




Homestay handbook



Guidelines, policies and procedures to ensure a fulfilling hosting experience

Contents

Contact information	Page 2
Part 1: Introduction	Page 3
Part 2: A member of the family	Page 6
Part 3: Understanding and overcoming cultural differences	Page 10
Part 4: Homestay facilities and services	Page 15
Part 5: Medical, welfare and safety	Page 23
Part 6: Money matters	Page 28
Part 7: A partnership between college and host	Page 31
Part 8: Supporting students of different ages	Page 35
Part 9: Bookings, arrivals and cancellation policies	Page 39
Part 10: Top tips for successful hosting	Page 44

Contact information

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Part 1

Introduction



Welcoming an international student into your home

We have been arranging the hosting of our international students since 1957. We are proud that tens of thousands of them have enjoyed a richly rewarding and overwhelmingly positive experience in the UK, and since 2011, in the USA as well

Providing a home away from home for an international student can be one of the most rewarding things you can do. There are huge cultural benefits for both hosts and students alike, and strong personal bonds are often created which last well beyond the hosting period.

Our experience has taught us, however, that the key to a successful hosting experience – for both host and student alike – is mutual understanding and mutual respect. Often this simply comes down to having sufficient knowledge in advance about what is expected of both parties. That's why we've created this handbook for you. We also give our students their own guide before they arrive so that they too know what to expect.

We hope that the information provided here will help to establish a friendly relationship between you, your student guests and Kings. Some of this information is taken from the English UK information booklet for homestay providers.

About Kings

Kings Colleges has been in operation since 1957 and is today one of the most successful and reputable international college groups in England. Our international colleges are located in Bournemouth, Beckenham and Oxford.

We offer a variety of English language courses plus specialized academic courses which prepare students for university entry.

About our students

Every year, we welcome thousands of students from over 70 countries. The student you host may come from Europe, Russia, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, China or South America. Outside the summer months students are usually between 16 - 25 years of age. They follow courses from just a few weeks in duration to those lasting over two years.

During the summer, we have greater numbers of younger students aged between 13 - 16 who are here for short-term vacation courses. Their needs will be different and we provide additional guidelines for hosting these students.

See page 35 for more details of our student profiles, and the differing needs of each student type.

Part 2

A member of the family



What international students need from you

When international students decide on homestay accommodation rather than a student residence, they are making a clear choice. They are choosing the option which gives them a warm welcome, home comforts, the opportunity to practice their English with American people and the feeling of being part of the American way of life. They are not simply renting a room. They are anticipating being treated as one of the family.

Introducing the family

As soon as your student arrives, it's important to give them a friendly welcome. Please try to make sure that all members of the household are introduced to the student as soon as possible after their arrival.

House rules and daily routines

For a homestay experience to be truly successful, a student should be welcomed into your home as a member of the family, rather than as a temporary guest. As such, the student should be treated with the same kindness, respect, but also the same discipline, as you would show to your own children.

It's important for both you and your student, therefore, that they become familiar with the house rules and normal daily routines as soon as possible. We have produced a First Night Questionnaire which you will find useful to go through with your student when they arrive. It will help them get to know about your family routine and what is expected of them.

Explaining things right at the very beginning prevents misunderstandings cropping up later. If a problem does arise, just tell the student clearly and tactfully what you wish them to do, for example, make their own bed in the morning.

Sharing family leisure time

Students will probably enjoy accompanying your family on outings. Advice about places of interest to visit, local activities, sports facilities and the like will be welcome. We arrange plenty of leisure activities for the students, but most will also appreciate the chance to meet American people on social occasions.

Friends and visitors

Most students like to be able to bring friends home and it is best to make clear arrangements with your student at the beginning of their stay with regard to visitors. Set clear rules which you are comfortable with about visiting times, noise late at night and whether or not you are happy for them to entertain guests of the opposite sex. Obviously common sense is the best guide and the age of the student will have a bearing on the policies you adopt.

Help with local transport

Your student will be expected to come and go independently. However, please initially help them to find the quickest and cheapest routes to and from the college and the town. On their first day it would be useful for students to know where to catch their bus, if required, or how to get to college on foot. Please help them by providing information on journey times, ticket systems and travel costs.

Gifts

Some students like to give their host family a small gift. It's perfectly OK for you to accept them, but please don't feel obliged to give a gift in return. It's not uncommon for families to give their student a card or little gift on their birthday, but you should not feel under any pressure to do so.

Part 3

Understanding and overcoming cultural differences



Avoiding cultural misunderstandings

For many students this may be their first time away from home. Their backgrounds will vary and they will have very different ideas about home-life. That's why it's so important that hosts are able to anticipate problems and respond with practical measures to ensure things run smoothly. We'll give you all the help and advice you need to manage the transition into a new culture.

Differences in culture can give rise to misunderstandings for homestay providers as well as their students. We can often feel offended when things are said in the wrong way. We expect our guests to use 'please', 'thank you' and 'pardon' as we do. The way we use these social skills may seem like common politeness but different cultures express social skills in very different ways.

In many cultures requests are expressed much more directly than American people are accustomed to. A student who says, "give me the salt" at the dinner table may not be disrespectful, merely lacking in English vocabulary or unaware of what is polite and impolite language. We also express ourselves through body language and tone of voice which can vary from culture to culture. Many languages do not have such a wide range of intonation as English so foreign learners can sound gruff and unfriendly when in fact they are not.

Similarly, students may have difficulty coping if their English is very elementary; they may also interpret certain American traits (such as our lack of kissing cheeks when greeting, like in Latin/South American countries) as unfriendliness.

These feelings of alienation can be caused by relatively 'minor'

things such as unfamiliar food; differences in routine; differences in travel arrangements and unfamiliar official procedures.

They can be exacerbated by the deeper cultural differences in family life or language.

The best way to deal with these issues is to anticipate them, and where necessary to address them in an atmosphere of mutual understanding. Recognizing difficulties while at the same time gently explaining how things are done in your house will get you both off on the right foot. Over time, misunderstandings will fade away.

Dealing with homesickness

Students thousands of miles from home may well be suffering from feelings of mild alienation or even culture shock. Providing a friendly and secure 'base' is a vital part of helping them overcome these feelings. Culture shock is similar to the feelings we have when we are adapting to a new job or other environment, only more so.

When people are surrounded by a different culture where everything (including the language) is new and potentially confusing, they go through changes of mood and attitude before coming to terms with their new environment.

Your students will be initially very excited and positive about their new culture. But as the reality of deeper cultural differences sinks in, this excitement can wear off. Students may then start to miss friends, family and places as they begin to have doubts about themselves and their new environment. Culture shock may manifest itself in a wide range of behavior, including confusion, withdrawal, tiredness and anxiety. Providing a comfortable and welcoming home will go a

long way to overcoming such culture shock.

Once this negative phase is past, the vast majority of students settle into their new life until the final phase occurs, which is often a feeling of sadness and loss as they approach the end of their time in the UK. The pattern to these feelings is normal and common. Most students navigate through them perfectly well. However, in certain circumstances, failure to adjust can bring serious problems for the student if they are not recognized and dealt with in good time. If you have a homesick student, alert the college and ask us for support. Also ask your student to talk to you about home, and get them to show you photographs of their family. Alternatively, you may have a shy student, in which case try to anticipate their needs – they may be too shy to ask for anything!

Helping students to practice English

Conversation is a very important part of the student's learning process. Spending time each day in conversation with your student is a valuable way of helping them improve their English and learn about the British way of life. Most students love to talk about their homeland and families. It will be very valuable too if you show an interest in their progress at college and even help out with their homework!

It's essential that as a host you help and encourage them to communicate in English. Patience and understanding will be appreciated, as students are often at low levels of English when they first arrive. When talking with your student, try to speak slowly, simply and clearly.

Most students like watching some television. It provides entertainment and improves their English. The student may expect to be able to watch television with you. Bear in mind that certain programs may be more interesting to the student than to members of your family!

Religious practices and beliefs

For many of our students, their religion is not merely a code of conduct, it dictates their way of life. Of course, students' beliefs should be respected and received with an open mind. Religion can also provide security for some in an unfamiliar environment. The college provides a prayer room and can help students to contact local community groups if they wish to practice their religion.

Personal relationships

International students may find attitudes to men, women and relationships very different from what they are used to at home. Some may not be accustomed to public displays of affection between couples or even a friendly hug or kiss. Others may regard American people as unusually reserved and lacking in warmth. 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.

The key to overcoming all of this is, as before, to maintain an open mind, a mutually respectful stance and a determination to communicate. If you can bring this to your role as a host, you should have no problems.

Part 4

Homestay facilities and services



This section deals with all the practical facilities and services your student will expect from you as a host. It is designed to ensure there are no misunderstandings once the student arrives so that you can settle into the important business of getting to know each other without distraction.

Homestay facilities

Other students in the house

Our students expect that there will be no other student of the same mother tongue at your home, unless by special request. **Please inform us of any other students you may have from other schools so we can ensure that we comply with the student's booking conditions.** Please take great care not to accommodate two students with the same mother tongue, unless we advise otherwise.

Most students will book a single room but, on occasions, students do prefer to share a twin room. We will discuss specific requirements with you in advance.

The student bedroom

Your student should be provided with their own furnished room, which is adequately heated. This should have a bed, dressing table, chair, mirror, bin and facilities for hanging clothes. A pin-board will also be useful to display timetables, posters, etc.

The student must also have access to a suitable place to study and do their homework. Please make sure there is good lighting by the bed, over the mirror and at the desk.

Bed linen and towels should be provided. You might find it useful to provide a crease-resistant bedspread which will withstand the bed's inevitable use as a sofa. Also you might prefer to use a glass covering to protect good surfaces. Please ask if the student has any electrical equipment and check it for differences in voltage.

If you have more than one bedroom available for students, please allocate the larger one for long-stay students, as they will generally have more belongings.

Common areas in the house

You must provide your student with access to the living room and other common areas. It is against the terms of the booking to lock the common areas of the house.

If there is no desk available in the student's bedroom, they will need to have access to a table and somewhere quiet for studying somewhere else in the house, such as the dining room.

Heating

Adequate heating should be provided in the student's room. The cost of this is included in the payment we make to you. Please bear in mind that many students are accustomed to having a warm bedroom through the night. If you experience any problems, please consult the college for advice. Please also warn your student about the hazards of using gas and electric fires.

Telephone and internet

In our experience, the use of the telephone by students is a common cause of misunderstanding. Sometimes students have no idea how expensive it can be and they may be used to free local calls at home. You should make your own arrangements with your student about use of the family telephone. The college cannot be held responsible for calls made by students.

The college makes available a package – which includes a mobile phone with a cheap international tariff – to all students. We also have cost-effective phone cards for sale in the college.

Although many hosts do have the internet at home, it is not a requirement. If you are happy for your student to use the internet, we strongly advise you to discuss it with them in advance to avoid any misunderstandings about when and how often they can use it, plus any charge you may wish to make.

Students will have internet access at college and there are a number of internet cafés locally. The college also makes a mobile broadband package available to all students, which enables them to access the internet on their own laptop on a Pay As You Go basis.

House keys

Students age 16 years and over should be given a front door key, and freedom to come and go as they please. Please remind your students that they are staying in a family home and that they should not expect a lock on their bedroom door.

Students under 16 must return to their homestay by 10.30p.m. and should not be provided with their own key. If there are any problems with this, please inform the college. See section on students under 16 (page 37).

Laundry, cleaning and hygiene

Laundry

The student's bed linen and towels should be washed and changed once a week. The cost for this is included in the payment you receive from us. In addition, we suggest one washing machine load of clothes per week is a reasonable amount for each student. Provision for additional laundry over and above the recommended amount should be discussed and agreed between you and your student. Please contact the college for information and advice about appropriate levels of charge for washing clothes.

Some students book their laundry in advance. In this case the college will pay you for any laundry over and above that included in the basic service.

It is helpful if you give your student a laundry bag, which you can collect from their room on a weekly basis. Let them know which day you will collect their laundry. Drying and ironing facilities should be explained and made available to the student.

Please be aware of cultural differences and sensitivities. For example, some female students may be embarrassed about you seeing their dirty underwear. It may help to give them a pillowcase to put their underwear in and put in the washing machine.

Bath/shower access

Your student should have free access to the bathroom in the same way as the family and should be able to have a daily bath or shower. You may find it useful to work out a schedule for the bathroom. Showers are usually more popular with students and can provide substantial savings in both water and fuel.

Ask your student to leave the bathroom clean and tidy after use and make sure that the student understands how to use all facilities. A few students may not understand exactly how to use baths and toilets in this country and it may be necessary to explain in detail.

Understanding different attitudes to hygiene

Practice differs around the world on many things which we take for granted. For example, some students may be shocked to find that household pets have access to most areas of the house including the kitchen. Many cultures prefer a shower to the bath as 'sitting in dirty water' is seen as unhygienic. In Japan, for example, the body is washed outside the bath and the soap rinsed off before getting in the bath to soak.

Please make sure that female students are told about arrangements for the disposal of sanitary towels; often they are too shy or lack the vocabulary to ask.

As a host, you may well come across behavior that you consider 'strange' or 'unusual'. As above, if there is anything in the personal hygiene regime of your student which seems unusual, it is best to try to deal with it in an open and mutually respectful way.

Of course, if there is evidence that the student is not attending to their personal hygiene properly, this may be evidence of wider problems and should be brought to the attention of the Housing Coordinator at college.

Cleaning

Some students may not be accustomed to tidying their own clothes or making their own beds. You may have to explain that they must now do these jobs for themselves so that you can clean the room properly. Try to have a regular time for this, preferably when the student is at college.

Catering requirements and mealtimes

Half-board meal requirements

Your student expects two meals per day as part of the service they have paid for. You will need to provide them with breakfast and a substantial main evening meal during the week and at weekends. The student is responsible for providing their own lunch and snacks although many families do offer their students light snacks such as cups of tea and biscuits.

Sharing mealtimes together

Mealtimes can be one of the most important tools you have to build a strong relationship with your student. Sharing family time together over good, home-cooked food is the ideal way to cement bonds and to make your student feel part of the family unit. Conversation at mealtimes is also great way for your student to practice their English.

Your student will be told by the college to let you know in advance if they won't be returning home to eat in the evening or will be arriving back later than usual. Please reinforce this if required. If you have a microwave, you may be happy for your student to heat up their meal when they get in.

Special dietary needs

You are not expected to provide any special diets unless previously agreed. It is still advisable to ask your student if they have any special dietary needs for religious or medical reasons. We also ask the student to let you know if they have any particular food likes or dislikes.

When your student first arrives, it is best to be flexible about meal arrangements. They may arrive late at night, or be jetlagged and exhausted. Please provide something which can be kept and eaten later without spoiling.

Additional lunches

Some younger students coming to Kings as part of a group booking may have paid for full-board accommodation. In these circumstances they will additionally require packed lunches at weekends and we will agree with you additional payment for this, as required.

Part 5

Medical, welfare and safety



Emergency contact numbers

The college has a 24-hour emergency contact number, for use by the student, or by you, in the event of a genuine emergency only. Details are available from the college.

If a medical emergency arises, contact the emergency services or your doctor before you contact the college as they will be of greater assistance in the first instance.

Please also make sure that you swap telephone numbers (mobile and landline) with your student as soon as possible.

Initial safety checklist for students

When students are new to a city, it can be easy to get lost. We have compiled a simple checklist to help you help them stay safe. Before your student goes out and about on their own for the first time, please go through the following with them:

- Write down your **address and telephone number**. Please check that they put this in a sensible place and don't leave it in their bedroom!
- Write down the location and name of the **nearest bus stop** to your home and make sure they know the relevant **bus numbers** going to and from college / town center.
- Make sure they have a **house key*** and put it in a safe place!
- Make sure they tell you **where they are going** and what time they are coming home.
- Give them the **college emergency number** and make sure they put it in a sensible place.

* See section on students under 16 (page 37)

- Students will be given a map on their first day at college, but if possible please lend your student a local map until they start college. (Please show them where your house is on the map!)

Student medical insurance

It is a condition of enrollment in a course at Kings that all students have adequate accident and medical insurance. The college recommends our own student insurance policy which will cover them for accident or illness while in the USA.

Action in the event of non-emergency illness or accident

If your student has a non-emergency illness or accident, please notify the college immediately. If you feel it necessary, please also call your own doctor.

If your student should be involved in any way with the police or other emergency services, you must advise the college as soon as possible so that all relevant responsibility will pass to the college.

Registering with a doctor

Any student staying in the USA for longer than six months should register with a doctor on arrival. The college can help with this if required although it is often preferable for the student to be taken on as a new patient by your family doctor if possible. If this is not possible, you can ask the college for a list of doctors in the area.

Medical treatment

If any medicine is prescribed, make sure dosage instructions are understood and the medicine is kept in a safe place.

Students are legally required to provide proof of medical insurance on their first day at school. If a student does not come with medical insurance from their home country, they may purchase it from the school. You should ask for a copy of their insurance for your own records.

Dental treatment

If a student needs a dentist, it is usual to send them to the dentist used by your household. You should tell the student that they will be expected to pay for treatment, and that they should establish the cost and extent of treatment in advance.

General welfare

Of course it's important to keep an eye on your student to make sure that their work and health are not suffering in any way. This will probably mean nothing more than ensuring they have plenty of good food and not too many late nights!

Make sure your students always tell you if they are going away for a night or a weekend. If you are worried about your student, you should contact the college.

Student's use of cars and bicycles

If your student has a car or bicycle, it would be very helpful to explain to them that they should be acquainted with American traffic laws, as well as the penalties for driving offenses. For cars, of course they must also have a full driving licence and insurance. Bike riders will need to comply with relevant safety laws.

Children under 16 will need to have their parents' written permission to use a bicycle.

Safety in the home

Please explain to your students details of any special safety rules you have in your household. If you have small children, make sure that the student is aware of the need to keep pills, cleaning fluids and breakables out of their reach.

Use of electrical equipment and any room heaters, water heaters, etc. should be explained carefully, as should fire precautions. It is a good idea to have a fire extinguisher or blanket in the kitchen. We would also recommend the installation of smoke alarms if you do not already have them.

Part 6

Money matters



Making payments to you

We will make payments to you by direct deposit transfer on a fortnightly basis. Payments are made monthly, in arrears. The last Friday of the month will always be the payday.

Payments will be deposited in your bank and you will receive a deposit notification by email. Please report any discrepancies to the college as soon as possible.

Please note that we cannot be held responsible for any charges that may be incurred as a result of unforeseen delays to payment which are outside of our control.

Tax implications

The income you receive from hosting students is classified as taxable by the Internal Revenue Service. If you would like guidance and advice on this, please contact the Housing Coordinator at the college.

Student's money

Your student is responsible for their own spending money and is responsible for providing their own personal items including toiletries, travel expenses, entertainment, etc. In general, we would advise against lending money to students as this can lead to misunderstandings and problems arising.

Students who are staying for several months should open an account with a bank. The college will provide the necessary references.

Students are strongly advised not to keep large sums of money in their rooms or on their person. It would be helpful if you could reinforce this message with them.

Insurance

Please note that the college cannot accept liability or responsibility for damage to your property caused by your students. You should ensure you have household insurance that covers any accidental damage by your students. It may also be worth insuring valuables, in case of breakage. Fair wear and tear should not be charged to students but they may be expected to pay for any damage they may have caused through carelessness.

In cases of dispute the college will be willing to arbitrate and should be contacted at an early stage, before the student leaves. It is imperative that you inform your home or rental insurers that you have a paying guest/student in your home. If your insurance policy does not cover paying guests in your home, you may be jeopardizing your cover for damage caused by a third party.

Rebates

A student should not expect a rebate for absences of less than a week. If your student wants to retain their room during longer absences and leaves their belongings so that the room cannot be re-let, please contact the college for advice about a suitable fee to charge for this.

Part 7

A partnership between college and host



You and Kings – working together

As a host, we regard you as an essential partner in the pursuit of our main aim – to give every one of our students a happy, successful and unforgettable experience of living and learning in the USA.

As such, we actively encourage you to take an interest in the life of the college. Close liaison between college and host is often the key to a successful and happy experience for all.

Support from Kings

Your role in the Kings community is vital and we want you to feel an active part of it.

As such, we appreciate that you deserve a full support and back-up service from us to help you fulfill your role. In addition to this handbook, we are always available to discuss any issues you have, whether by email, phone or face to face. All contact details are printed on page 2 of this booklet. We also value any suggestions or tips for successful hosting you might have which we can pass on to other hosts.

In our experience, the key to success is having a genuine interest in the students, a willing commitment, realistic expectations, patience and above all, a sense of humor!

Dealing with problems together

Most students' stays are happy and uncomplicated, but from time to time problems may arise. The college is very experienced in dealing with many situations that you will not have met before.

Do not hesitate to contact the college if you feel the student is excessively homesick, not adjusting to life in the USA, or suffering from any illness or stress. These are often more evident when the student is alone and away from the college environment.

Keeping us in the picture

If the whole household is going to be absent for any substantial period of time, you should inform the college to make any necessary arrangements.

If you take students from more than one school or college, you should let the Housing Coordinator know.

Please also let us know about any change in domestic circumstances – such as your marital status, new children or pets.

Please contact the college if you have any problems with your student. Please remember only to use the emergency number in the event of a genuine emergency. Otherwise, please contact the college during normal working hours.

College attendance

Students are expected to attend college every day. Your student is responsible for getting themselves up and ready for college every day, although you might decide to give them a wake-up call, if they need it!

Only absence due to illness or exceptional circumstances can be excused. If the student is unwell or likely to be late for some reason, they are expected to telephone us first thing in the morning. If they are too unwell to telephone themselves, please do so on their behalf. Classes are checked every morning and we call every student we haven't heard from. If we are unable to contact them on their mobile, we will give the host family a quick call, too.

Poor attendance may lead to disciplinary action being taken, their end-of-course certificate may be withheld and, most seriously, future educational plans could be put in jeopardy.

Transfer to another homestay

Over the years, we have gained lots of experience in placing the right student with the right host. Because of this, the vast majority of hosting arrangements are happy and successful. Just occasionally, though, there may be some reason why the host and student are incompatible.

There may be many different reasons for this which are totally out of your control. As such, if a student does ask for a transfer, please don't take it personally. It may well be in your interest to arrange a swift move should a transfer be necessary.

Data Privacy Protection

Kings Colleges store computer records of hosts in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Personal details will not be disclosed to companies or organizations other than those with a legal right to request information, for example the IRS, Social Security Administration or the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Part 8

Supporting students of different ages



It is very important to understand and respond to the specific needs of each student. These needs will vary greatly depending on a number of factors, the most important of which is usually the student's age. In addition, the intensity and length of the course the student is following will have an impact on the levels of care and support they require at home. The majority of our students are over the age of 16 and as such are classified as adult students. We do, additionally, welcome students under 16 and have specific policies in place for their care.

Students following English courses (average age: 18 - 25)

Students following English language courses will tend to be older – we accept students age 16 and above, but the average age of our language students is 18 - 25. We have even welcomed people of over 70! These students will obviously tend, as a rule, to be comfortable with more independence.

Students following academic pre-university courses (age 16 - 18)

Students following pre-university courses at Kings will be younger; between 16 - 18. These students will also tend to be on longer courses (between one and two years) and will have a highly structured academic program which includes regular homework and private study time. As such, these students require a much greater degree of "hands-on" familial support, and also the time and space at home to meet the demands which their homework places on them.

Occasionally, we may also accept students age 15 on to GCSE courses (see opposite page for policies on under 16s).

Students under 16

While the majority of our students are 16 or over, during the summer we also accept students from age 14 on vacation courses at some Kings colleges.

You, as the host parent, and the college, are 'in loco parentis'. This means that you and/or the college must know where the child is at all times. Older students, e.g. 14 year olds, will be given 'coming home times' by the college (the curfew time for 14 to 16 year old students is 10.30p.m.). If juniors are persistently going out on their own after college, you should contact the college right away.

Don't forget that the child is given your contact details together with that of the college. Make sure the child understands that they can contact you at any time.

Specific requirements are:

- No student aged under 16 may be issued with their own house key.
- All students under 16 must return to their homestay accommodation by 10.30p.m.
- No student age under 16 must be lodged with students age 18+ (unless specifically arranged by the college in response to parents' or agents' request).
- No more than two students (of any age) will share a room, unless specifically arranged by the college in response to parents' or agents' request.

- No students (of any age) of the same mother tongue will be placed in the same family, unless specifically arranged by the college in response to parents' or agents' request.
- Attendance by all students will be closely monitored by the college, and any absence will be followed up by a telephone call to the host-family. Host families should notify the college immediately if they know that their student will not attend college.

Any present or prospective host family should contact the college if they have any questions or doubts about any of the above matters before agreeing to accommodate any students under 16 years of age.

Part 9

Bookings, arrivals and cancellation policies



Kings
Colleges

Welcome
to Kings

Visits from Kings Housing Coordinators

Once you have decided that you would like to become a host, we will first arrange a convenient time to visit you at your home in order to establish that you are able to offer accommodation of a suitable standard. This is a requirement of the Kings Colleges Housing Agreement.

Reservations

Accommodation bookings will normally be offered to you by phone. We will give you details of the student's age, sex, nationality and duration of stay. We will ask for your work and home numbers in order to contact you as quickly as possible. Known preferences of both the student and the host family will be taken into consideration and complied with whenever possible.

Once you have accepted the booking verbally, we will send a confirmation letter with the student's details.

Student arrival procedures

The college will provide you with information about the student's arrival and departure dates and details of any medical issues, if relevant.

Accommodation is usually reserved from Sunday to Saturday, or Sunday to Sunday and students will almost always arrive at the weekend. They are expected to attend college on the following Monday.

We will endeavour to establish the specific arrival time of the student and inform you of this. However, please be aware that the college does not make flight arrangements for the students and the majority of our students are recruited via educational agents. We therefore do not generally have direct contact with the student before they arrive.

All students who have not booked an airport transfer with the college via their agent are instructed to contact their host family directly to advise on their estimated time of arrival. It is not your responsibility to pick the student up from the airport unless you have specifically arranged with them in advance.

Occasionally students arrive at inconvenient times due to flight times or delays in their travel arrangements. We would ask you to be accommodating in such situations, which are beyond the control of either the college or the student.

Once your student arrives at your home, it would be appreciated if you could show them how to make a collect call home to reassure both themselves and their parents/guardians.

Non-arrivals

Very occasionally, the student may simply not arrive.

The overwhelming reason for these rare instances is that for some reason unknown to us their visa has been refused at the last minute.

If your student does not arrive on the due date given to you, please telephone the college as soon as possible on the following Monday.

We are required by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement to inform them immediately of all non-arrivals so that they can cross-reference the data with their own immigration records.

Extensions and curtailments

If your student wants to discuss plans to either extend their stay with you, or to cut it short, please contact us before agreeing any terms with the student. There may be other issues, for example academic or emotional, of which we will need to be aware.

Cancellation

By the student

On rare occasions the student will cancel their booking with us, and in turn their accommodation with you. If this does happen, we will make every effort to find a replacement student for you. However, please note that in such circumstances the college cannot accept any liability for any financial impact this will have.

By the host

We understand that occasionally circumstances change and that there may be reasons why you have to cancel your booking. Please bear in mind that we require at least 7 days' notice of cancellation. This is because it may take time to ensure that amendments to accommodation details are passed from the college, via the educational agent to the student.

A woman with long dark hair is running on a beach, her hair blowing in the wind. She is wearing a dark tank top and denim shorts. The background shows the ocean waves and a bright, cloudy sky. The entire image has a purple tint.

Part 10

Top tips for successful hosting

- Let your student know your ground rules straight away. This will prevent any future misunderstanding. It is harder to implement a new house rule if your student has been a part of the family for a long time.
- Let your student know whether it is acceptable to help themselves to food or not.
- When your student arrives, let them know what time you usually have dinner. Make sure they understand that they must call you in advance if they are eating out with friends or if they are going to be late.
- Allow students to have a door key (unless they are juniors under 16). Make sure your student keeps this in a safe place.
- Ensure that your student has a copy of your address and telephone number in case of emergencies. This is particularly important for their first few days, in case they get lost. Please note: It is important that the door key is kept in a separate place from the student's copy of your address.
- If your student has a mobile phone, make sure you have their phone number in case of emergencies.
- Do not allow pets to enter the student bedrooms.
- Be aware that some students feel very uneasy if animals are allowed in the kitchen whilst food is being prepared.

If you have any problems or queries, please do not hesitate to contact your local Housing Coordinator. See page 2 for details.





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