

Guidelines for Homestay Host Families

Strode College is keen to ensure that both hosts and students get as much enjoyment and satisfaction out of the Homestay experience as possible. We hope that clear, accurate information and a common understanding of requirements will help to guarantee that the student's stay is a success for all concerned. These Guidelines have been created in order to inform hosts of expectations regarding their role and responsibilities as a Homestay host family.

In general Homestay hosts should offer a comfortable home:

- Which is clean, tidy and safe
- Where all members of the household are welcoming to people from different countries and cultures
- Which has a friendly, happy and caring atmosphere
- Where the student is treated as a member of the family rather than as a paying guest

Please note that all adults who normally reside in a Homestay host's home will be checked by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) before placing a student.

Language

The aim of the Homestay experience is to give the students an insight into the English way of life and to expose them to as much English conversation as possible. It is therefore important that English is the main language of communication in the home.

We are specifically looking for hosts who are keen to spend time conversing with the student in English to allow the student maximum benefit from the experience. At first students may find communication difficult so it is important to be supportive and patient. Try to speak slowly and clearly and use simple phrases. If necessary note down what is being said. Students often find reading English easier than understanding the spoken word.

We try to place no more than one student of the same nationality or language in the same Homestay family. It is therefore important to us that our hosts do not house other guests of the same language group whilst our student is resident unless it has been specifically agreed with Strode College.

Bedroom

The student's bedroom should be a private room of at least 6.5 sq m which is not shared with any other person. As a minimum the bedroom should contain a comfortable full size single or double bed, ample drawer and wardrobe space, a mirror, good natural light, waste receptacle, electrical sockets and a window with curtains or blind. It is also useful if the room contains a desk or table and chair which the student can use for study purposes. If there is no desk or chair in the bedroom you should allocate a desk/table and chair elsewhere in the home, which the student can use to study undisturbed. The bedroom should be clean and tidy and adequately lit and heated. You should provide the student with clean hand and bath towels and bed linen (i.e. sheets and blanket or a duvet) weekly and arrange with the student a regular time each week for you to clean their room.

Adequate heating should be provided in the room but it is advisable that students are reminded that heaters should not be left switched on overnight or when they are not there. Extra blankets or an electric fan should be provided if needed.

Some students may not be accustomed to tidying their own clothes or making their own bed. You may have to explain that they must now do these jobs for themselves so that you can clean the room properly.

Bathroom

Your student will expect to be able to take a bath or shower everyday. If the bathroom is shared with others please discuss with your student what the best times are for them to use the bathroom in the morning and in the evening. If you have any particular hot water restrictions or a water meter it is a good idea to make sure your student is aware of them. Ask your student to leave the bathroom clean and tidy after use and make sure that the student understands how to use all the facilities. Female students should be informed of the arrangements for the disposal of sanitary towels.

Meals

Students should be provided with a well-balanced diet of breakfast and an evening meal every day and additional lunches at weekends. If your student would like lunch to be provided for them during the week there will be an extra charge.

Students will not expect to receive a cooked full English breakfast every day but might appreciate it occasionally at weekends. For a normal breakfast you could offer cereal and bread/toast with butter and jam/marmalade accompanied by a drink of fruit juice and tea or coffee. For the evening meal you should try to provide a hot meal which is tasty and nutritious followed by a dessert of some sort. Weekend lunches can be cold e.g. sandwich or salad with a drink and the student can be expected to make their own lunch with the food provided by you.

If a student has particular dietary needs or allergies the College should have been informed and this will be discussed with the potential host. It is a good idea to discuss with your student about the foods they like and dislike when they first arrive. We will endeavour to match the dietary needs of the student with those of the host e.g. placing a vegetarian student with a vegetarian host.

It will also help the student to feel at home if you show them where food is kept and explain what they may help themselves to. If the student wants to eat large quantities of extra food e.g. biscuits or other snacks we would expect them to buy this for themselves and suitable storage should be made available for this.

Mealtimes

Mealtimes are an excellent opportunity for students to communicate and socialise with the members of the household and students and hosts are therefore expected to eat the majority of their meals together. It is a good idea to let your student know the times you generally eat your meals so that he/she can ensure that they return home in time or can let you know if they are going to be late or have made other plans.

Students may sometimes wish to bring a friend home for dinner and we therefore recommend that you talk to your student at the start of their stay about what the general procedure is for inviting guests over. Your student may also offer to share their culture by preparing a meal for your family on occasion.

Laundry

You should provide the student with clean bed linen and clean hand and bath towels every week. It is also expected that you take care of a reasonable amount of the student's personal laundry each week and no extra charge should be made to the student for these services. Students may prefer to launder their own clothes, in which case, please show them how to use the washing machine, drying and ironing facilities.

Telephone

Students must be able to receive incoming phone calls as it is important that the College and members of their family can contact them. We recommend though that you do not allow students to make outgoing calls unless you have a firm agreement with them in advance about charges. However advances in technology such as call barring, credit cards, itemised bills and mobile phones mean that this is less of a problem than it used to be.

Please note that the College cannot be held responsible for any student's telephone bill.

The internet

Many students will have a PC or laptop and you may allow your student to share your broadband connection if available. Alternatively you may allow them to install their own telephone line (at their expense) if they wish to do so but ultimately this is your decision. We do not guarantee internet access in any accommodation but there is access at College (including a wireless network) during opening hours.

If students are fortunate enough to have internet access they are asked by the College not to exploit the facility. They should ask you what is the maximum usage/download cap per month on your broadband contract and understand that even if it is described as "unlimited" it will still be subject to a fair usage policy and you, the host, may incur a penalty if the limit is exceeded.

We ask students to remember that if they wish to do more than just emailing or surfing the internet e.g. if they intend to upload/download photographs, music, video, films or to play online games they should discuss this with you first.

If your broadband package needs to be upgraded to cope with the student's requirements, students are told that you are likely to ask them to pay a contribution towards the increased monthly bill.

Please be aware that you are entitled to prevent your student from using your broadband connection entirely if they do not agree to reasonable use of the facility.

Access

Students should be provided with his or her own front door key which they should return at the end of their stay.

Transport

We do not expect you to drive your student everywhere but instead that they walk, cycle or use public transport where possible. If you are able to bring the student into College for the first few days or for specific activities at the College or in the community then that would be appreciated. Please check with your insurance company if the student will be covered by your insurance in case of accident and advise the student accordingly.

We would ask that you inform your student of the public transport arrangements near your home and the times and fares of the services. Students can obtain further information from the College website.

If your student has a bicycle make sure that they are fully acquainted with the Highway Code before setting off. It would also be helpful if you can provide secure storage for the student's bicycle.

Leisure time

Students will probably enjoy accompanying their Homestay host family on outings and would be grateful for advice about local places of interest, activities and sports facilities. Students will also be encouraged to access the facilities and extra curricular activities available at the College which they will be made aware of throughout their time here.

Safety and security

It is important that students living with you are aware of the risks of fire and any other hazards in your home. You should point out to them the means of escape and the actions to take in the event of a fire. If you have young children please make your student aware of particular safety issues that they may not be aware of e.g. keeping hazardous items out of their reach, use of stair-gates etc.

Locking up

It is a good idea to explain any arrangements for household security to the student e.g. what should be locked by the last person leaving or entering the house and if there are any security alarms to be set.

Valuables

It would be helpful if you can provide students with a safe place where they can leave valuable items such as passports, air tickets etc.

Smoke alarms and fire blankets

To comply with health and safety regulations we request you install and regularly check (once a week) smoke detectors in appropriate areas (minimum of one per storey) and that a fire blanket is available in all kitchen/cooking areas.

Gas safety

It is recommended that you install a carbon monoxide detector in a suitable location in your home.

You are required to have any gas appliances in your home serviced by a Gas Safe registered engineer every 12 months. At the beginning of your student's stay you will be asked to

provide evidence of gas safety for any gas appliances or installations in the home. This could be a copy of your annual gas service record, receipt for service or a gas service safety certificate.

Please be aware that as from 1 April 2009 any businesses or self-employed persons carrying out work on gas appliances or installations should by law be registered members of the Gas Safe Register. This replaces the CORGI gas registration scheme as the official gas safety body. All Gas Safe registered engineers carry an ID card with their licence number and a photograph. For further information call the Health and Safety Executive Gas Safety Advice Line 0800 300 363.

Insurance

It is important that you inform your insurance company, in writing, that you are now hosting a student and you must ensure that you have adequate cover. Strode College strongly recommends that hosts make sure that their household insurance policy covers them for accidental damage to property. Hosts should also ensure that they have insurance to cover them for any liability in the unlikely event that the student should suffer an accident or injury during their stay. Strode College cannot accept liability for claims, damages or costs, except arising as a result of the College's negligence. For further information you can contact the Association of British Insurers on 020 7600 3333 or via their website www.abi.org.uk

Not informing your insurance company could invalidate the policy.

Wellbeing

E-safety

We ask all our students to be careful about sharing their personal information online and to discuss any suspicions about anyone they have met via the internet with their Homestay host family or a member of the Student Support Team.

First Aid and medication

There may be occasions when you need to administer some first aid or provide your student with some non-prescription medication. Please always remember to ask if they are allergic to anything. Ensure that medication is kept in a cupboard, in its original packaging, with any instructions or information that came with the medication.

Your student's personal safety

In the unlikely event that your student is involved in an accident or is taken ill when away from their Homestay accommodation or Strode College the emergency services will search their mobile phone for "ICE numbers". ICE stands for In Case of Emergency.

Students are asked to ensure that they store on their mobile phone at least 2 UK telephone numbers listed as:

ICE1 ICE2

For example:

Contact name:

ICE1

ICE2

ICE3

Telephone number:

Strode College's emergency mobile phone number

Their Homestay host family's telephone number

Their UK guardian's telephone number

Illness

The student should register with a GP and dentist when they arrive so that an appointment can be made when necessary. You should let us know if your student is ill as we may need to inform the student's guardian or family. Students whose course of study is for 6 months or more will qualify for NHS medical treatment on the same basis as anyone who is ordinarily resident in the UK.

Absence

If your student wishes to go away at a weekend or overnight it is essential for you to know where they are with a contact telephone number and address. It is the student's responsibility to provide you with accurate information. If you are in any doubt about the suitability of the arrangement please tell us so that we can make enquiries and gain parental permission if necessary.

If your student is absent and has not informed you of any plans please notify the College at the earliest opportunity.

Curfew

You should consider what time you would like to set as a curfew and agree this with your student on arrival. It would normally be expected that students under the age of 18 will be in their accommodation by 11.00 pm, however there will be occasions when this can be negotiated. They should always tell you where they are going in the evening and provide you with a contact telephone number and address. If you would like guidance/support in setting a curfew please contact the Accommodation & Welfare Officer or the Student Support Manager.

You staying away overnight

If you are planning to go away overnight, please tell us. In the case of students who are under 18 years of age, an adult who has a CRB certificate must be on the premises overnight. If this is not possible, it will be necessary for us to find alternative accommodation for your student while you are away. If your student is over 18 and happy with the arrangement the student can be left alone for a night or two. In either case please could you let us know when you are going away, for how long, how we can contact you in an emergency and what arrangements have been made for the student e.g. in respect of food.

Religion

Although not all members of a religion are equally devout in practice, for some, religion is not merely a code of conduct but it dictates their way of life. Students' beliefs should be respected and received with an open mind. Religion can also provide security for some in an alien environment. Strode College may be able to help students contact local community groups if they wish to practise their religion.

Relationships

Some students may find attitudes to men, women and relationships very different from what they are used to. Men from some cultures may have problems accepting authority from females as it is highly unusual in their own country. Women may feel uncomfortable complaining about something as they are afraid that it may be taken as an insult.

Hygiene

Practice differs around the world on many things we take for granted. For example some may be shocked to find that household pets have access to most areas of the house

including the kitchen and that pets are not bathed regularly. Many cultures prefer a shower to a bath as sitting in dirty water is seen as unhygienic. Try not to be alarmed by unusual behaviour or comments but try tactfully to explain the facilities in your house.

Friends/family

Students are expected to ask your permission before inviting friends round to your home. You should make clear at arrival what you expect from them and agree how late in the evening the student's friends can stay.

You are under no obligation to provide accommodation for a student's family. We recommend that visiting family members arrange hotel or bed and breakfast accommodation during their visits.

Smoking

Please ensure that your student understands your policy on smoking. If you allow them to smoke make it clear where they can and cannot smoke.

Behaviour

Students are expected to sign an agreement to the Guidelines for Students in Homestay at the beginning of their stay. These Guidelines outline the standards of behaviour expected from our students and can be viewed on the College website.

Students are obliged to abide by the Strode College Student Code of Conduct. Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct can lead to disciplinary action with the possibility of exclusion from College. Copies of the Student Code of Conduct and College Charter will be made available to students on enrolment. Students will also be informed of the College Student Disciplinary Procedures and Student Complaints Procedure.

Correspondence from the College

The College cannot give information to parents (or anyone else*) relating to a student's academic progress, attendance or social development without the student giving consent to the College to disclose information.

*Information about a student's application, enrolment, attendance and progress at Strode College may be passed to the Home Office for purposes connected with immigration.

First few days

We suggest that you discuss the following with your student during the first few days:

- Mealtimes and dietary requirements
- Use of the kitchen
- Use of the bathroom
- Escape route in case of fire
- Where they can keep valuables e.g. passport
- Laundry
- Can they put pictures on their bedroom wall?
- What happens at weekends?

- Use of the telephone/internet
- Can they bring their friends home?
- Can they use their own TV, laptop etc in their bedroom?
- How late can they stay up studying or listening to music without disturbing the family?
- Locking up the house/setting house alarm
- Cultural/religious needs
- Buses to College/surrounding area
- Local shops and amenities
- Any other details that you feel they may need to know regarding their safety and security

It is suggested that when your student arrives both you and the student look at the student's living area together and complete and sign a checklist which describes the condition and contents of it. Photographs may also be taken if desired.

Your responsibility for student welfare

Under the Education Act 2002 and the Children's Act 2004, the College has special responsibilities to students less than 18 years of age, to safeguard and promote their welfare at all times, including time spent out of College and away from lodgings. As you are caring for our students, this responsibility is also yours, and so we ask you to always report anything of concern. We would like you to contact us if you think your student is unhappy or depressed or you may think that they have too much work pressure or are showing signs of an eating disorder. Any concerns like these would warrant a call to the Accommodation & Welfare Officer or the Student Support Manager. In the Student Support Centre we have a support network for students and a team of qualified College Counsellors whom students can contact confidentially.

Please inform the Accommodation & Welfare Officer should an adult become a regular overnight visitor to your home as we will need to arrange for them to be checked by the Criminal Records Bureau.

Payment Details 2011/2012

<u>Term Dates</u>	<u>Autumn</u>	<u>Spring</u>	<u>Summer</u>
Term Starts	5 September 2011 (new students) 7 September 2011 (returning students)	3 January 2012	16 April 2012
Half Term Starts	24 October 2011	13 February 2012	4 June 2012
Half Term Ends	28 October 2011	17 February 2012	8 June 2012
Term Ends	16 December 2011	29 March 2012	27 June 2012

Accommodation Fees

Payment weeks run from Monday to Sunday.

Weekly Rate £110

To include accommodation, breakfast and evening meal Monday to Friday and breakfast, lunch and evening meal on Saturday and Sunday.

Weekly Rate £120

To include accommodation, breakfast, packed lunch and evening meal Monday to Friday and breakfast, lunch and evening meal on Saturday and Sunday.

Part Week Rate

Weekly Rate £110		Weekly Rate £120	
Days	Rate	Days	Rate
1	£15.72	1	£17.14
2	£31.44	2	£34.28
3	£47.16	3	£51.42
4	£62.88	4	£68.56
5	£78.60	5	£85.70
6	£94.32	6	£102.84
7	£110	7	£120

Payment

The student's parents will be invoiced at the beginning of each term and pay the College for one term's accommodation fees. The College then pay the Homestay host family. Payment will be made on a weekly basis.

Payment will be made to the Homestay host family's bank account on the Friday for that week.

No retainer is paid to the Homestay host family over the academic holiday periods (including half terms) if/when the student is not present. Students should be allowed to leave their belongings in their room.

No payment is made to the Homestay host family when the student is on holiday or absent from their accommodation for another reason. If they do not stay in their accommodation for a full week the provider will be paid the part-week rate as detailed above. If we are notified of a student's travel plans after the relevant payment run the College will claw back any overpayment following the period of absence.

Students should not be required by their host to vacate their room at any point during the Homestay period, unless in an emergency situation.

Tax and benefits

Before agreeing to become a Homestay provider, potential hosts are strongly recommended to check with the Department of Work and Pensions and/or HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) to see how taking a student in may affect their entitlement to any benefits and/or tax credits they may receive.

Income is taxable. You should therefore keep a record of income and expenses incurred in connection with each student. As you can set not only the cost of food and heating but also a share of general household expenses such as insurance, rates etc against this income you may find that very little tax will be payable. Under recent legislation gross annual income from letting furnished accommodation which does not exceed £4250 is exempt from income tax. Those who receive gross annual rents in excess of £4250 can choose between:

- Paying tax on the amount by which their gross rents exceed £4250 without any separate tax relief for allowable expenses, or

- Calculating their profit from letting (gross rents less actual expenses) and paying tax on that profit in the normal way.

We are legally required by the Department of Work and Pensions and the HMRC to supply details of payments made to hosts on request.

Council Tax

It is your responsibility to inform the local authority of any change in residence that may affect liability or the amount of the bill and you could be charged a penalty if you fail to do so. The College can provide on request a Council Tax certificate showing that the student who resides in your property is a full time student.

The Homestay period

The period covered by this agreement is for the duration of the academic year 2011/12. The arrangement between the host and Strode College covers only the period specified in the agreement. Any arrangements made outside of this period are between the student, the student's parents (where appropriate) and the host family and are the responsibility of those parties.

Accommodation is arranged by the College from the day before the student's course begins (5 September 2011 for new students or 7 September 2011 for returning students) to the day after it ends (27 June 2012) including half terms but excluding Christmas, Easter and summer vacations. If a student wishes to stay with their Homestay host family during these vacations it will be a private arrangement between the host family, the student and the student's parents (where appropriate). Homestay host families are not expected by the College to host their student outside the Homestay period. If, however, the Homestay host family does want to host their student during a vacation the College expect that the fee charged to the student's parents is at the same rate as during term time e.g. £110 excluding weekday lunches or £120 including weekday lunches. The College will not be responsible for the student during these vacations and the emergency telephone will not be staffed.

Vacation periods 2011/2012

Christmas	Saturday 17 December 2011	Monday 2 January 2012
Easter	Friday 30 March 2012	Sunday 15 April 2012
Summer	Thursday 28 June 2012	To be confirmed

It is expected that hosts will allow the Accommodation & Welfare Officer to visit their home on a prearranged basis before and/or during the Homestay period.

Cancellations/transfers

Once an arrangement has been made to place a student with you it is deemed to be firm and all reasonable efforts should be made to honour it. If however you are forced to break off the arrangement due to a change in personal circumstances we will endeavour to transfer the student to new accommodation within one week of being notified.

Except in exceptional circumstances students are expected to remain in their Homestay accommodation for at least the first half of term in order to allow time to settle at College and adjust to living in the UK and with their host family. The student's parents may be

charged by you, the Homestay host family, if they require their son/daughter to move earlier than this.

If a student has a valid reason for wanting to leave their Homestay accommodation that cannot be resolved satisfactorily between the student, the host and the College we will endeavour to transfer the student to new accommodation within one week of being notified.

Agency

In booking accommodation for students and making payments on their behalf the College is providing a service for the convenience of its students and is not acting as their agent. The College cannot accept responsibility for any damage caused by students in the home nor will it pay compensation for any such damage. Please refer to the section on Insurance on page 5.

Data Protection

Strode College is registered with the UK Information Commissioner under the 1998 Data Protection Act (UK). For the purposes of managing the Homestay accommodation service we will hold information about you in paper and electronic format. We will only share this information with UK statutory organisations, including the UK Border Agency, our education agents, banks and medical services and will not share it with any other party.

You are required to consent to the College processing your information, but if you do not consent then we will be unable to manage an appropriate Homestay accommodation service and your services will not be utilised. You have the right to request to view your personal information for a small fee.

College emergency telephone number

A 24 hour emergency telephone number will be supplied to you as a Homestay host family. In case of emergency Homestay host families are asked to ring this number and the College can contact the parents/guardian of the student if necessary. This mobile telephone will only be staffed during the Homestay period specified (please refer to page 10). If students remain with Homestay host families outside of this period the student is responsible for supplying you with their emergency contact details.

All students living in Homestay accommodation are also provided with this number for use only during the Homestay period.

Feedback

We are always concerned that both students and hosts enjoy their experience of Homestay so will contact you once a term to make sure that everything is OK.

And finally....

The Homestay experience can make or break a student's visit to the UK and leave a lasting impression of British life and citizens. We want to encourage hosts to view the experience not merely in commercial terms but also as an exciting opportunity to learn about the

student's home country and way of life, a real 'cultural exchange'. Hosts can also play a very active part in helping the student to improve their English which can be truly rewarding.

Hosts should try to make their student feel part of the family and involve them in their normal daily life. Try to encourage them to speak as much in English as possible and be patient if they make mistakes!

Contact details

Annabel Mitchell: Accommodation & Welfare Officer
Tel: 01458 844477 (Thursdays and Fridays)
Email: amitchell@strode-college.ac.uk

Bill Scott: Student Support Manager
Tel: 01458 844454
Email: bscott@strode-college.ac.uk

Please note that when a student has been placed with you, you will be asked to sign an agreement to these guidelines and to give us your consent to process your personal data.