

Host Family Handbook



Updated: March 15th, 2024

Key Information

One guardianship offers a tailored guardianship service for international students in the United Kingdom. Our seasoned team brings a wealth of global experience in the educational sector to ensure every student achieves their academic potential within a secure and nurturing environment. As part of the OneGuardianship family, students are placed in caring homestays that contribute significantly to their personal and academic growth.

Contact Details

Office Number: +44 (0) 7500 625036 (Weekdays 09:00 - 18:00)

Emergency Contact: +44 (0) 7500 625036 (24/7 Availability)

Email: oneguardianship@gmail.com

Holidays: Closed during UK Bank Holidays and Christmas Week

Role of the Guardianship

In the UK, it is mandatory for international students to have a UK-based guardian over 18, available 24/7 to provide comprehensive support, including emergency, logistical, and parental assistance. OneGuardianship fulfils this role by closely collaborating with schools, houseparent, staff, and host families to maintain a personal and caring environment, ensuring our guardianship students receive the utmost level of care.

Role of a Host Family

OneGuardianship's network of host families is diverse and carefully selected to meet students' specific needs. Host families play a pivotal role by offering:

- The environment offered within the home is paramount, aiming to be not just a place of residence but a sanctuary. It is essential that this environment radiates warmth, ensuring safety and fostering a nurturing atmosphere where the student can truly feel at ease and supported. Such an atmosphere contributes significantly to the overall well-being and comfort of the student, making them feel valued and secure.
- A private bedroom for the student is more than just a sleeping area; it is their personal retreat. Therefore, it is crucial that this space is furnished comfortably, with appropriate furniture to meet their needs. This includes a suitable bed, adequate storage space, a study area, and personal touches that can help the student feel at home. The objective is to create a space that supports relaxation, study, and personal growth.
- Nutritional needs are fundamental to the student's health and well-being. Providing three nutritious meals daily, along with access to snacks, ensures that the student's dietary needs are met comprehensively. These meals should not only cater to the physical nourishment of the student but also introduce them to the local cuisine and eating habits, encouraging a shared dining experience that fosters family bonds and cultural exchange.
- The inclusion of the student as a family member goes beyond merely sharing a living space. It involves integrating them into the daily routines, celebrations, and even the challenges of family life. This approach fosters a deep sense of belonging and community, enriching the student's experience and facilitating a more profound understanding and appreciation of the host culture.
- In today's interconnected world, access to safe Wi-Fi Internet is indispensable for the student's academic success and personal communication. Ensuring that this access is not only available but also reliable and secure allows the student to study effectively, stay in touch with their family and friends, and explore the wealth of information available online safely.
- The availability of the host for emergency contact is a critical component of the support system provided to the student. Knowing that they can reach out at any time, for any reason, provides the student with a sense of security and reassurance. This open line of communication is essential for addressing any concerns or emergencies that may arise promptly.

- Respect for cultural differences is not just about tolerance but about fostering an environment of mutual respect and learning. It involves open dialogues, shared experiences, and the willingness to understand and celebrate the diversity that the student brings into the household. This respect enriches the host family's life, offering new perspectives and experiences.
- A firm commitment to the student's health, safety, and welfare underlines the responsibility of the host family to provide a secure and supportive environment. This commitment is demonstrated through actions, decisions, and the establishment of a safe space where the student's physical and emotional well-being is prioritized.
- Participation in training sessions provided by OneGuardianship is an essential aspect of preparing the host family for their role. These sessions offer valuable insights and guidelines on how to best support the student, addressing any challenges that may arise, and ensuring a rewarding experience for both the student and the host family.
- Prompt and effective communication with OneGuardianship regarding any concerns or issues that may arise is crucial for maintaining the well-being of the student and the quality of their experience. This communication ensures that any potential challenges are addressed promptly and effectively, with the support and guidance of OneGuardianship.

A Comprehensive Guide for Host Families on Welcoming International Students

Introduction

The moment a host family first meets their international student is of monumental importance, as it shapes the entirety of the student's experience during their stay. It is imperative for students to immediately perceive a sense of welcome, security, and appreciation upon their arrival. This document aims to provide host families with a structured approach to ensure a seamless and reassuring introduction for the student to their new abode.

Initial Protocols Following the Student's Arrival

1. *Gracious Reception:* It is paramount for the host family to extend a warm greeting to the student right at the threshold of their home. Introductions should be made not only to the immediate family members but also with a gesture of welcome, such as a sign or a modest gift, to instill a sense of belonging from the outset.

2. *Detailed Home Orientation:* A thorough walkthrough of the residence is essential, with special attention given to the student's personal quarters. It is crucial to demonstrate the location and use of vital household items and the operation of appliances including but not limited to the laundry machine, dishwasher, shower facilities, and internet connectivity.

3. *Clarification of Household Norms*: Promptly acquainting the student with the household's customs and regulations is advisable. This could encompass policies regarding footwear within the home, scheduled times for meals and bathing, as well as the utilization of communal areas. This introduction should be conducted in a manner that is both welcoming and comprehensive to prevent any feeling of being overwhelmed.

Fostering a Comfortable and Safe Environment

1. *Pet Introduction*: In households with pets, it is advisable to gradually introduce the student to these family members, detailing any significant care instructions or behaviors to ensure a comfortable coexistence.

2. *Definition of Privacy and Space Boundaries*: It is critical to delineate private areas within the home to uphold a mutual respect for personal space. Simultaneously, it should be communicated which communal spaces the student is encouraged to use, fostering a sense of community within the household.

3. *Emphasis on Cultural Empathy and Communication*: Engaging in dialogue about cultural variances and inviting the student to express any personal concerns or requirements is vital. A host family's openness and adaptability to the student's cultural context are fundamental in establishing a relationship based on trust and mutual respect.

The initial reception and orientation process is crucial in cultivating a positive and enduring relationship between the student and the host family. By ensuring the provision of a supportive and inclusive environment from the beginning, host families are setting the stage for a mutually enriching experience. The overarching aim is to afford the student the utmost comfort and ease in acclimatizing to their new environment.

Accommodation Standards for Host Families

Bedroom Requirements

Personal Space: Each student must be provided with their own private bedroom, which should not be shared unless a prior agreement has been made. The room should be furnished with a comfortable bed, desk or table, chair, and adequate storage solutions including drawers and hanging space. A personal rubbish bin should also be provided.

Bathroom Accessibility

Facilities: Students must have access to a bathroom, which may be shared with the family or en-suite. Host families should communicate the optimal times for bathroom use, especially during busy morning and evening routines.

Shower Preference: It's important to inform students, many of whom prefer daily showers, on the operation of shower and toilet facilities. This includes guidance on rubbish disposal and, if necessary, instructions on sanitary item disposal.

Usage Guidelines: Discuss and suggest reasonable time limits for bathroom use, considering the potential limitations of hot water supply in the UK. Encourage students to leave the bathroom tidy for the next person.

Personal Hygiene: Discreet monitoring of the student's hygiene practices may be required to promote health. Encourage habits such as daily showers, regular oral hygiene, hair washing, and frequent clothing changes.

Meals and Food

Nutritional Requirements: Host families are expected to provide three nutritious meals daily, along with snacks and fruits for between meals. A selection of meal ideas will be suggested, not as an exhaustive list, but as a guide to include variety.

Cultural Sensitivity: Be prepared for students to find some English foods bland and respect their preference for adding condiments or spices. Engage students in meal planning by inviting them to accompany you for grocery shopping and selecting a few of their favourite meals or snacks.

Dietary Preferences: Prior to cooking the first meal, confirm any dietary restrictions or preferences with the student, even if OneGuardianship has already provided this information.

Laundry and Cleaning

Amenities: Provide clean bedding, two towels, and ensure the student's room is cleaned weekly. While students are encouraged to maintain tidiness and make their own beds, host families are not expected to tidy up after the students.

Laundry Instructions: Inform students where to place dirty laundry and discuss the arrangements for washing clothes, which may include teaching them to use the washing machine for their own laundry.

Bedtimes and Curfews

Guidelines: Establish bedtime and curfew guidelines appropriate for the student's age, ensuring their safety and well-being. Host families should discuss and agree on these guidelines with the student to foster a respectful and secure environment.

Health and Safety Guidelines for Host Families

Ensuring a Safe Environment

Fire Safety Measures: Upon the student's arrival, conduct a thorough walkthrough of your home, highlighting all basic fire escape routes, the accessibility of exits, and the location of keys necessary for emergency egress. It is crucial to ensure that the student is familiar with these procedures to enhance their personal safety.

Activity Precautions: Exercise due diligence in evaluating the safety of activities proposed by or for the student. It is advisable to discuss such plans with OneGuardianship before participation, particularly for activities with inherent risks, such as go-karting or rock climbing.

Storage and Safety of Medications and Chemicals

Secure Storage: Ensure that all medicines, chemicals, or substances potentially harmful to the student are stored securely and out of reach. This is especially pertinent for any bathroom or area the student might use, to prevent accidental ingestion or misuse.

Electrical and Appliance Safety

Appliance Maintenance: Verify the safety of all electrical appliances in the home, particularly in areas accessible to the student. Annual PAT (Portable Appliance Testing) is recommended to ensure that all electrical items are in safe working order.

Risk Assessment

Property Evaluation: Complete a detailed risk assessment of your property prior to the student's arrival. Identify any potential hazards, such as busy roads, water bodies, or other risks, and clearly communicate these to the student during their orientation to your home. A specific risk assessment form, provided by OneGuardianship, should be filled out to facilitate this process.

Gas Safety and Smoke Alarms

Annual Inspections: All gas appliances should undergo annual inspection by a Gas Safe registered engineer, with a Gas Safety Certificate issued to OneGuardianship as confirmation. Additionally, install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors throughout your home to further ensure the safety and well-being of all occupants.

First Aid Preparedness

First Aid Kit: Maintain a well-stocked first aid kit that is easily accessible to the student. At a minimum, the kit should include plasters, a sterile eye pad, triangular bandages, safety pins, non-medicated wound dressings, disposable gloves, and a first aid guidance leaflet.

Communication and Digital Well-being: Guidelines for Host Families

Effective Communication

Exchange of Contact Information: Upon the student's arrival, exchange all pertinent contact information, including mobile and landline phone numbers. Ensure the student knows to keep their mobile phone charged and on for ease of communication and to notify you promptly of any changes to their plans.

Emergency Preparedness: Make sure the student is aware of emergency contact numbers, including 999 for police, fire, or ambulance services, and 101 for non-emergencies. Familiarize them with the process of seeking help in an emergency.

Internet Safety and Usage

Wi-Fi Access: Upon arrival, provide the Wi-Fi password and ensure the student understands the expectations regarding internet use, including academic research, social media, and video calling.

Downloading and Streaming: Clearly communicate policies regarding the downloading and streaming of large files, such as movies, games, and music, to avoid overuse of internet bandwidth and potential legal issues.

Parental Controls and Monitoring: Implement appropriate parental controls on your internet to manage access to various websites and ensure the digital safety of the student. Regularly review and adjust these settings as needed.

Time Management: Encourage sensible use of the internet, especially in the evenings, to ensure it does not interfere with sleep. Agree on reasonable times for internet use, taking into consideration the student's age and your family's routines.

Privacy and Respect: Discuss the importance of privacy and respect online, including not sharing personal information with strangers and being mindful of the content shared on social media platforms.

Concerns and Reporting: Host families should feel empowered to limit internet use if it becomes excessive or is used during unsociable hours. Any concerns about the student's internet activity,

including the types of websites accessed or excessive time spent on social media, should be reported to OneGuardianship for further guidance.

Navigating Cultural and Religious Differences: A Guide for Host Families

Embracing Diversity

OneGuardianship values the rich tapestry of cultures and religious beliefs that our international students bring to their host families. Understanding and embracing these differences is key to fostering a welcoming environment where students feel respected and valued for their unique backgrounds.

Communication and Understanding

Language Proficiency: While most students possess a good command of English, it's beneficial to ensure comprehension by speaking clearly and confirming understanding. Patience and attentiveness in communication reinforce a supportive atmosphere.

Cultural Sensitivity: Encourage open discussions about cultural norms, practices, and traditions. This mutual exchange enriches the host family experience and promotes a deeper understanding and appreciation of diversity.

Religious Considerations

Respect for Practices: We inform host families of any specific religious observances or dietary restrictions in advance of the student's arrival. Host families are encouraged to discuss these practices directly with the student to accommodate their needs respectfully.

Supporting Religious Observances: Providing information about local places of worship or adjusting mealtimes during religious fasting periods exemplifies the supportive and inclusive environment that OneGuardianship strives for.

Addressing Misunderstandings

Sensitivity Towards Pets: Some students may have limited exposure to household pets and may find them unfamiliar or unsettling. Introduce pets gently and respect the student's comfort level, adjusting as necessary.

Inclusivity in Activities: When planning activities, consider the cultural interests and restrictions of your student. This ensures their full participation and enjoyment in family outings and gatherings.

By fostering an environment of mutual respect, openness, and curiosity, host families contribute significantly to the personal growth and cross-cultural understanding of their international students.

Educational Support and Academic Engagement: A Framework for Host Families

Encouraging Academic Excellence

Our international students often have homework or study requirements during their stay with host families. It's crucial for host families to actively engage with and support the students' educational pursuits to ensure a successful academic experience abroad.

Homework and Study Habits

Study Time Allocation: Encourage your student to designate specific times for homework and studying. Providing a quiet and comfortable study space within your home can significantly enhance their focus and productivity.

Academic Encouragement: Check in with your student about any assignments or projects they may be working on. Offering encouragement and even minor assistance, if appropriate, can make a substantial difference in their academic confidence and performance.

School Communication and Transportation

School Transportation: If you are responsible for the student's transportation to and from school, coordinate with OneGuardianship to establish agreed-upon pickup and drop-off times. Should there be any changes to these arrangements, promptly inform OneGuardianship, as we need to notify the student's school and parents.

Direct School Communication: While OneGuardianship maintains primary contact with the student's school, there may be instances where the student shares school-related issues or concerns with you. In such cases, immediately relay this information to OneGuardianship. Direct communication from the student's parents or their school to you should be shared with OneGuardianship to ensure all parties are fully informed and can act in the student's best interest.

Role of OneGuardianship

Primary Educational Guardian: OneGuardianship serves as the primary educational guardian, liaising with the student's school as necessary. This includes managing all formal communications and addressing any concerns or issues that may arise during the student's stay.

This section underscores the importance of host family involvement in the international student's educational journey. By providing a supportive and conducive learning environment, host families play a pivotal role in the academic success and overall well-being of the student.

Insurance Requirements

Hosting an international student involves careful consideration of insurance to safeguard both the host family and the student. Here are the essentials:

Homeowner's Insurance: Inform your insurance provider that you're hosting a student to ensure your policy covers additional residents. Verify whether you need to extend your coverage to include potential damages or injuries that could occur during their stay.

Vehicle Insurance: If transportation for the student will be provided using your vehicle, confirm with your auto insurance provider that your policy covers additional passengers, particularly for purposes related to hosting an international student.

Liability Coverage: OneGuardianship carries a public liability insurance policy that extends protection to host families in the event of legal claims arising from the student's guardianship. It's crucial to understand, however, that this coverage does not substitute for your own homeowner's or personal liability insurance.

Student's Insurance: The student's family is advised to secure insurance coverage for the student while abroad, which should include health, accident, and personal property protection. Host families should confirm with OneGuardianship that such arrangements have been made prior to the student's arrival.

Tax Implications

Tax-Free Allowance: Under the Rent-a-Room Scheme in the UK, host families can earn up to £7,500 per year tax-free from renting out furnished accommodation to a lodger, which includes international students. This allowance is per property and not per homeowner.

Reporting Income: If you exceed the threshold of £7,500 in a tax year, you must complete a tax return. You'll only be taxed on the excess income above this threshold. For detailed guidance and to ensure compliance with tax obligations, consult the HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) website or a tax professional.

It is essential for host families to navigate insurance and tax responsibilities with diligence and transparency. Ensuring proper coverage and adherence to tax laws fosters a secure and legally compliant hosting environment for international students.

Conclusion: Building Bridges Through Cultural Exchange

As we close this handbook, we reflect on the profound journey host families embark upon, welcoming international students into their homes. OneGuardianship's mission extends beyond academic support to include fostering meaningful cultural exchanges that enrich both host families and students. This handbook serves as a guide, laying the foundation for a rewarding experience filled with learning, growth, and mutual respect.

To our dedicated host families, your role is pivotal in shaping the students' experience, providing them with a nurturing environment that feels like a home away from home. Through your support, students

are empowered to explore, learn, and succeed in their academic endeavours while immersed in the rich tapestry of British culture.

OneGuardianship is committed to supporting you every step of the way, ensuring a seamless and fulfilling guardianship experience. Together, we create a global community, bridging cultures, and fostering understanding and friendship that last a lifetime.

Thank you for your invaluable contribution to this vital mission. We look forward to continuing this journey with you, creating lasting impacts and cherished memories for both you and your international students.