



GUIDING NOTES FOR HOST FAMILIES

28/12/23

Please read these notes carefully. These guidelines are based on the rules of the European authorities for students travelling abroad. They have been laid down for the protection, well-being and safe keeping of the young people in our care. They are intended to help avoid any misunderstandings arising between the visitors and the host family and as a general guide to the responsibilities of a host family.

Short-stay visits are becoming increasingly more popular and mostly take place between February and November. The students usually stay between 3 and 5 nights and each family hosts two, three or four students.

English should be the spoken language in the home. Usually Full Board is required (although sometimes we are asked to host half board groups - so no packed lunches) and families must take their guests to and from the meeting point daily. The students are out with their party all day, usually leaving by 7.40am and returning at around 6.30pm. You may not be given details about your students in advance, except to know their sex, age and any medical/allergy information we have been given. The students usually come from one school, with their own teachers, and can be any age from 12 to 18+ years (the majority of groups will be aged 13-16).

MEALS

Full board should be provided (unless advised differently) and at least one member of your family **MUST** eat with the students (or at least sit and chat with them during the meal.) If you are unable to eat with your students, please EXPLAIN WHY NOT e.g. that we eat earlier in the UK but that you will sit and chat with them whilst they are eating. This avoids complaints from parents and teachers. A packed lunch should be provided daily. A normal packed lunch will be two rolls (not sliced bread) containing something and salad, a wrapped chocolate biscuit, crisps, fruit and their bottle filled with tap water. Please provide a hot meal in the evening with dessert. French people especially are accustomed to eating bread and having a glass of water at all meals and they always appreciate having these provided when in England. Please offer a fairly substantial, help-yourself breakfast e.g. fruit juice, cereals, toast, coffee/tea. A cooked breakfast should not be provided in the morning but makes a good "English Experience" evening meal.

On the evening they arrive in Britain, it is **compulsory** that you provide a **slice of cheese & tomato pizza**, chips and salad followed by ice cream (or similar dessert). They will often have had a long journey and not eaten a proper meal all day and will want to eat as soon as they arrive. This is a meal that suits vegetarians, Muslims and meat eaters alike and is something they will recognise which helps them relax and settle in easier. It is also adaptable, as if they are very hungry, you just cook extra chips.



IMPORTANT: Always avoid pork (including ham) for the first packed lunch as you may be allocated a vegetarian or Muslim. Never allow students to drink alcohol - whatever their age!

BEDROOM / BATHROOM

Short-stay students can share a bedroom (but not with your family members). They must have a proper bed. Sofa beds, camping beds, lilos, etc. must not be used (futons/bunk beds/trundle beds, are fine - but bunk beds are not suitable for adult leaders).

A place to store clothes should also be provided if possible - although from experience, most of them live out of their suitcases.

Please show students how to use the bath/shower as it may not be the same as at home. Declutter the student's room and put down rugs to protect your carpets from spillages, etc.

GOING OUT AT NIGHT / DISCIPLINE

Without exception, the students **must not be allowed out on their own** after they return to your care in the evening. This rule is, of course, for the safety of the student and not, as some of them believe, to stop them having fun! If a student is not co-operating with this or is badly behaving in your home, please let the WHF Coordinator know and they will ask the teacher to speak to them.

TELEPHONE

Most children bring mobile phones with them and so should have no problem contacting their parents. If this is not the case, the parents will have been given the English family's number and should ring on this. If a child has been moved, the teacher should call the parents with the new number. Please tell the student this, and let us know if there are any problems, so we can speak with the teacher. If absolutely necessary, allow the child to place a 10 second call to their family to give your number. The parent should then ring the child back.

HEALTH

If a student is taken ill or has an accident, please contact your **Coordinator**. Do not hesitate to do this, even if you believe the situation is not serious. **Do not give any medication whatsoever - not even paracetamol, aspirin, creams or plasters.** The Group Leader will have instructions as to which, if any, medicines can be taken and is the only one who can give medication. (If the student brings their own medication then that is fine for them to take.)



PETS:

If you are a pet owner, we will have informed the school of this fact and you should not have been allocated a student who is allergic to your pet. Unfortunately, the teacher who decides the final placements may not always be aware if a student is "frightened" of your pet - so we would appreciate it if you would keep your pet out of the way when the students first arrive at your house, and then introduce them to your pet gently.

INSURANCE/DBS:

Please ensure that you have adequate house and car insurance for hosting short stay students. If using your car to transport students, it must also be in roadworthy condition.

Hosts will be required to hold a DBS that must be enhanced to work at home with children. All members of the household who are 18 or over need to be checked, so when applying for an enhanced DBS on your behalf, we will tick a box that enables the police to carry out a search on all adults at that address. That means only one adult needs to apply for the check which costs £60. We will need to validate your ID when we visit, so please have ready a passport/driving licence & recent utility bill/bank statement with your address on it for us to check. If you are the only member of your household over 18, we can accept your enhanced DBS from another organisation if you have one, provided it covers working with children. We will still need to validate your ID when we visit.

In addition to a DBS, one member of your household may be asked to complete a free short on-line Safeguarding Course which takes around 45 minutes and is very easy. We will explain more about this during your Home Visit.

All hosts will be visited by a representative of WHF Ltd who will help you complete a Fire Risk Assessment form, ask to see evidence that your Gas is safe, check you have working smoke and Carbon Monoxide alarms and that the home is of a suitable standard. At the visit you will be given a Welcome Pack with information about how we work, what we expect from our hosts and what to do in case of any problems.

DAMAGE

IMPORTANT: *Accidents happen, and this can be upsetting for both the host and the student involved. Of course, you will be covered by your home insurance, but it is best to reduce risks wherever possible, so we would advise that all money, credit cards and any precious items / valuables are put out of harm's way and not left in communal areas. Remove items of financial or sentimental value from the student's rooms and bathroom too please. Also, if the students are sharing your own children's belongings - PLEASE check that everything has been returned before the student leaves. "Collectables" such as tablets, designer label clothes etc. have been known to disappear and are very difficult to*



retrieve! Please check the student's bedroom every day, so any damage can be detected early and acted upon. It is recommended that you cover mattresses with plastic sheets/mattress protectors. This is not only a protection for bed-wetting (a very rare occurrence) but for spilled cans of drink, cups of coffee etc. A cheap rug in the bedroom will also protect your carpet in case of spills.

This is your responsibility - make your home low risk before the students arrive please! Fortunately, it is extremely rare that claims need to be made via your insurance company, as most incidents can be dealt with whilst the group are in situ and are for small amounts.

If a student does cause damage in your home, you must advise your Coordinator immediately at the time of the visit. Take photos and get a written statement from the student involved confirming what happened. Always check the students' bedroom again just before they leave on the final morning. If you notice damage after the group has left, **tell us immediately**. We will give you a Notification of Damage form, which should be completed and returned to us **within 5 days of the incident - together with receipts/repair estimates**. We will immediately pass on claims to the authorities but please bear in mind that **no reimbursement is guaranteed** and that such claims can take a long time to be settled

HOW WE WORK

Each group will be allocated an Administrator who will deal with all the allocations and paperwork prior to the group's arrival. The Administrator will deal with you by email and text, to allocate students and give you the programme and other information about the group. A few days before the group travels, the Administrator hands over the responsibility for the group to the Coordinator, who makes sure the visit goes well. From that point on you deal with the Coordinator who will contact you by mobile phone and is there to support you and the group.

CENTRE MEETING POINTS

Melksham groups: **King Street Car Park, Melksham SN12 6HB**

Trowbridge groups: **Lovemead Car Park off Duke St/The Halve, Trowbridge BA14 8EA.**

Warminster groups: **Funways Car Park, 100 Goodwin Close, Warminster BA12 0DF.**

Westbury groups: **High Street Car Park, Westbury BA13 3BW**

Please always park in a parking bay and be mindful of Health & Safety.

Students must be dropped by **7.40am (latest)** and collected at **6.30pm (earliest)** unless advised differently. The Coordinator will be there 15 minutes before departure time if you wish to drop early. You will be issued with the group's visit programme in advance, confirming all times, and any medical or allergy information that the group have supplied.



PAYMENT

Although not everyone will be hosting for the money, it is always nice to be able to treat yourself or your family member to those little extra treats - and hosting is a great way to earn an extra tax-free income.

By hosting 4 students overnight for a 4-night stay you will receive a tax-free cash sum of £304 on the first morning of the stay. The money is classed as tax free under the government's Rent a Room scheme.

That means if you host 4 groups each month (16 nights total) you could earn up to £1,216 extra cash, tax free each month for just a few hours "work".

Obviously if you take less students or the stay is less nights, the rate drops accordingly, but it's all extra income and we show you how to budget carefully to make a good profit no matter how many you choose to host.

It is possible to make good money from hosting, if you follow the guidelines that we provide in your home visit Welcome Pack. Just remember, you will be cooking for yourself and your family anyway, so no extra gas or electricity is involved and, as the students are out all day, your heating bills will be no higher than usual.

The only real extra costs are for the food we ask you to supply that works out at around £5/head/night and the £1.50/head cost of a quick 3-minute shower, as recommended by the water companies.

Most hosts either walk their students to the meeting point or drop them on their way to work / school so no extra fuel is involved, but for those living more than 20-minutes' drive from the Centre they are hosting for; we offer a little extra help by paying an additional £5/night supplement.

We also use families to host the adult leaders and payment is £23.50/night/adult. There is no minimum or maximum number of adults you can host but the number of spare single / twin rooms or the room in your car are usually the limiting factors.

Occasionally groups are half board (no lunches), so £2/night/person is deducted from the full board rate.

We have tried to cover every eventuality in these guidelines, but no two visits and no two students are ever the same! Please contact your centre Administrator or info@wiltshirehostfamilies.co.uk should you have any queries about a forthcoming visit or contact your Coordinator if you have any problems during a visit with which you need help or advice.