



1-3 Marlborough Place Brighton
East Sussex BN1 1UB

Telephone (01273) 671746

Email: brighton@stgiles.co.uk

Website: www.stgiles-international.com

Hospitality 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 England. 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 guide has been produced to help new as well as experienced homestay providers to provide a good service in offering accommodation to St Giles 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.

We hope you will enjoy being a St Giles Host!

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. According to the Plimsoll analysis of UK English Language course providers, St Giles International was the 7th largest independent provider of English language courses in the UK in 2012, within a field of around 1,000 separate operators and employed an average of 440 staff and over 600 during the summer. Our 2012 turnover exceeded £27M British Pounds Sterling and we were ranked 9th for UK profitability.

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 CEO is a member of the founding family and opened our London Central school in 1987, the largest in the Group. He was St Giles Group Marketing & Commercial Director for 15 years. He was a founding Director of English UK – the National Association for Accredited English language centres in the UK, covering around 450 British Council Accredited schools in Britain.

The St Giles Group now consists of seven medium/large, year-round centres: Brighton, Eastbourne, London Central and London Highgate in the UK; New York and San Francisco in the USA; and Vancouver in Canada along with several franchise schools in Brazil. We also run a thriving Summer Camp operation for 'Juniors' aged 8-18 and last year we ran 14 camps in the UK, USA and Canada. Approximately 14,000 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 the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) and 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 San Francisco and New York City centres are members of the AAIEP - the American Association of Intensive English Language programmes- and accredited by the CEA. The Vancouver centre is an Accredited member of Languages Canada.

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. Last year approximately 500 teachers took courses leading to the Cambridge Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) and Trinity School Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (Cert TESOL), many of whom 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 English UK

As mentioned above, all St Giles Schools in the UK are members of **English UK**, which is the professional association for schools accredited by the British Council. As a condition of continuing accreditation, the British Council carries out regular inspections of all members, covering every aspect of the activities of our Schools. An important requirement of our membership is that all hosts abide by the English UK code of conduct for homestay providers, which is reproduced in section 37 of this document.

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 practice their English outside the classroom, and also because they are interested in learning about English domestic life and culture. Integration in a homestay gives them an ideal opportunity for such an experience and to improve their English. We expect our students to join in and to adapt as much as possible. We have found that homestay providers who put the most energy into hosting students also get the greatest satisfaction.

5 Arriving in England

St Giles Brighton is an international School, taking students from many different countries. For most, it is their first time in England, and many things will be new and bewildering for 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. It is essential that someone is at home to meet students when they first arrive, so we ask you to make appropriate arrangements for someone to be at home all day if students have given you an arrival time. If you must pop out, please leave a contact number on the door. **Do not call the Emergency Telephone in this instance.**

6 Nationality of students in your home

The British Council requires that no students with the same mother tongue are to be 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

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 4 are accommodated this will be classed as a **private home accommodation**. 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.**

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.

11 Cleaning

Students should understand that they are responsible for making their beds and tidying their rooms. 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 you have 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. A rota system may be necessary. 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. Where possible, 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 coin-operated launderette facilities.

14 Meals

You should provide your student with two meals each day. You are not expected to offer a full English breakfast every day, but you should offer a substantial breakfast, including fruit juice, yogurt or cereal, toast, and tea or coffee. 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 students have their main meal with the host **most evenings 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 check with the student on arrival if there is any other dietary need for religious or medical reasons.

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 wish to miss a meal. If a student is away for a day at weekends, they may ask you to provide a packed lunch.

15 Telephone and internet

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

The School provides free internet facilities for during the hours it is open. However many students need to use the internet while in the homestay. We expect you to provide this service – it will mean that we are more likely to place to students with you.

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. Hosts are required by law to carry out a risk assessment on their home.

Please note 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 of the opposite sex should not stay after 11.00 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

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 practice 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

If your student needs medical treatment, he/she should register with your GP, as a temporary resident. If this is not possible, please direct the student to the Accommodation Office at the School, who will provide relevant advice.

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 you are accepting a student at your own risk.

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 in some cases to make allowances for this.

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 the UK in general.

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 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.

23 Transport

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

24 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

25 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 rules apply for students under the age of 16, and you will be informed of these if 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 a special '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. The emergency number is 07816 414 660

26 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.

27 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.

28 Short-stay and long-stay students

We operate a system of differential pricing for students in *standard half-board accommodation* (single or shared), depending on the student's length of stay. Students staying for 1-21 weeks ('short-stay students') pay normal rates, but those who plan *in advance* to stay for 22 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.** Please see the enclosed information sheet giving the current rates.

29 Placements

The Accommodation Officer will normally contact you by telephone 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 refer to the information in section 5 **Arriving in England.**

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

30 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 two weeks in arrears and two weeks in advance. 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 through the BACS system. Money will reach your account by the Friday 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.

31 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.

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 would 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.

32 Absences/holidays/retainers

There is a provision at the booking stage for long-stay students (see section 28) 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 office 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.

33 Cancellation

Cancellation before 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 £75 will be paid.

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.

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 time.

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 22 weeks in order to qualify for the concessionary rate. If a long-stay student changes his/her plans and leaves the homestay before completing 22 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.

34 Problems or changes

The Accommodation and Welfare Officer is available during office hours to discuss any problems you may have with your student.

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 as 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.

35 Income tax

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

36 Students who are under 18 years of age

Due to recent changes in the law, students who are under 18 years of age are now classed as 'minors'. This means that all hosts, and other members of their household who are over 18, accommodating students under 18 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 a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service – Criminal Record) check. Students under 18 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. Students under 18 must also receive written consent from their parents if they

want to travel somewhere that involves an overnight stay. Please read the 'St Giles Brighton Child Safeguarding Policy' which offers more information and guidance on this subject.

37 English UK Code of Conduct

As members of English UK, we are required to ensure that all homestay providers abide by the following code of conduct. It should be understood that by signing your Homestay application form, you have agreed to observe the requirements of this Code as well as the other provisions of this Hospitality Agreement.

As the Homestay provider I agree:

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 schools/centres.

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/centre 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.

You should retain this complete document for future reference.