



Homestay Handbook

24-hour Emergency Phone Number: 07919425660

Hosting International Students

Updated July 2020

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The following Policies will be sent with Homestay Handbook

- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- **Bulling, including Cyber-bulling & E-Safety Guidelines (Appendix 5 of Safeguarding)**
- **Welfare, Health and Safety Statement**
- **Missing Student Policy (Appendix 4 of Safeguarding)**
- **Complains Policy & Emergency Procedure**
- **Anti-Radicalisation – Prevent Duty Policy (Appendix 6 of Safeguarding)**
- **Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice (in Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy – Appendix 3 of Safeguarding)**

1. Introduction:

1.1. About Student

Your visitor will normally be attending a private boarding school in the UK. Many of these schools offer fixed "Exeat" weekends in addition to the normal half-term holidays. During these periods, the boarding houses close giving staff and students a break, and the students are required to have alternative accommodation arrangements.

When your student first arrives at your home it is important to be welcoming and understanding, as staying in an unfamiliar environment can be an anxious time for a young person. So although students will sometimes spend time in their room working or playing, access to your living areas to watch TV, chat with your family or relax is invaluable. We always ask our hosts try to include our students within the routines of your family as possible and provide a homely environment.

1.2. Level of English

A student's command of English may at first be limited and initially they may not communicate with you very much. Imagine yourself in the students' situation! Please treat your student, as you would wish your own children to be treated if they were staying with a host family, and hosting will be a rewarding experience.

Most students are interested in the host family they are staying with and like to chat about experiences in their own country and here. It is good to involve them in helping you around the house, perhaps asking them to set the table, calling other students or family members to the table, make tea or coffee for everyone etc. Try them on a few of the following family activities: cinema visit, visit to town centre, supermarket or local shopping centre, swimming, cooking.

Don't worry if the students want to spend some time 'chilling out', lying in or playing computer games. School life can be very busy, and some relaxation time is often what is needed.

1.3. Cultural & Religious Differences

As a host family you may find that the most difficult part of hosting a student will be resolving cultural differences. Knowing a little about some of these cultural differences may help you identify a misunderstanding before it becomes a problem.

Here are some of the ***cultural differences*** we hear about most often:

-  Some students find it difficult to accept the control and supervision of their host family. Students may not understand that the new country not always is a safe place, and that it is important you know where they are at all times. You may need to talk together about why it is important for you and your family to know where our student is and with whom. Express your thoughts and concerns clearly and openly.
-  Discipline can also differ from culture to culture. Share your family's disciplinary standards with our student and so student understands all of your house rules.
-  We give our students guidelines on what is acceptable in the UK compared to their culture.

Religious differences:

As we all know, the topic of religion can be sensitive and sometimes controversial. Naturally you might have different views and your student may not wish to follow your religious practices and activities. We ask that you respect their beliefs and religious preferences. These differences, when discussed in a positive manner, can contribute significantly to the student experience. You will see their religion listed on their profile.

1.4. House Pets

Many British households own pets. Different cultures view pets in many different ways. Some cultures view

man's best friend, a dog, as unclean. Some cultures fear cats, as being superstitious links to the unknown. Do not be insulted if your student shows genuine fear or discomfort to be around the family pets. Quite often it just takes time and patience for the student to adjust.

If you have any concerns either before or during your student's homestay, please do not hesitate to contact us.

2. Your responsibilities as Host Family

During the times that you are hosting, your responsibilities are to protect, care for and provide full board and lodging for your student on a day-to-day basis. Please exercise the same level of care as a responsible parent – 'in loco parentis'.

The overall guardianship responsibility remains with My Guardians, whom you should contact whenever a situation arises in which you are uncertain as to the appropriate action to take. Untoward occurrences, such as hospitalization, unexplained student absences or other situations effecting student safety, should be reported to My Guardians immediately. Specifically, should a student we have booked in with you, not arrive within 1 hour of when you are expecting them, it is your duty to advise us of this matter and we will follow up.

Host families are not allowed to contact schools or parents, all communications should be conducted via My Guardians.

3. What Student can expect from Host Family

3.1. Bedroom

Each student should have his or her own room or share with someone of a similar age and of the same sex. Ideally, boys' and girls' bedrooms should be on different floors.

The students should be provided with a comfortable bed, wardrobe, drawers and a study desk or a table with a lamp and a chair, Internet access for daytime use will be also required.

My Guardians needs to be aware of all students' sleeping arrangements in your house, so please confirm these to us, particularly if there are students from alternative organisations. There could only be a maximum total of three students in a Host Family, so if we are not aware of any others you have booked in, please inform us when overall numbers will be greater than three.

3.2. Meals

If the student has any food allergies or religious considerations with food types, we will inform you about these particularities prior to his or her arrival.

Breakfast must consist of:

- ✚ Various cereals with milk,
- ✚ Toast with butter and jam to be made available,
- ✚ Fruit juice and a choice of tea, coffee, hot chocolate.

However, many students would greatly appreciate a traditional English cooked breakfast on weekends.

Lunch can be:

- ✚ A light meal, soup and bread, or sandwiches,
- ✚ But a jacket potato, cheese on toast, or maybe pasta or noodles could be offered as an alternative, with some salad, fruit or a yoghurt, etc.

Evening meal must consist of:

- ✚ Meat or fish with potatoes or rice or pasta and vegetables,
- ✚ Hot or cold dessert or fruit and/or cheese,
- ✚ Bread or similar should be available if requested,
- ✚ Cold water, tea, coffee, hot chocolate.

Snacks, something like biscuit or cake or some fruit should be available.

A hot drink and a biscuit before going to bed would be appreciated, especially if the dinner is early.

Table manners and food preferences vary from culture to culture. Ask the student if there are any foods he or she likes or dislikes.

Some cultures chew with their mouths open. Some cultures do not use verbal manners as part of their everyday conversation. To help them fit in it might be helpful to teach your student a few courtesy phrases such as, "Please pass the..." or "Thank you for the..."

At first, participation in mealtime conversations may be limited as speaking English can be stressful, as well as, some cultures do not encourage conversations during meals.

3.3. Bathroom

Discuss suitable times for students to use the bathroom, and make sure your student knows how to use the shower, toilet facilities, and where to put any rubbish. You may also suggest a maximum time for a shower, e.g. 10 minutes. Ask them to leave the bathroom clean and tidy.

Ideally, students should have access to a bathroom, which is not shared with any adult member of the host family. Bathroom should have a bathroom door lock fitted.

3.4. Internet Access

Students expect access to an Internet connection, preferably wireless. The Internet is an essential and cost effective way for students to keep in touch with friends and family and may also be required for homework. However, we would advise that you suggest a time limit be set and informed. Please read a relevant section in our Safeguarding Policy about Internet Access.

Students should not need to use your telephone landline, although some have prepayment cards to ring home to their parents. They should always ask for your permission.

3.5. Laundry

Particularly over a half term, students will have some laundry. Please let your student know where they can put their laundry and the days that you use your machine.

4. Guidance on the AEGIS Basic Homestay Checklist

Host family responsibilities:

- ✚ **Always respect the rights, religion and culture of the student.**

The host family should respect the student's religious beliefs, rights and cultural differences, and student should respect theirs. Host families may invite students to attend worship services as part of the cultural experience, but students are not required to participate.

- ✚ **Ensure the collecting and returning of the student from and to school in accordance with the school timetable at half terms and exeat weekends, as agreed.**

My Guardians provides all host families and drivers with the time for collection of each student, as stated by the school. If there are any changes in the school timetable, My Guardians will contact host families immediately.

✚ Not release care of the student without the relevant prior agreement.

Host families are not allowed to release care of the student unless they receive the consent of students' parents along with permission from those people the student will be staying with and all arrangements are discussed in advance with My Guardians.

✚ Exercise the same caution as a responsible parent in allowing a student to stay somewhere other than in the host family home.

Host families are not allowed to let the student go anywhere by themselves, unless they receive the consent of students' parents, along with permission from those people the student will be staying with and all arrangements are discussed in advance with My Guardians.

✚ Keep in adequate contact with parents, the student, and the school as appropriate and as agreed. Emergency contact details must be provided to all.

In emergency Host families should keep in touch with parents, students and schools as appropriate and as agreed. My Guardians provides emergency contact details to each host family, student and parents (see Guidelines for host families, Student Handbook and Parent Handbook).

✚ Care for the student in the home, as would a responsible and caring parent.

Host families sign the contract where they agree to look after and care for the student in the home, as would a responsible and caring parent.

✚ When providing accommodation in the home, the host family should take day-to-day responsibility for the student while he/she is residing there, assimilating the student into the family as far as possible and being available and willing to receive a student into the home when necessary and as agreed.

My Guardians explains to host families that they should act as responsible parents would and make a student feel welcome in their house.

✚ Use only reasonable, appropriate and lawful means of control and contact with the student so as to provide comfort to the student if in distress and to maintain safety and good order in the home. Corporal punishment must not be used.

Each host family has to provide comfort to the student if in distress and to maintain safety and good order in the home. No corporal punishment must be used and any instance will be reported in accordance with Safeguarding and child protection policy and procedure.

✚ Be at home when the international student is there and providing suitable living and studying accommodation.

My Guardians ensures that host families are at home when their students are there by issuing clear guidance to them (see Homestay Handbook) and by contacting students directly.

✚ Not accept paying guests into the household, or be running a bed and breakfast, whilst providing hosting services in the home for an international student.

Host families are not allowed to accept paying guests into the household, or be running a bed and breakfast, whilst providing hosting services in the home for an international student according to the contract with My Guardians.

✚ Provide a consistently good standard of accommodation and meals, where this is part of the arrangements made.

My Guardians ensures that host families provide consistently good standards of accommodation and meals to each student by issuing clear guidance to them.

✚ Allow a representative of guardianship organisation to inspect the suitability of the accommodation at least once a year.

All host families have to allow a representative of My Guardians to inspect the suitability of the accommodation at least once a year according to our policies and procedures.

✚ **Attend any relevant induction or other training offered by guardianship organisation.**

My Guardians ensures that all host families take Basic Awareness training in accordance with Safeguarding and child protection policy and procedure.

✚ **Ensure that adequate insurance arrangements are in place for home and Car and adequate attention to health and safety in the home.**

During registration process for host families My Guardians ensures that all of them have insurance for home and car and each host family pays attention to health and safety in their home.

Compliance with this policy will be monitored through on-going supervision and periodic reviews.

My Guardians do not have day students and do not intend to have day students with homestays, as our expertise is based with providing care for boarding school students. However if we were to decide to have a day student, we know that the Local Authority needs to be informed and private fostering needs to be arranged. We would ensure compliance with the Private Fostering legislation and report to the Local Authority as appropriate.

5. What Host Family can expect from Student

Students have guidelines on staying in a Host Family, and although they are paying guests and don't have particular duties or chores, they are expected to be polite and courteous, and you should give them friendly guidance on this if required. It is likely that your student will have a lot of schoolwork and possibly revision to do during the holiday period, so they may spend more time in their bedroom than you would expect. Please also be aware of cultural and background differences; they normally prefer to play computer games rather than walk in the countryside!

5.1. Times to be home

My Guardians has guidelines for students on times to be home:

- ✚ Aged under 14 years old must be accompanied by an adult member of their host family.
- ✚ Aged 14 year olds should be home no later than 21.00pm
- ✚ Aged 15-16 years old - 22.00 pm at the latest
- ✚ Aged 17-18 years old - no later than 23.00 pm.

Our students are asked not go to bed too late and be respectful of the family by being quiet during the night when people are sleeping. Recommended bedtime would be 22.00pm-23.00pm, depending on student's age. Students are asked to keep in contact with their host and inform hosts what time to expect them home. If student is delayed, he or she must phone the host family immediately. If student are in serious difficulty, they are also advised to phone My Guardians emergency number and possibly call the police on 999.

5.2. Students are not allowed to do:

- ✚ **Staying away overnight** from their host families, for instance, with their friends or relatives, unless My Guardians have already received specific permission, in writing, from students' parents.
- ✚ **Friends staying overnight** – students must not have other friends to stay overnight unless they have contacted My Guardians for consent beforehand.
- ✚ Having any **friends of the opposite sex** in their bedroom.
- ✚ Using the **host family's phone or computer** without their permission.
- ✚ **Hair colour and body piercing** are forbidden. Schools do not allow the students to colour their hair and students may not use hair dye in hosts' homes. Same rules apply for body piercing.
- ✚ **Smoking** is not allowed at school or while staying with host families. UK law prohibits the sale of tobacco products to children under the age of 16. Our students are very much familiar about these rules but if you feel you should remind them while they are staying at your home, please do so!
- ✚ **Drugs:** The use of all non-prescription drugs is illegal for anyone in the UK, selling or possessing drugs is against UK law. This means that students may only take medical drugs and

medicines issued by their own doctor, hospital doctor or those that you can buy from the chemist without a prescription. Any incidents involving drugs should be reported to My Guardians immediately. My Guardians will contact parents and send back home any student using, selling or possessing drugs.

- ✚ **Alcohol:** In UK students have to be 18 years of age to be able to buy and drink alcohol. These restrictions are one of the important rules laid down by UK boarding schools. Same rules apply while staying with host family.

If you, as a host family, have any concerns or questions, please contact My Guardians.

5.3. The Use of Restraint

Restraining a child is never acceptable. Corporal punishment is illegal and must never be used. Host families must be aware that they use only reasonable, appropriate and lawful means of control and contact with students so as to provide comfort if the student is in distress and to maintain safety and good order in the home. If there is any form of physical restraint then the homestay must contact My Guardians immediately to explain the circumstances.

5.4. Dealing with Homesickness

Most students will experience homesickness at some point during their stay, and this is not unusual. What you can do if your student experiences homesickness:

- ✚ Encourage your student to become involved in activities with your family. This will help your student to be more active and take his or her mind off home and family and help them to make friends.
- ✚ If your student misses food from home, help your student cook a traditional dish to share with your family.
- ✚ Remember that if your student is sad, it is usually homesickness, not a reflection on your family or home. Help your student by communicating and providing a warm, supportive environment.
- ✚ You should notify My Guardians if the student is encountering any exceptional problems such as anxieties about family matters or serious homesickness.

6. What Host Family can expect from My Guardians

6.1. Communications:

Arrangements regarding the student, school and transfer times will be confirmed to you in writing prior to arrival. We will visit your house each year and you can contact My Guardians at any time should you have any queries or concerns.

We will make contact with you, as a host family, during our student's stay to check that both parties are happy with how the stay is going.

6.2. 24 Hour support:

My Guardians is available to offer assistance and support, where necessary, for both the host family and the student. If you feel the student is having any problems please contact My Guardians straight away and we will do all we can to help and assist whenever necessary.

6.3. Payment:

Housekeeping Allowance: We have a standard rate per night, which will be clarified with you at the time of booking. We are able to confirm in advance, and in writing, the amount you will be paid for the student's stay.

Expenses: My Guardians will pay your mileage if you collect the student from school (currently 45p per mile). If the student has no pocket money we can also cover the cost of the student's entrance for activities

such as swimming or cinema (to a maximum of £30, but please ring if in doubt). All claims should be supported by itemized receipts and sent to our office, as expenses are added to the parents' account. Payment is made direct to your bank, using the BACS system.

6.4. Contractual Arrangements:

Please note that due to the guardianship contractual arrangements between My Guardians and you, the Homestay family, as well as our contract with the students and their parents, all arrangements must be done through My Guardians Office.

7. Health and Safety.

- ✚ Please make sure all electrical appliances in your home are safe, particularly in the student's room.
- ✚ Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors must be fitted in your home.
- ✚ **Gas Safety Certificate** should be provided to you by a 'Gas Safe' engineer, a copy of which we will ask you to send to us.
- ✚ We ask all our host families to explain to the students basic escape routes, access to the outside doors, and the location of any necessary keys, which can be used in cases of emergency.

8. Student Illness.

In case of student illness or accident, take the same precautions as you would with your own child. If in doubt, your first course of action should be to contact your family doctor in the usual way. The student would have been registered with the NHS by the school. If the illness becomes more serious or hospitalization ensues, or treatment at your local A&E is necessary, you should immediately ring My Guardians emergency number: 07919 425 660.

9. Mobile Phone Numbers.

Swap numbers, so they are known to all parties, as well as land line and any other useful contact numbers. As a host, you should at all times know where your visitor is and be able to contact him/her if required.

10. Household and Car Insurance.

My Guardians Ltd has Professional Liability and Indemnity Insurance, but **host families must have household contents insurance**. Standard policies include cover for accidental damage by visitors and third party liability insurance. Please inform your Insurer that you will have a student visitor in your home.

Standard car insurance policies cover the holder for a minimum of third party claims whilst the car is being used for domestic, social and pleasure purposes, but not for business. If in doubt, you should consult your insurer.

11. Safeguarding and Child Protection.

At My Guardians we take our responsibility for our students very seriously and we have therefore implemented Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy setting guidelines that all our staff must follow to ensure that our students are protected from harm (Appendix 1).

My Guardians is committed to the protection of all children in its care. Our aim is to ensure at all times a caring and secure environment in which students feel safe, respected and valued. We have a policy of trust, openness and clear communication between students, schools, My Guardians personnel and our Homestay Families. Our students' welfare is our top priority.

Please read all relevant sections in our Safeguarding Policy:

Bullying including Cyber-bullying & E-Safety Guidelines.

My Guardians produced guidelines for students on how to deal with any bullying issues they or their friends may be facing. We are asking all our host families to familiarize themselves with these guidelines.

Safe Use of the Internet.

My Guardians produced guidelines for students and host families concerning safe use of the Internet. Please see more details in our Safeguarding Policy.

Prevent / Anti-radicalisation.

My Guardians has a suitable policy to cover the aspects of anti-radicalisation, it relates to all relevant points contained in the latest version of the government guidance; The Prevent Duty: for schools and childcare providers. And prevent Duty Guidance.

If you have any Safeguarding concerns, contact the Child Protection Officer Mrs. Irina Bowman on 07919425660.

12. DBS check, training and updates:

As a Homestay family, you will be expected to protect the students that you host and you will be required to have a valid Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure. Host will be required to complete online Basic Awareness Training (formerly Level 1 Safeguarding).

My Guardians is currently going through AEGIS application process.

As part of the application process we are required to inform our host families that they must co-operate when there is an inspection by AEGIS or any other statutory body. We informed our host families that a meeting with the host family and access to their accommodation at a pre-arranged time might be necessary.

We kindly asked hosts to cooperate during the inspection and received their reassurance that we will be fully supported by hosts during the process of inspection.

13. Guardianship Responsibilities during Contagious Pandemic.

My Guardians responsibilities as per MYG Statement on COVI-19 dated 27th May 2020.

What My Guardians will do during this current pandemic time?

 We continue to monitor the situation regularly and to follow the advice of Public Health England (PHE).

 We also follow advice and are part of Safe Schools UK who, in turn, refer to the Boarding Schools' Association (BSA) and follow their Covid-Safe Charter.

 My Guardians offer accommodations in host families for our guardianship students who remain in the UK and who have not been able to travel home.

 The UK government imposes a 14-day quarantine on international arrivals from 8th June. This rule will be reviewed every three weeks.

 My Guardians committed to assisting schools and parents in the safe return of students in the Autumn 2020.

My Guardians commitment to helping students returns safely to UK boarding schools

- ✚ My Guardians personnel are committed to assisting schools and parents in the safe return of students in the Autumn 2020.

Coordination of Flights and UK travel.

- ✚ It is likely that some travel will need to be planned at the last minute as flights become available. My Guardians pledge to be working with emergency assistance available 24/7 throughout the summer break to facilitate the immediate assistance required for parents arranging flights for arriving students.

Safe Travel Arrangements.

- ✚ We recommend that parents choose My Guardians to organise airport transfers with drivers who are experienced with picking up international boarding students and who are committed to abiding by strict social distancing and hygiene standards.

Quarantine facilities.

- ✚ Where schools are unable to assist with quarantine, My Guardians will assist, in some exceptional cases, in host families who are prepared and equipped to offer this service.

If boarding students display COVID-19 symptoms whilst at school:

- ✚ My Guardians will follow Public Health England advice and are therefore not permitted to move a symptomatic student from their household unit. Host families are not in a position to take over the care of students with suspected COVID-19. Schools also follow Public Health England advice and that of the Safe Schools UK and BSA Charters and provide isolation on school premises for such students.

If students display symptoms whilst at a host family provided by My Guardians.

- ✚ Host families sign up to a COVID-19 Charter and Policy when taking in students and would continue to care for students who display symptoms whilst at their home. They would follow medical advice and would liaise closely with My Guardians that will keep the school and overseas parents fully informed of the situation.

School holidays.

- ✚ My Guardians will work closely with schools to offer clear guidance to students and their parents on the best course of action for the October half term and Christmas holidays 2020. If students remain in the UK, and are not able to stay at school, MYG will be able to assist with accommodation.

In the event of a school closure.

- ✚ In the event of a prolonged school closure, My Guardians would continue to follow the advice of the Department for Education and Public Health England.

The procedure for My Guardians is set out below.

Healthy students must ultimately and as soon as is practicable either:

- Return home,
- Be looked after by their parents,
- Be looked after by another responsible adult (family friend/relative 25 years+).

✚ My Guardians will support the school with the student's forward planning, providing they have not been to, come from or had contact with anyone from an affected area, by providing host family accommodation for healthy students, while they make alternative accommodation arrangements. This may be with their regular long-term host family or with their short-term family. Provision of host family has extended for several months so far this year when schools closed in March as flights were not available and some students are still in the UK with host families to this day.

✚ If there is a school closure and students at the affected school are displaying symptoms and/or awaiting test results for COVID-19, My Guardians are unable to accommodate these students in host families, due to the risk to the host family and wider communities. Any such student will need to remain within the school's isolation provision, until they receive the all clear, or are admitted to a medical facility. If a student receives a negative test result, My Guardians will then accommodate them as stated above.

✚ If a student develops symptoms after being placed in a host family and the school is closed, My Guardians will instigate the proper testing and isolation procedures and accommodate the student until they are given the all clear, or admitted to a medical facility.

✚ If a student develops symptoms during a residential course, the responsibility for the care of the student will remain with the course provider.

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My Guardians Ltd is registered in England & Wales, Registration Number 8920466

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