conduct or behaviour of students, though we will try to work together with you to offer support to you and the student. Naturally, in a legal sense our duty of care is to the students, and we have to act in their best interest. Please note that we do not (and in many cases cannot) conduct criminal record background checks on students, and that accepting students from St Giles International is entirely at your own risk. Ultimately, in cases where in the school's sole opinion it is in the best interests of the student (for example, due to the student's overall safety or wellbeing), we reserve the right to remove a student from a homestay without notice, or payment in lieu of notice.

21 Religion and Culture

A great number of important welfare issues or problems may have their origin in this broad category. It is important for hosts to make an effort to understand and respect differences in cultures, and try to empathise with students.

Differences in culture can often give rise to misunderstandings for homestay providers as well as students. Differences in voice intonation, the use (or not) of 'please' and 'thank you' are common sources of problems. Try to tactfully explain how things are done in your home and in your country.

All religious differences must be respected and received with an open mind. The School can provide students with information on local centres of worship.

Advice on these matters can be sought from the School.

22 Equality and Discrimination

St Giles International cannot legally act on requests for students to be accommodated with homestay hosts based on preferences for nationality, ethnicity or religion.

Equality legislation prevents hosts from refusing to accept students of a certain nationality, ethnicity or religion and the school cannot be deemed to be complicit in, or a party to, facilitating such acts.

23 Smoking

Please make very clear from the start your policy regarding smoking. Both the student and the School should be aware of this before a placement is made. If you do not want to permit smoking in your home, please advise students or their friends to do so outside.

24 Transport

Please show the students where to find the nearest bus stop.

25 Insurance

Fair wear and tear should not be charged to students, but they should be expected to pay for any damage they may have caused. As the School cannot accept responsibility for any loss or damage, we strongly advise you to make the necessary arrangements with your own insurance company

26 Emergencies

The School should be notified ***as soon as possible*** in cases of

- serious disputes between yourselves and the student/s
- injury, serious illnesses or cases of severe distress involving the student(s).

For younger students (e.g. aged 16 to 18), it is a good idea to be aware of their planned movements and to ensure that they return home at a reasonable time when going out at night. The School will inform you of any special rules that apply to individuals, and will expect you to ensure that they are followed. Special Safeguarding rules apply for students who are minors, and you will be informed of these as necessary.

Regarding welfare and safety, please let us know if your students don't come home at night. Please call the office in the morning in order for us to find out where they are and more important that they are safe and well.

The School has an 'outside hours' emergency telephone, where you can leave a recorded message. In cases of *extreme emergency*, contact one of the persons whose telephone numbers will be contained in the recorded message.

27 Termination of Agreement

The School reserves the right to remove a host's name from the homestay register at any time if, in the opinion of the School, there is good reason to do so. Removal from the register may arise through non-observance of this agreement, inflexibility regarding the service you provide to students or in relation to working with us, or due to a serious complaint by a student, or regular complaints of a less serious nature from a series of students.

28 Information about you

The information you provide about yourself and your household on the Application helps us to provide a good service to both our students as well as to our host, so it is essential that it should be accurate and up to date. The data will be held on our computer system to enable us to make a compatible and successful match between student and host, and relevant details will be sent to the students we place with you. In order to ensure the accuracy of the information we hold, please keep us informed of any changes in your household.

Our policy on Maintaining Personal Data on you as a host of our students is included in our Data Protection Policy, which can be found on our website under 'Group Policies'. By signing this agreement you give your consent to storage of this data. You have the right to request copies of any data we hold on you which is maintained for the purposes of placing our students in the most appropriate homestays to ensure their comfort and well-being.

29 Short-stay and long-stay students

We operate a system of differential pricing for some homestay options for students, depending on the student's length of stay. Students staying for 1-23 weeks ('short-stay students') pay normal rates, but those who plan *in advance* to stay for 24 weeks or more ('long-stay students') are offered a slightly lower (concessionary) rate in return for their long-term commitment to the School and to the host family. *Normal rates apply to all students for eight weeks in July and August.*

30 Placements

The Accommodation Officer will normally contact you by telephone or email in order to place a student. This will establish the gender, nationality and age of the student, the length of

stay and the type of accommodation required. You will subsequently receive a letter confirming the details. A similar letter is sent to the student or his/her agent by e-mail.

Please note we cannot guarantee placing students with you on a regular or continuous basis.

31 Payment

All accommodation payments are made via the School, and you should not accept direct payment from the student.

Accommodation is normally booked from Sunday to Sunday, but on occasion students may be booked to arrive or leave a day or so earlier. This will be clearly stated on the booking letter, and in these cases you will be paid for the number of nights booked.

Accommodation payments are made fortnightly. Normally a student is with you for two weeks before an initial payment is made. Payment is then made on the basis of one or two weeks in arrears and one or two weeks in advance (depending on the St Giles centre you are working with – please check with the centre office for clarification). Sometimes because of irregular arrival dates or in the case of shorter bookings, payment may be made in the third week after the student's arrival. Please see the enclosed information sheet giving the pay-run dates.

We make payment directly into homestay hosts' bank accounts. Money will reach your account by the Tuesday after each pay-run.

The policy of accommodation payments being made solely by the School enables us to retain a modest mark-up on the payments made to you as the host. This is to cover some of our administration costs and to allow us to maintain and monitor high quality accommodation provision for our students and to ensure a good supply of students to our homestay providers.

32 Reservations and extension of stay

If you accept a reservation from the School, it is implicit that you intend to be present overnight in your home for the full duration of the student's stay. If you intend to be absent during any part of the stay, you must discuss the alternative arrangement with the Accommodation Officer to ensure that they are acceptable to the School. In some cases, we may agree to make alternative arrangements temporarily to cover your period of absence. If you need to go away for any unplanned period after the student has arrived, you must inform the Accommodation Officer as a matter of urgency, and consult with them regarding alternative arrangements. In order to act in the best interests of our students and to consider their safety and well-being, we reserve the right to move students permanently if any host is going to be absent overnight.

Many students choose to book only their first 4 weeks' accommodation. We will inform you of the student's course duration at the time of booking. Some students wish to extend their stay and make payments to the School 4-weekly. It is your responsibility to discuss the student's future plans regarding accommodation and liaise with the Accommodation Office.

We feel it is reasonable to give priority to meeting the accommodation requests made in advance for new students. Existing students who wish to extend their stays with you after arrival have not by definition reserved this in advance, and therefore cannot expect to be given first preference. To do otherwise may cause inconvenience to those students who book in advance, particularly when there are shortages of accommodation. Wherever possible the Accommodation Officer will do his/her best to make changes in accordance with the wishes of the student.

As part of this agreement you undertake not to allow existing students to extend their stays at your home without the approval of the school. If a student asks about the possibility of extending their stay with you, please refer them to the Accommodation Office who will do their best to consider this request depending upon accommodation ability.

33 Absences/holidays/retainers

There is a provision at the booking stage for long-stay students (see section 29) to arrange a holiday break of 1 week per 12 weeks of study (maximum 2 weeks at any one time) provided they extend their stay by a matching number of weeks.

Students should expect to pay 50% of the normal weekly charge as a retainer, unless they clear the room of their belongings. The School will make appropriate adjustments to your next scheduled payment in these cases. No reduction in charges will be made for absences of six days or less, or in cases where students take unplanned holidays without proper notice to the School.

Please note that courses for all students are discontinued for one week at Christmas. If a student on a half board arrangement remains in the homestay during the Christmas week when classes are discontinued, s/he should receive full board on 25th and 26th December, for which you receive a supplementary payment. Students on bed & breakfast arrangements can with your agreement opt for full-board at Christmas.

34 Cancellation

Cancellation before arrival

The School cannot guarantee that a student will arrive at the agreed time, nor that s/he will stay for the whole period, since her/his movements and decisions are not under our control. However, every effort is made to minimise any inconvenience or loss on those occasions when arrangements go wrong. Students who arrive after the reserved date of arrival will be expected to pay for the days they were absent, except in cases where you have been notified before the agreed date of arrival.

No cancellation fee will be paid if *at least one week's notice* has been given before the arrival date, or if notice is given on a Monday preceding a student's expected arrival the following weekend.

If less than one week's notice is given before the arrival date, or if a student fails to arrive and if in each case the School is unable to replace the student within the first week, a cancellation fee of GBP 75 / USD 130 / CAD 130 will be paid.

The cancellation fee payable for a student who fails to arrive is paid subject to the understanding that the host family notifies the School on the first Monday after the arrival day.

Cancellation after arrival

If any student wishes to leave the homestay before the agreed date of departure, s/he must normally give one week's notice or payment in lieu. If the student gives notice to the Accommodation Officer on the Monday after arrival, then only six days' notice will be given to the homestay provider (i.e. the student can leave on the following Sunday without penalty), as it is obviously impossible for the student to give notice on a Sunday, when the School is closed.

Long-stay students must remain in the same accommodation for a minimum of 24 weeks in order to qualify for the concessionary rate. If a long-stay student changes his/her plans and leaves the homestay before completing 24 weeks, the homestay provider is entitled to receive the normal short-stay rate from the date of the student's arrival until the final day of his/her notice period.

Any advance payment already made beyond the leaving date will be recouped from the following student booking.

The notice required is waived by the School in the following cases:

- where the homestay provider has failed to observe any of the terms of this Agreement;
- where, in the opinion of the School, the student or homestay provider are seriously incompatible, and an immediate change is in the student's best interests.

35 Problems or changes

The Accommodation and Welfare Officer is available during office hours to discuss any problems you may have with your student. For emergencies outside office hours, there are staff available and their number can be obtained by calling the main school number and listening to the recorded message if the school is closed.

Under no circumstances should a student be evicted without the prior authority of the School.

You should also notify the School beforehand if there is to be *any change* in the accommodation originally requested and booked, e.g. if you are planning to ask student to change rooms, or start sharing with another student. Please remember that sleeping arrangements should be appropriate to the number of people staying in the house. For example, it is not appropriate for hosts or their guests to be sleeping in living rooms while hosting students.

36 Income tax

Please note that you are responsible for any dealings with tax authorities such as HM Revenue and Customs, the IRS or the Canada Revenue Agency regarding your disclosure of income from homestay for tax purposes. You can get advice about this from your local tax agency office if you need to. You should, of course, be aware that the School is obliged to provide details of such payments to tax agencies in the event of being asked for information.

37 Students who are under 18 years of age (or 19 in Canada)

Students under the above ages are now classed as 'minors'. This means that all hosts, and other members of their household who are over that age, accommodating students within this age group are required to fill out a declaration form, which will be provided by St Giles, stating that they and any other responsible adults in the home are not unfit to be in contact with such students, and that they give their consent to St Giles to carry out UK DBS and / or criminal records and background checks in North America. Students of this age need to return home to their homestay accommodation earlier than adult students. St Giles have set standard curfew times of 11pm Sunday to Thursday and midnight Friday and Saturday. A Parental Travel Consent Form and Parental Permissions and Medical Consent Form are sent to the parents of the students, which are completed and returned to us. A copy is then sent to the host if the parents specify an earlier curfew time. Hosts must comply with these rules, and must inform the school if a pattern forms of a student arriving home late. These students must also receive written consent from their parents if they want to travel somewhere that involves an overnight stay. Please read our Safeguarding policies on our website, which offer more information and guidance on this subject.

38 English UK Code of Conduct

All our UK centres are members of English UK (the association of accredited English Language schools in the UK) and as a consequence, these schools are required to ensure that all homestay providers in the UK abide by the following Code of Conduct. It should be understood that by signing this agreement, all UK homestay hosts must agree to observe all the requirements of the English UK code, as well as all other provisions of this homestay agreement. The English UK Code includes the following undertakings by homestay hosts:

- To encourage the student to speak English as much as possible in my home.
- To encourage the student to feel at home and treat him/her as a member of the family rather than as a paying guest.
- Not to host another student of the same native language at the same time unless by special arrangement with the students and the school.
- To provide a clean and comfortable student room, meeting the requirements laid down in this agreement.
- To provide a home environment in which it is possible for the student to carry on his/her English studies properly.
- To provide the student with a balanced, and appropriate diet.
- To show due concern for the welfare, safety and security of the student during his/her stay.
- To give the student reasonable and regular access to bathroom and laundry facilities.
- To maintain a close liaison with the student's school and so be in a position to help resolve any problems that the student may encounter during his/her stay.
- To respect the student's different cultural background and be sensitive to the needs of the student.
- To observe and maintain all the terms and conditions referred to in this agreement.

39 Liability

It should be understood that by signing this agreement with St Giles International, St Giles International is under no obligation to send the homestay provider any students and that the agreement is intended as a set of guidelines and expectations of the obligations of St Giles and the Homestay provider for hosting students of St Giles International. Whether or not St Giles sends bookings to the homestay provider will depend upon a variety of factors, including student demand and the considered appropriateness of the homestay to meet the students' needs.

The liability of St Giles International and its group of Companies, their Directors, Officers, Employees, Affiliates, Agents and Partners, with respect to losses arising from negligence, except where such liabilities cannot be excluded as a matter of law, breach of contract, or otherwise will be limited to the margin retained by St Giles on the full amount paid to it by the relevant student/s for the accommodation provided. Such companies and persons will in no circumstances bear any liability for indirect or consequential losses or damages resulting from the act of hosting students of St Giles International.

You should return a signed copy of this agreement to the school and retain a copy of this complete document for future reference.

Homestay Host:

Surname: _____

Forename: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____