



WARWICKSHIRE
COLLEGE
GROUP

Student Guide to living in Homestay Accommodation

Homestay accommodation means you will live within the home of a local host. Living with a host family will give you a good introduction to life in the UK and will help with the transition as you settle into life in a new country. A host family is not always two parents and children, many hosts are couples or single people with or without children. Many hosts have pets - usually cats and dogs that live indoors. You may not feel very confident around pets but unless you have an allergy to them, it will be easier to find you accommodation if you can accept them. Please let us know if you are unable to live in a household with pets.

We do our best to try to place you with the most suitable homestay, however this is helped the earlier we receive your application. Ideally we would like at least 2 - 4 weeks' notice to find your accommodation. We try not to place you with students of the same nationality or language together but this is not always possible. We cannot guarantee you will be within walking distance of the college but you should be no more than 35 minutes traveling time away.

We encourage you to take part in family life, as this improves the atmosphere in the home and is a good place to practice your English outside of the classroom. You will need to fit in with the house rules of the family just like any other member of the family.

Here are some tips for establishing and maintaining a good relationship with your host family:

- ♦ The Accommodation office will send you the address and telephone number of the family before you arrive. It may be a good idea to write them a short letter to introduce yourself and let them know the details of when you are expected to arrive at their home.
- ♦ If you change your travel plans please let the accommodation office know immediately so that your host can be informed. If your flight or arrival time is delayed and the accommodation office is closed please contact the host directly and taxi company if applicable.
- ♦ Discuss any house rules as soon as possible with your host so you know what they expect from you and what they allow you to do, e.g. your host may prefer you don't use the shower or bath after 10pm or for longer than 15 minutes.
- ♦ If you are unhappy with something, please discuss it with your host family. If the problem continues, please speak to the accommodation office.

- ♦ Find out what the arrangements are for laundry. Some homestay hosts will show you how to use the washing machine and tell you when you can use it. Other hosts will ask you to give them your laundry and they will wash it for you.
- ♦ Please do not expect your host to iron your clothes. ➔
- ♦ Do NOT use the telephone to make outgoing calls. There are many public phones in the area which accept cards or cash, or you may choose to use a mobile telephone for the duration of your stay. You must ask permission from your host to receive incoming calls.
- ♦ Do NOT expect to have unlimited internet access. If you are lucky enough for your host to allow you to use their broadband then please confirm what usage you have and what times you can use it. If you increase their limit then please be expect to pay for it. Please be courteous, do not disturb your hosts during the night, making long distance phone calls or video messaging.
- ♦ If you are going to stay out overnight, then let your host family know, so that they do not worry about you. If you are under 18 years then you will need your guardian to provide written permission to your host or to the Accommodation office.
- ♦ In some homes you will be expected to prepare your own breakfasts – your host should show you where to find all the necessary utensils.
- ♦ If you are not planning to eat a meal at home, or are going to be late for a meal, tell the host family in plenty of time.
- ♦ Do not use the kitchen or help yourself to food (apart from breakfast time) unless you have agreed this with your host family.
- ♦ Your declared food likes and dislikes will be taken into account when your host prepares the evening meal but you should remember that you are expected to fit in with the usual family diet. Hosts are **not** obliged to provide Halal meat. If you wish the host to cook this you must ask them if they are happy to do so and you may have to source and purchase it yourself.
- ♦ If you break or damage anything, tell your host family as soon as possible and offer to pay for it.
- ♦ Do not leave lights, electric fires or heaters, computers or any other electrical item switched on when you are out. You **MUST** ask before buying or using additional electrical items such as electric heaters, computers etc. in the host home.
- ♦ Keep your room tidy, make your bed, leave the bathroom clean and tidy after using it and remember to use your own shampoo, soap, toothpaste etc...
- ♦ You must not smoke in your homestay accommodation and do not take alcohol in your room.
- ♦ Ask before you bring friends home.
- ♦ You are expected to stay with your host family for at least the first 4 weeks for you to settle in. After the first 4 weeks if you are unhappy and wish to leave your host family, you should give them at least **2 week's notice** and inform the accommodation office. **If you do not give your host notice you will still be expected to pay 2 weeks rent.** If the host family ask you to leave, then they must also give you two weeks notice.

- ♦ Hosts expect payment on arrival of 4 weeks rent and then every 4 weeks thereafter. Ask for a receipt for any money that you pay.
- ♦ Hosts will also require a deposit at the beginning of your stay (usually £250). This will be returned to you, in full, at the end of your stay providing you have not damaged or broken any thing and there is no rent outstanding.
- ♦ If you return home for College holidays (Christmas, Easter & half term) you will usually need to continue paying rent to keep your room and to store your belongings. This is usually a retainer of 30% of your weekly rent. If the host wishes to use the room in your absence they should notify you to remove your belongings and not charge you. You must notify your host of your holiday dates so payment can be worked out in advance. Absence from the host family during the college term time does not affect your rent, as payment is still expected to be paid in full.
- ♦ You will be given a key to the house for your use while you are living there. Please take good care of this and do not keep it with the address of the house. Remember to return the key when you leave.
- ♦ If you do change your address you must inform the accommodation office.

Homestay is not like living in a hotel. Please remember you are a guest in your host's home and that you will be treated like a member of the family. You should treat all members of the household with courtesy and respect at all times.