

# UK

*Independent*

*Colleges*

*Guardianship*

*Homestay Handbook*

*2024-2025*

# WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO HOMESTAYS

Welcome to UKIC. we are really looking forward to getting to know you and working with you over the coming years whilst you are caring for our students. UKIC is run by Mr Min ZHANG who has over 15 years' experience in international education and who understands the importance of nurture and care for children and young people.

UKIC appoints fully inspected host families who act “in loco parentis” by exercising the same levels of care as a responsible parent for our young people when they are unable to board at school but remain in the UK. At exeat (occasional weekends when the school closes), half-term holidays or on other occasional days some students stay in the UK and go to live with one of our host families. UKIC understands how important it is for young people to feel safe, comfortable and “at home” whilst staying with their host family and that is why we always try to ensure they stay with the same host family each time. This means you can start to develop a positive and open relationship with your young person and they can make the most of living in the UK when not at school.

We have appointed Guardians attached to each school who meets the students and their families when they first arrive in the UK and then provides on-going support both to the parents and the child whilst liaising closely with the school. This one appointed Guardian will be your main point of contact with UKIC and will offer you advice and support as and when you need it. We appreciate hosting an international student can be a bit daunting at the start, but our staff are always on hand to help you. We have a 24-hour emergency line too.

The purpose of this handbook is to explain how UKIC works and, more importantly, to explain how your role as one of our host families works. If you have any further questions or concerns regarding anything mentioned below, please do not hesitate to contact us.

## Contact Details

There will be times that you need to contact us. We are always here to assist you with any questions or concerns that you may have. You can contact in the following ways:

General enquiries	
Telephone (Monday to Friday: 09:00-17:00)	+44(0)7508118886
Email	info@primecolleges.co.uk
WeChat	PrimeArts
Emergencies 24/7	
Telephone	+44(0)7508118886
Safeguarding concerns	
Designated safeguarding Lead Min ZHANG	+44(0)7508118886 info@primecolleges.co.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Zhi XU	+44(0)7300012772 uk3@primecolleges.co.uk
Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership (KBSP)	0117 903 6444 kbsp@bristol.gov.uk
Nicola Laird	0117 903 7795 LADO@bristol.gov.uk

## The role of the guardianship organisation, your the role as a homestay

### The guardianship organisation (UKIC)

Our primary role as UK Independent Colleges Limited (UKIC) is to be child's guide and support system while them study in the UK. We will oversee their welfare, academic progress, and overall experience.

**WELFARE MANAGEMENT:** We ensure their well-being and safety throughout their stay. We coordinate with their schools, homestays, and other third parties to address any concerns or problems they might have. We also assist in medical emergencies, ensuring they receive the necessary care promptly.

**ACADEMIC SUPPORT:** We liaise with their school, track their academic progress, attend parents' evenings, and share termly reports with parents. We're here to help them navigate the school system and offer support and advice to help them achieve their academic goals.

**CULTURAL ADAPTION:** We provide guidance and advice to help them adapt to the UK's culture and lifestyle, organising cultural immersion activities and providing them with the necessary tools to integrate seamlessly into their new environment.

**COMMUNICATION BRIDGE:** We act as the communication bridge between you, your child, their school, and their homestay family. We ensure everyone is informed about their progress and welfare.

### Your role as a homestay

**STUDENT'S GUARDIAN:** During the times that you are hosting, your responsibilities are to protect, care for and provide food and lodging for your student on a day-to-day basis, as you would your own children. The overall guardianship responsibility remains with UKIC, whom you should contact whenever a situation arises in which you are uncertain as to the appropriate action to take. Untoward occurrences, such as hospitalisation, unexplained student absences or other situations affecting student safety, should be reported to UKIC immediately.

**SCHOOL CONTACT:** You will not normally be expected to instigate contact with a student's school or to attend school occasions, which is a role undertaken by UKIC. If there was a need for the host to contact or visit the school, it would be at the instigation of UKIC and with the agreement of the host.

**HOST FAMILY REQUIREMENTS:** UKIC requires the following documents from host families before we can place any students with you:

1. A completed application form
2. Passport copy for the main host
3. Enhanced DBS Certificates for all persons aged 16 and over living at the premises\*
4. Gas safe certificate issued in the past 12 months
5. 2 references (one personal, one professional from people who have known you for at least 2 years)
6. Safeguarding certificate issued in the last 3 years (we can send you an online safeguarding course to complete if necessary)

\*If you are not signed up to the DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) update service, you will need to apply for the DBS certificates ASAP. Copies of the following documents will be needed: passport, driving licence, proof of address and National Insurance number. Only after the DBS certificates are acquired can we proceed with the cooperation.

We will arrange a visit to your house where we will meet the family, have a look around your house and discuss any questions you have about hosting or child safety. We will also check that you have working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.

You will also be asked to sign a contract and complete a self-declaration and medical declaration form. Please provide us with at least 4 weeks' notice if you wish to terminate the contract.

We will visit you each year to ensure high standards are maintained. If there are any changes to the house, student facilities or household make up, it is your responsibility to let us know as soon as possible.

Please be aware that in some cases, a student's school may wish to visit your house, and an AEGIS representative may also ask to visit you at the time of a UKIC inspection. Your cooperation at these times will be much appreciated.

## Looking after and respecting the rights of the student

We host students aged from 7 to 19 years old. Students of different ages may require different care. For example, younger students will require greater nurturing and supervision during their stay, whereas older students will be more independent and may be allowed to visit the local area on their own. Parental permissions may vary from student to student too. We will explain to you what we expect from you prior to placing any student with you.

One of the most mutually rewarding experiences of hosting an international student is learning about another culture. We ask that all homestays respect the students' own culture, values and background and be mindful that there will be some differences in the way students approach everyday life, such as when greeting others or whilst eating. Likewise, the students may have a different religious belief to the homestay. Again, we ask that you are respectful of any differences.

## Loco Parentis

We expect our homestays to exercise the same levels of care as a responsible parent – in loco parentis. This means that you are accepting the day-to-day responsibility for the care of the student whilst they are staying with you.

## Codes of conduct

UKIC has a code of conduct for staff and homestays. Please take time to read through this document as it outlines how staff and homestays are expected to behave whilst working for the guardianship organisation. You can find it on our official website: [www.primecolleges.co.uk](http://www.primecolleges.co.uk)

Likewise we have a code of conduct for students. This outlines the expected standards of behaviour for our students. Please read through this as it will help you to understand our expectations. You can find it on our official website: [www.primecolleges.co.uk](http://www.primecolleges.co.uk)

## Safeguarding

UKIC is committed to safeguarding and child protection. We have comprehensive policies on safeguarding, prevent / anti-radicalisation, low level concerns, complaints, anti-bullying, missing student, online safety, data protection that provide further information and outline our procedures. These can be found on our official website: [www.primecolleges.co.uk](http://www.primecolleges.co.uk). Please ensure that you have read and understood all our policies.

You are required to undertake a basic certificated course on safeguarding. This should be refreshed every three years. We will also provide an annual safeguarding update. This will be via email.

We encourage students to talk to any trusted adult should they have any concerns. As a homestay, a student may consider you to be a trusted adult. There may be students who feel more comfortable speaking to other homestay family members about a concern they may have. You should therefore ensure that all members of your household are aware of what to do if a concern is shared with them. We have explained to students that any concerns they raise will be treated seriously. If a student comes to you or any homestay member to raise a concern, please ensure that it is dealt with in line with our published procedure (see safeguarding policy) and reported to our Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.

## Control

Homestays may only use reasonable, appropriate and lawful means of control to maintain safety. Under no circumstances should physical punishment ever be used.

## Homesickness

When students arrive in the UK, they might be homesick. Signs that they may be feeling homesick include:

- A strong desire to go home
- Feeling lonely
- Feeling sad
- Feeling anxious
- Lack of motivation
- Loss of confidence
- Feeling depressed
- Experiencing mood swings
- Feeling insecure
- Finding simple tasks difficult
- Physical symptoms, such as headaches and nausea

If your student is showing signs of homesickness, tell them not to worry as there are many people who can help them manage their feelings. Let them talk to you about their feelings, and remind them that they can always talk to their house parent, teacher, parent, guardian, or any member of guardian staff who will listen and will be able to support you and offer advice. It is best not to encourage them to frequently call home, as this can make the feelings worse. Keeping the student busy and interested in a variety of family activities and discussions may help them settle and feel happier. Please do let us know if you are concerned that your student is suffering with homesickness. We are here to support both you and the student.

## How to comfort a student in distress

Students in your care may feel homesick or nervous about staying with a family they do not know. We would urge hosts to speak to the student calmly to try to discover the reasons they are feeling the way they are and to try to make them feel as comfortable and welcome as possible.

If you suspect, discover or are told that a student in your care is dealing with the effects of bullying behaviour, please remember that they may be feeling scared, embarrassed or ashamed, and they may be worried about what will happen if they tell anyone. If they decide to open up to you, keep calm and listen carefully to what they say. Otherwise, suggest that they have a chat with another trusted adult, such as a UKIC staff member, teacher or family member. Alternatively, they can contact [Childline](#) where they can discuss their problems anonymously.

Students may lack confidence as a result of bullying. It is a good idea to help them find things to do that make them feel good, like listening to, or playing, music, or doing sport. Try to give them opportunities to help build their confidence.

**If you have any concerns about a student in your care, please contact UKIC immediately.**

Additional guidance can be found in our Staff and Homestay Code of Conduct.

Further advice relating to homesickness can be found in our Student Handbook.

Additional information relating to bullying can be found in our Anti-Bullying (including Cyber Bullying) Policy.

All these documents can be found on our website at [www.primecolleges.co.uk](http://www.primecolleges.co.uk).

## Curfews and Bedtimes

Students who have permission to go out on their own will be required to return to homestays by the following times:

- 15 and under: Must be accompanied by an adult member of host family
- 16 and 17: Must be home by 9pm at the latest.
- 18 and over: Must be home by 10pm at the latest.

We will inform you whether or not the student you are hosting has permission to go out alone. All students who are permitted to go out unaccompanied by their homestay must take their mobile phone (fully charged) with them and keep this switched on. Please make sure that they have your telephone number programmed into their phone. It is important that if students do go out unaccompanied, that they let you know where they are going and roughly how long they will be out. If for any reason they are delayed, students must contact you to keep you informed of their whereabouts.

UKIC suggests that student bedtimes should be as follows:

12 and under:	9pm
13 - 15:	10pm
16 - 17:	10:30pm
18 and over:	11pm

Any deviation to these times should be discussed with the homestay.

## **Permission for students to visit the local area/shops/travelling further afield/excursions**

Students aged 16 and over are aware that they need to inform their hosts and UKIC if they would like to go out by themselves or with friends to visit the local area. If they would like to travel further afield (e.g. to another city), UKIC must be informed in advance and we will seek permission from the student's parents.

If you would like to take a student out for an excursion (e.g. a day trip or cinema/theatre visit), please let us know. If this will incur any additional charges, this must be agreed in advance with UKIC.

If a student informs you that they would like to go out and you have concerns about their safety or whether it is permitted, please contact us straight away and we will be happy to advise.

## **Students staying away from the homestay**

Occasionally your student may ask to go and stay with friends overnight and this type of request often comes at the last minute. They are not permitted to do so unless the visit is sanctioned by UKIC and by their own parents. You would need to contact your appointed Guardian or Head Office and we would seek permission to ensure that we comply with UKVI (UK Visa & Immigration service) requirements.

If, as a host family, you wish to stay away overnight taking your student with you then, again, you must seek permission from UKIC. Whilst this can often be a great experience for the student, it can have implications upon safeguarding as well as UKVI which are tricky to resolve.

We appreciate that the students staying with you are all individuals with varying degrees of maturity, so whilst we give you guidance to help and support you in this handbook, we are happy for you to make personal judgements based on your own instincts. You can always ask your appointed Guardian for advice too – please don't ever think you are operating alone!

## **Accommodation requirements**

Homestays should ensure that they provide a comfortable living environment for students. We require our students to be provided with the following:

- A suitable bedroom and social area(s) which are well kept, clean and in good repair, with sufficient natural light.
- Suitable safeguards must be in place to ensure that students have sufficient privacy from other students. Parents should be made aware of students who may wish to share bedrooms and must give consent before the arrangement goes ahead.
- Where homestays are using a double bed, only one student is using this facility. Under no circumstances should students share a double bed.
- The rooms should have suitable heating and lighting and there should be access to sufficient supplies of hot water as required.
- Students should have access to a private space to study.
- Students should have access to appropriate hanging and drawer space for clothing.
- Students should have access to a bathroom with a lock on the door and either a shower or bath.
- Students should be treated as part of the family, and therefore have access to the communal rooms in the home. They should not have access to family member's bedrooms.

Please make us aware if any member of the homestay is a smoker, or if you have any pets. Students should have the right to opt for a non-smoking and/or non-pet homestay environment.



Please be aware of the need to ascertain the adequacy of your home insurance in respect of hosting international students. The insured (homeowner) should declare all facts to the insurer in order to a) obtain the right cover and b) obtain the right premium.

No more than three students should be placed with the same homestay at any one time, unless in exceptional circumstances. Please ensure that you inform us if you work with other guardianship organisations as we need to check that you are not accommodating more than three students in total when members of an AEGIS guardianship organisation are being hosted.

When students under the age of 16 are in the care of a homestay, no students over the age of 20 should be hosted either by the guardianship organisation or another guardianship organisation working within the same homestay.

Homestays should not host any other paying guests or operate any form of bed and breakfast facility when hosting AEGIS students.

Homestays are expected to adhere to following advice on adult supervision and ensure that:

- Children under 12 years old shouldn't be left home alone.
- Children over 12 years old can be left alone for short periods of time, only if they feel comfortable with the arrangement.
- Children should never be left in a home that could put them at risk – like with no electricity or heat, or with dangerous objects.
- Students are not to be left at home alone regardless of their age if they do not feel comfortable with this.
- All students must know how to contact you in an emergency and you need to be able to return to them within a reasonable timeframe.
- In addition to these advice, UKIC insists that no students should be left alone in the house overnight.

## Meals and Snacks

We ask that homestays provide students with a full board provision of breakfast, lunch and dinner during their stay, taking account of any dietary needs. In addition, students should be provided with access to suitable drinks and snacks during their stay.

Host families will have been informed of any food allergies and in some cases, of dislikes. This means hosts can preplan food menus, which in turn allows some purchasing of food in advance. We suggest that you also speak to the student on their arrival about mealtimes and the types of food that they particularly like. Students generally require full-board accommodation, and as a guide will expect the following:

- Breakfast - At school, a cooked breakfast will usually be available daily, so the offer by a host of an egg and/or bacon (perhaps a bacon sandwich) and/or baked beans is usually appreciated. As an alternative, offer some combination of fruit, yogurt, cereal, toast and muffins. Teenage students are often keen to lie-in in the mornings and therefore a late breakfast is common.
- Lunch - At school, lunch is the main meal of the day. That said, for most UK households, lunch is a lighter meal. A compromise between these two is for a lunch such as jacket potato with cheese, pizza with salad, BLT, pasta with sauce, hotdogs or soup and bread. When a sandwich is offered, it should have plenty of fillings with perhaps salad and crisps on the side. Fruit, cake or something sweet should also be available for dessert.
- Dinner - Dinner should ideally be taken with the family, and consist of at least two courses, e.g. a main course of chicken, fish or red meat with vegetables and a dessert. Popular main courses would include roast chicken with potatoes and vegetables, pork in a jar of Chinese-style sauce with rice or pasta, stir-fried vegetables with noodles and prawns, lasagne with salad and garlic bread, fish fillets with chips and peas, bangers and mash with vegetables or a BBQ. Dessert might be a fruit pie or crumble, fresh fruit salad and ice cream, choc-ices, cake or jam doughnuts with custard. If you are lucky, the student may even offer to cook a meal for your family one day.
- Snacks - Students should not expect to help themselves and 'snack' in between meals, but are encouraged to ask if they are hungry. If hungry (teenagers are often growing fast!), something like fruit, biscuits or cake should be available. Some hosts leave a box of daily snacks for the student to help themselves to throughout the day. A hot drink and a biscuit before going to bed would be appreciated, especially if the dinner is early.

Students are told that they are not allowed to use a host's kitchen for safety reasons (unless agreed in advance, e.g. if they offer to cook the family a meal, in which case appropriate supervision must be provided in line with their age and basic hygiene control should be in place). However, students might bring some food/snacks with them so please show them where they can keep this (e.g. in a cupboard in the kitchen to avoid food being eaten in the bedroom).

Sometimes, the student's table manners cause a little concern. Remember, for some of them, they have only just become accustomed to using a knife and fork (they may have only used chopsticks before). Please respect this difficulty and we would also ask you to appreciate that slurping food, talking with mouth full etc. is broadly common and acceptable in China, but at the same time try to offer some sensitive guidance if you feel it is necessary. The Student Handbook explains some typical British customs and manners including not leaving the table until everyone has finished and helping to carry the plates to the kitchen at the end of the meal.

Please remember to discuss meal times with the student on arrival so they know what time they need to be home/available. Students are told to give at least 1 day's notice if they wish to miss a meal and eat elsewhere.

## **Laundry**

Homestays are asked to provide students with suitable laundry facilities if they are resident for more than one night. In most cases the homestay would undertake to do the laundry for the student. Depending upon the age of the students, the homestay may give permission for them to do their own laundry if requested and agreed.

## **Use of the homestay's car for transport**

Any cars used to transport student should be roadworthy with up-to-date tax, insurance, and MOT (where required). If you provide transport using your car for the students in your care, please be aware of the need for adequate comprehensive vehicle insurance and that you should inform your insurers that you will be using your car to provide transport to international students for which you may be paid or receive expenses.

Please ensure that all relevant laws relating to the use of child seats or booster seats for under 12s, when the student is below 135cm in height, and seat belts for over 12s or more than 135cm tall are discussed with students and adhered to.

## **Access to computers and the internet & safe use of the internet**

Students now expect access to an internet connection, preferably wireless. All schools provide this but do limit use and monitor it carefully. The internet should only be used for academic work and also to stay in touch with their family and friends during the holiday period.

Unrestricted Access - There is increasing concern about the dangers to young people of free and unrestricted access to the Internet without appropriate controls. We would advise hosts to limit access in the best interests of the student. The best way to do this is by setting up a filtering system on your home internet that limits which websites can be accessed. The following article explains how to do this: <https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parental-controls-offered-by-your-home-internet-provider>

Students are told not to download or stream large files, such as films, games and music, as this can lead to problems with your normal access but it can be difficult to monitor this. Host families should feel free to switch off the internet if it is being used excessively or at unsociable hours.

Students are taught how to use the internet safely at school and are given guidance by UKIC. They are advised not to give out personal details or send digital photos to strangers, respond to unkind messages or give out their passwords to anyone. If you have a concern about a student not following safe internet guidelines, please inform UKIC.

UKIC has an Online Safety Policy which you can find on our website: [www.primecolleges.co.uk](http://www.primecolleges.co.uk)

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

## **Health and Safety in the Home**

We expect all homestays to adhere to our health and safety guidelines:

- A minimum of one smoke alarm should be installed on every storey.
- A carbon monoxide alarm to be installed in any room containing a gas, liquid or solid fuel burning appliance.
- An annual landlord gas safety check to be undertaken by a Gas Safe registered engineer and a copy of the certificate provided to the guardianship organisation.



- The homestay must ensure that the electrical system is safe, e.g. sockets and light fittings are secure and not overloaded and any appliances used by the student are safe.
- The homestay must discuss the possible evacuation routes from the property with students on a regular basis. If doors or windows are locked students must know where to find the key in the event of a fire.
- If fire extinguishers and fire blankets are provided, they must be suitably serviced.
- Where open fires are used, a suitable fire guard should be in place when the fire is lit.
- Any matches / lighters should be appropriately stored.
- A basic first aid kit should be available to include, plasters, sterile eye-pad, triangular bandage, safety pins, non-medicated wound dressing, disposable gloves, leaflet giving guidance on first aid.
- Any prescription medication and drugs should be kept safely especially when hosting young students.
- Alcohol should be appropriately stored.
- The homestay should have an awareness of basic food hygiene when preparing meals for students.

We will conduct an initial visit to check that your accommodation is suitable prior to you hosting a student. Thereafter we will visit at least once a year to undertake an annual check. Please let us know immediately if there are any changes in the accommodation you are offering. This includes informing us of any temporary building work that may take place when you are due to host students. In some case the school may also wish to make an annual visit to check the property. You will be made aware of this prior to agreeing to host a student.

Please refer to our separate Welfare, Health and Safety statement, that can be found on our website: [www.primecolleges.co.uk](http://www.primecolleges.co.uk)

## Changes in circumstances

You are required to inform the guardianship organisation about any changes to the homestay arrangements.

## Expenses and payments

UKIC ensures that any payments due to homestays are transacted promptly and in line with any contractual agreements in place.

All expenses claimed by host families are charged to the Student Expense Account. UKIC must be able to justify and explain all expenditure to parents when they receive their invoices each term.

The following payments are made:

- Accommodation fee per student per night or part thereof
- Mileage plus an hourly rate for school collections, airport runs or excursions solely for the student.
- General expenses include but are not limited to; meals out, concert, theme park, cinema, or theatre tickets, pocket money, dry cleaning and haircuts.

If you need to spend more than £50 per day on these general expenses, then please seek authorisation from UKIC first.

When claiming expenses, include receipts whenever possible. You will be provided with a claim form which you can complete by hand or online and then return it to UKIC along with scanned/photographed copies or paper copies of your receipts. We shall process your claim within 10 working days of receipt and make payments directly into your bank account.

## Your contract and cancelling the agreement

**Termination by the Homestay:** In the event that the Homestay wishes to terminate the contract, the following conditions apply:

**Notice Period:** The Homestay agrees to provide a written notice to the UKIC, stating the intention to terminate the contract. The notice period shall be 4 weeks, as specified in the homestay contract.

**Reasons for Termination:** The Homestay may terminate the contract for reasons consistent with the terms and conditions specified in the formal contract and the homestay agreement. Such reasons may include, but are not limited to, breaches of contract by either party.

**Termination by the Guardianship Organization:** Should the UKIC find it necessary to terminate the contract with the Homestay, the following conditions shall apply:

**Notice Period:** UKIC agrees to provide written notice to the Homestay indicating the termination of the contract. The notice period shall be 5 days, as specified in the homestay contract.

**Reasons for Termination:** UKIC reserves the right to terminate the contract for reasons consistent with the terms and conditions specified in the formal contract and the homestay agreement. This includes, but is not limited to, instances where the Homestay fails to meet its obligations or breaches the terms of the agreement.

**Mutual Agreement:** In certain circumstances, the Homestay and UKIC may mutually agree to terminate the contract before the expiration of the notice period. Such agreements must be made in writing and should clearly outline the agreed-upon terms and conditions for the termination.

**Review and Amendment:** This is subject to periodic review and may be amended as necessary. Any changes will be communicated to both parties in writing. This aims to ensure a fair and transparent process for terminating the contract between UKIC and the Homestay, promoting a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship.

## Responsibilities during a pandemic

Pandemics can cause major disruption to travel and schooling. It is important in such events that UKIC takes advice from the government, UK Health Security Agency and the World Health Organisation. AEGIS also provides guidance for members to follow. This is regularly updated as a situation develops. Usually, in a pandemic it is important to restrict movement so as not to spread the disease further. That means boarding school students would usually remain at school. In the event of a pandemic UKIC may not be able to offer homestay accommodation as this could place students, homestay families and the wider community at risk. UKIC will work with parents to find flights to home countries where required. UKIC will work with schools to meet students' needs during a pandemic. This could be by helping to support students to learn remotely as directed by the school. UKIC will work with parents and schools to find suitable quarantine accommodation for students where required. UKIC has a policy that outlines the procedures we are following during a pandemic. This can be found here on our website: [www.primecolleges.co.uk](http://www.primecolleges.co.uk)