

# HOST FAMILY AGREEMENT



Experiment in  
International  
Living UK

EIL UK is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all host families to share this commitment. Host families should share the vision of EIL UK that by living and learning together, we can work towards a more tolerant and understanding world.

This document outlines the responsibilities of host families, programme participants and EIL UK to ensure that young people coming to the UK to participate in cultural exchange programmes have a successful and fulfilling experience. Please read this document and sign and return the second copy to confirm your acceptance of this agreement and the standards expected of host families.

Host families complete a comprehensive application form and their home is subject to an inspection. Before acceptance as a host family everyone over 18 will be expected to have a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service certificate (police check).

## 1. Host Families:

- 1a EIL will make every effort to match a participant to the needs and interests of the host family, but cannot make decisions based on race, cultural identity, religious background or sexual orientation. This would breach the law of England and Wales.
- 1b Host families should respect the participant's different cultural background and be sensitive to their needs. They need to show tolerance and respect for cultural or religious differences.
- 1c For the High School Programme, host families must be prepared to make a commitment for the full academic year but EIL can help with short stay substitute families should a family emergency arise.
- 1d Host families are expected to show due concern for the welfare, safety and security of the participant during their stay and report any concerns to the Local Representative promptly.
- 1e Host families must speak English as the first language within the home.
- 1f Host families receive an expenses payment for providing a home and hospitality to international participants. Responsibility for declaring this income to HMRC rests with the host family.
- 1g Host families must provide the participant with a key or someone must be at home to open the door.
- 1h The host family will provide clean and comfortable accommodation for the participant. Their privacy should be respected.

- 1i Participants should have easy access to bathroom facilities and regular access to laundry facilities.
- 1j There should be morning and evening access to the bathroom and a shower or bath every day. If you don't want participants to use the bath or shower after a certain time, please explain this clearly to them at the start of the placement.
- 1k On a weekly basis, the host family should provide clean towels and bed linen.
- 1l Upon arrival, the host family will take the time to explain their house guidelines to the participant and agree together on any basic rules which will help the placement run smoothly.
- 1m Care should be taken to provide the participant with a balanced and appropriate diet taking into consideration any agreed special requirements.
- 1n Three meals a day are to be provided, including packed lunches on school days, and a cooked meal at least once a day. Participants may be expected to make their own packed lunch or breakfast if that is the usual practice in the family.

**Breakfast** should consist of cereal, toast, spread, juice, coffee/tea/hot chocolate/milk. A cooked breakfast should be offered at least one day of the weekend.

**Lunch** should be substantial with a sandwich, crisps, cake or biscuits, fruit or yoghurt, and a bottle of water.

**Dinner** should be a hot meal including pasta, potatoes, rice, along with meat or fish, and fresh vegetables. There should be a starter or dessert and bread available.

**Snacks:** At other times, participants should be allowed to help themselves to a soft drink, hot drink, inexpensive biscuits and fresh fruit if they need something. These items can be pointed out specifically to the participants as 'snack' food.

- 1o Host families will help participants feel at home and treat them as a member of the family rather than a lodger or paying guest.
- 1p Host families encourage their participant to speak English as much as possible and are ready to share their culture with them. They also appreciate that there may be times when the participant needs to speak in his/her native language or in privacy to an EIL UK representative.
- 1q Host families may host more than one participant but not of the same native language. Please inform your local representative or EIL UK if you are hosting or plan to host additional participants from another organisation during a booked homestay.
- 1r No host family should offer accommodation to more than 4 students at any one time, unless by prior discussion of facilities available.
- 1s The participant should be allowed to accept incoming calls on your landline. However, most have their own smart phone and do not ask to use your line at all.
- 1t If the host family is going to be away from home overnight, a responsible adult must stay with the participant, if they are under 18. This adult must be known to EIL UK and have a valid DBS Enhanced Certificate. Your local representative can help with substitute families if you are going to be away, but EIL UK must always be informed in full of arrangements.

- 1u In exceptional circumstances, host families wishing to end a placement must contact EIL UK directly, even if they have already spoken to the local representative. Such a decision should never be taken lightly. If it is out of office hours, please call the Emergency Number: **0300 3030 173**.
- 1v Host families should ensure that they have adequate insurance to cover against fire and other damages and should inform their insurer that they have a paying visitor in their home. They should inform the participant of the family's fire escape plan. In the case of accidental damage to the host family's property, the visitor's liability is limited to the excess on the host's home insurance policy.
- 1w Host families will be invited to provide feedback to EIL UK via an on-line survey at the midpoint and end of each placement. Additionally host families may contact the office at any time with concerns or feedback.
- 1x Host families are expected to keep EIL UK informed of any changes in the home or family which may affect this agreement, including additional adults living in the home, for more than a few days. Everyone over 18 is subject to a DBS check.

## **2. All Participants:**

- 2a Once the placement is confirmed, participants should make contact with their host families to begin to develop a relationship. Host families will introduce themselves and their local area.
- 2b The participant (and if under 18 his/her parents) signs an Agreement covering expectations of programme participants. A copy of this Agreement will be provided to host families with the letter confirming the placement.
- 2c The participant and host family should agree the house 'ground rules' together early in the stay and, if possible, write these down.
- 2d The participant should keep their room tidy including making their bed and changing their own linen weekly.
- 2e Participants should adhere to family mealtimes and not expect meals to be provided outside these times.
- 2f Participants should not bring friends home without the prior permission of the host family and never invite anyone to stay over in their room.
- 2g Participants should be polite and considerate to the host family and inform the host family if they are going to be out or late for a meal.
- 2h Participants should make every effort to take care of host family property. Damage and loss must be paid for, where it is clearly the participant's liability. Items damaged or lost should be replaced.
- 2i EIL UK has an Independent Listener service available to all participants.
- 2j All participants are entitled to a supportive relationship with their host family and local representative and to be comfortable and happy during their stay.

### **3. Additional Requirements for High School Students:**

- 3a High School students must have their own room with bed, chest of drawers, wardrobe and a well-lit area for their studies, ideally with a desk and chair.
- 3b Students on the High School Programme will be invited to an orientation with their local representative and will have regular contacts throughout the year. Students are to participate actively in this process and be prepared to work with the local representative and the EIL UK Programme Managers who share responsibility for their welfare and safety.
- 3c Rules with for travel and overnight stays must be respected and the host family and student should always ensure that permission has been confirmed by the EIL UK office before the start of a trip or stay. Students must plan ahead so that details can be passed to natural parents and permission in writing received before the trip takes place. For students over 18 years of age, parents must be informed although consent is not required. EIL UK may veto a planned trip if it is considered unsafe.
- 3d High School students will be invited to respond to three evaluations in September, February and June. These are initiated by the Programme Manager to ensure happy progress during the year and to address any issues which may have arisen.

### **4. Withdrawal from the High School Programme:**

- 4a If a student is excluded or suspended from school, the Programme Manager must be informed immediately.
- 4b EIL UK will provide support to the student for meetings with school staff.
- 4c If the school exclusion is permanent, this will require the student to leave the High School Programme and return home.
- 4d If a student wishes to withdraw for any other reason, the host family will be informed of the circumstances. EIL UK may offer compensation to the host family in lieu of any food which may have been purchased in advance.

### **5. EIL UK and the Local Representative:**

- 5a EIL UK will maintain a local representative in each community. The local representative is a voluntary role. Expenses are paid.
- 5b The local representative will assist with host family placements and act as the first point of contact with the participant, host family and school (if relevant). They will feed back to EIL UK via written contact reports. Host families maintain a close liaison with the local representative and they are in a position to help resolve any problems that may arise during the year.
- 5c EIL UK will intervene in disputes which arise due to misconduct either by the host family or by the participant. Support will be provided to resolve disputes if needed.
- 5d EIL UK may remove a participant or high school student from a placement, without prior discussion, if safeguarding the welfare of the participant demands such an approach. At the discretion of the Programme Manager, host families may be compensated for food purchased in advance, depending on the circumstances.

- 5e Evaluations are collected by EIL UK according to the duration of the programme. The information from these evaluations contributes to improving programmes and to maintaining an overview of the welfare of high school students throughout the year. If a concern is raised via an evaluation, this will be followed up by EIL UK.

## **6. Money Matters**

- 6a EIL UK makes expenses payments to the host families, in advance for short stays and in arrears for longer stays.
- 6b All payments to host families will be made by BACS transfer.
- 6c Payments to host families may be subject to taxation. EIL UK can offer guidance on where to find further information on the 'Rent a Room' scheme or host families can refer to the HMRC website: <https://www.gov.uk/rent-room-in-your-home/the-rent-a-room-scheme>
- 6d Host families should not lend money to the participant. If there is a cash flow problem (lost bank card, etc.), EIL UK should be informed immediately so that this can be sorted out with the support of the young person's parents. All financial transactions in such a case should be via EIL UK. This protects both the host family and the participant. If a host family acts outside of this instruction, there can be no guarantee that EIL UK will refund the family for any loans made.
- 6e In the case of accidental damage, claims should be made against the host's household insurance, with the excess being paid by the visitor, if they were clearly responsible.

## **7. Summary**

- 7a EIL UK will make every effort to make constructive matches between participants and host families, taking into account personality, interests, aspiration, location and background.
- 7b Participants and host families are expected to do their best to maintain a mutually respectful relationship and to take each other's point of view into account, to achieve everyday harmony in the home.
- 7c Problems which arise due to cultural differences may be mediated by experienced staff from the EIL UK office.
- 7d The Independent Listener is an important resource for the participant and they should be reminded to call if they are feeling overwhelmed.
- 7e All concerns should be reported to EIL UK at an early stage so that support can be provided. This support may be for the host family, the participant, school issues, or problems with logistics, transport, medical services, finding a language tutor, etc.
- 7f All participants, host families, schools, local representatives and staff may revert to the EIL UK Complaints Procedure for more serious matters.
- 7g Participants and host families have an equal right to contact EIL UK for support.
- 7h Host families, participants and schools are all part of the evaluation cycle as we strive to deliver an outstanding programme for all individuals and groups.



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## HOST FAMILY AGREEMENT

I confirm that I have read and understand the contents of the Host family Agreement, the EIL UK Safeguarding Policy and Complaints Procedure:

This agreement stands until I confirm in writing that I wish to be removed from the register of host families at EIL UK.

Host family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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