



## HOST FAMILY CODE OF PRACTICE

Dear Host Family

Thank you for taking a student into your home and offering him or her the opportunity to share your family life. Your student will be staying in England to improve his or her English. They chose to stay with a family not only for this reason but also to learn about our way of life. You have a key role to play in both aspects of their stay with you. We are therefore grateful to you for helping your guest to improve their knowledge of your language by talking and encouraging them and, most of all, by making your student feel part of your family. You will find, in the following pages, answers to questions you may be asking yourself and practical advice to help you as a host family.

**What is Work Placements UK Ltd?** We are a small Work Placement Providing organisation, trading since 2006. We organise work placement programmes for groups of European students from Universities or Schools. Most groups stay for 2 weeks, some for 4 . All of our programmes include a work placement, some may have a period of study included too. The objective of these programmes is for the students to improve their English skills in a working environment, to learn about the British work place and gain work experience.

**Who is your guest?** One or two students usually aged between 17 and 25 who have been studying English for at least one year. Of course no distinction is made on the grounds of colour, race or religion. Occasionally we bring in 14 / 15 year old school students, they should be able to speak in English.

**Your payment?** When the host family organiser visits you she will ask for your bank details. We will pay directly into your bank account every 2 weeks, in

arrears. If you have any concerns about this please contact us directly and we are grateful that you do not discuss administrative matters in front of your student. On rare occasions it may be that a student has to be moved. We reserve the right to do this and to pay the host family only for the time that the student has stayed at the home. In the event that you may be paid for nights when the student did not stay with you, you accept to reimburse Work Placements UK Ltd.

**Arrival and Departure?** You will be informed by your host family organiser of the meeting point, date and time of arrival of your student. It is easiest to inform people by text or by email so please ensure the host family organiser has up to date details. Please be there to meet your student personally and help with luggage. Please try to provide a warm meal on arrival and make your student welcome in your home.

The host family organiser will also advise you of the departure details and where the student needs to be dropped off. We try to keep arrivals and departures at weekends and at reasonable hours, but this isn't always possible. Please be as flexible as you can be as this is very helpful for us.

Please understand that it is the host family's responsibility to pick up and drop off the student and any costs (e.g. taxi) must be met by the host family.

**The Host Family visit** – our host family organiser will arrange a visit to your home before the student arrives. When agreeing to host a student through Work Placements UK Ltd you will have to fill in a questionnaire with your host family organiser. You are required to sign this document as an acknowledgement that you have been given a copy of this 'Guidelines for the Host Family' and to state your agreement to comply with the terms contained in this document. For the families who have been hosting students before, an update of the information contained in the questionnaire must take place every year. Your host family organiser will stay in contact with you. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

### **Homestay accommodation**

UK Bodies have established minimum standards as a uniform Code of Practice for homestay accommodation. This code, which is sponsored by bodies which include the British Tourism Authority, the British Standard Institute and the British Council, highlights elements of conditions and care expected by overseas students on a language study tour to ensure that their stay is both enjoyable and beneficial. In order to meet the requirements of the laws in Britain and because of the profile that has been given to these laws, we need to ensure that all our host families are aware of these regulations and accordingly have acknowledged its effect and its intent.

### **Code of Practice for Host Families receiving overseas students**

If you decide to host a student through Work Placements UK Ltd, you agree to :

- 1) Encourage the student to speak English as much as possible.
- 2) Encourage the student to feel at home and treat him or her as a member of the family rather than as a paying guest by sharing meals, involving him or her in your family and social life and encouraging him or her not to spend too long alone in the bedroom.
- 3) Do not host another student of the same mother tongue at the same time as you host a student from Work Placements UK Ltd.
- 4) Have a proper state of cleanliness and repair in the home
- 5) You also agree to provide :

- A clean and comfortable bedroom in your house, with bedding ( a good supply of blankets and pillows) for the student where there shall be adequate living space according to the number of occupants. A room where each student will have a single bed. No, camp beds inflatable or similar bed shall be supplied
  - A room equipped with adequate natural light, ventilation, heating, a window that can be opened and a door that can be closed
  - A chair and a table suitable for writing with sufficient lighting for study purposes, where appropriate
  - A room with adequate hanging storage space for the student's clothes and belongings, such as a wardrobe or chest of drawers
  - The room can be a single or double bedroom. In the case of sharing a bedroom, make sure that the students are of the same sex and of similar age. If you take students from other agencies, please do not arrange for a Work Placements UK Ltd student to share a room with a student from another agency
  - Reasonable and regular (daily) access to bathroom and laundry facilities, and ensure that towels and bedding are changed at least once a week.
  - During winter, please provide extra blankets and make sure your student is not cold. Students may not be accustomed to the cold and damp that comes with British weather.
- 6) Provide a home environment in which it is possible for the student to carry on with his English studies properly
  - 7) Provide the student with a balanced and appropriate diet
  - 8) Respect the student's different cultural background and be sensitive to the particular needs of the student
  - 9) A responsible adult must always be present at all times when a 14 or 15 year old student is in. The student must not be left alone in your home
  - 10) Your student cannot be expected to do any housework or childminding

- 11) You should allow your students to make use of your phone to phone home once during their stay with use of an international calling card
- 12) You should arrange regular maintenance by a Gas Safe Registered engineer for all pipe work, appliances and flues; including arranging annual gas safety checks to be carried out by a Gas Safe Registered engineer once a year. You will also need to ensure that smoke alarms are provided and maintained during the time that any guest is placed in the home.

### **CHILDREN ACT 1989**

Under the Children Act 1989 there are legal responsibilities for host families accommodating students under 16 years of age. Since children are potentially at their most vulnerable when they are away from their families, especially with only a limited ability to communicate in English, this Act provides a necessary element of protection.

The following are NOT allowed to host children :

- Anyone who has been convicted of an offence against a child
- Anyone whose parental rights over a child have been taken over by a legal authority
- Anyone who has had a child removed from their care by order of a court
- Anyone who has had an order made against him/her refusing or cancelling registration under the Nurseries and Childminders Act 1948 or the Children Act 1989
- Anyone who has been convicted of a crime
- Any household where a person living has a serious infectious illness

Should any of these conditions apply to you or any person living in your household we would not be able to entrust you with one of our students and we ask you to report the situation immediately to your host family organiser. Therefore, before entrusting you with a Work Placements UK Ltd student we ask you to sign a statement on the Host Family questionnaire declaring that the Children Act 1989 does not apply to you or to any member of your household.

Thank you for your help with this. **We are confident that you would want the same assurance if a family in a foreign country were hosting your child.**

### **FIRST CONTACT WITH YOUR STUDENT**

You will receive information on your student from your host family organiser. As a minimum you will know the student's name, age, where he/she is from and where he/she will be working.

Please do not hesitate to contact the host family organiser should you have any queries.

Once you have your student's details you may want to make email contact in advance of their arrival.

Should any student fail to come for any reason we will make every effort to find a replacement. Work Placements UK Ltd cannot, however, accept responsibility for the last minute cancellation of a student.

Where appropriate you will be given the group itinerary so that you know when your student is likely to be out in the evenings and weekends.

Work Placements UK Ltd runs different programmes for each group – some will have a few days English classes before their work placement starts, others may go straight to their work placements. Please check with the host family organiser which programme your student is on. Please help the student with directions for their first day – whether it is straight into work or to a local hall for English classes. Most groups have a group leader, who is responsible for ensuring that things run smoothly and for helping to sort out any problems. The group leaders are always very approachable and speak excellent English.

### **YOUR STUDENT'S WELFARE**

**FOOD** – You are expected to provide full-board to your guest. On their day of arrival please welcome your student and make sure you supply a hot dinner. Your meals should not be any different from what you usually serve. Keep in mind that students will appreciate varied meals. Mealtimes provide an excellent opportunity to get to know each other. We therefore **expect that meals are taken with the family** and that students are not catered for separately. It makes a big impression on your student if you are able to spend time with them on the first couple of evenings, eating and discussing their day etc.

**Breakfast** – Students require a substantial breakfast (ie cereals, toast, fruit juice, tea/coffee etc). You may find that your student will drink hot chocolate rather than tea or coffee.

**Lunch** – during the week your student will not be at home for lunch so please provide a packed lunch. This should consist of at least two substantial ham, cheese or pate sandwiches, fruit, yoghurt and either cake, biscuits or crisps plus a drink (in a closeable bottle). Experience has shown that potted pastes and spreads are not popular. If the student is going on a trip at the weekends then please provide a packed lunch. If the student is at home at the weekends please include the student in whatever you have for lunch.

**Evening meal** – as your student gets a packed lunch please ensure they have a warm **cooked meal** in the evening. Please make sure your student knows what time to be in for dinner and that he or she eats with you. If your student is going to be late, please leave the meal on a plate that can be heated up in the microwave.

#### **LAUNDRY**

Your student will expect to have their laundry done at least once a week. Please indicate from the start where to put dirty linen and when you usually do your washing. If you prefer the student does his own washing then please explain how the washing machine works, and where the wet laundry should be hung to dry. Bed linen and towels should be changed weekly.

We suggest that you place a waste bin and some disposable paper in the student's bedroom for used sanitary towels.

#### **ASSISTING YOUR STUDENT TO FIND HIS/HER WAY ROUND**

Since your student is a complete stranger to St Albans please provide him or her with a map. Point out the nearest bus stop to your home and provide the student with an up to date timetable (available on the internet), explaining how it works and when the last bus home is. Please ensure your student knows how to get to where they need to go on day 1 and gently explain that they probably need to leave a little extra time as buses can run late. Where possible the students will be buying weekly or monthly tickets, please explain how they should do this. Some groups are supplied with tickets by the group leader, so please check if this will be happening.

#### **YOUR STUDENT'S HEALTH**

Should your student fall ill or some other incident occur, please call or take your student to your family doctor immediately. Also, please notify the host family organiser even if this seems trivial as the group leader will need to know. If it seems more serious please take the student to hospital. We insist the students carry their own insurance for medical cover. However, visitors to the UK are treated free of charge by the National Health Service as 'temporary residents'.

#### **MONEY**

Under no circumstances should you lend money to your student. Work Placements UK Ltd will not take any responsibility for any debt contracted by a student.

We regret that you cannot host a student if you are going away on holiday during their stay.

Please check the student's room before they leave to ensure they don't leave anything behind and that the room has been left tidy.

## SOCIAL LIFE

**Free time** – Weekends and bank holidays are when your students have free time. There may be excursions organised by the group leader, but if not please include the student in whatever you are doing and offer to take him or her with you. Free time that the student spends with the host family is a perfect opportunity to practice English, the student will be very grateful if you can gently correct their pronunciation and grammar. Please do not speak too fast so that your student is not discouraged!

## HOW WE EXPECT YOUR STUDENT TO BEHAVE

During the time you are hosting a student the host family organiser may call you to arrange a social visit with the group leader. The purpose of this visit would be to discuss the welfare and behaviour of the student during their stay with you.

**Telephone** – if your student wishes to phone home please explain that it is possible to buy a pre-paid international phone card (from the post office, newsagents etc) and perhaps assist with this. Most students have mobile phones and will buy a UK sim card for use when they are here – perhaps you could help them with this and then stay in touch using texts.

**What time must your student be home?** We advise all host families to explain what time you eat your evening meal and to expect them home for this. On the occasions when students go out straight from work they should let you know they will be late home for dinner (and you will leave the meal plated ready for them to heat up when they get home). We would suggest that you have a curfew which is explained to the students on arrival – may we suggest for over 18s 11 pm mid-week and later at the weekend?

**Vehicles** - students are not allowed to drive any sort of motor vehicle (including cars, motorcycles, scooters or boats etc). Even if the student has a driving licence their insurance will not cover them for this type of activity. If a student (over 21) chooses to hire a car then they are responsible for all costs and insurances required to cover this hire.

**Smoking** –we tell all students that they cannot smoke in your home. However, your student may be a smoker so if your house rule is non-smoking then the student should not smoke in your home. Please make this clear from the beginning as when students complete their application form they always mark down non-smoker but this may not actually be the case!

**What if there are problems?** If you are uneasy about any situation please try to resolve it with the student in the first instance. If you continue to be worried please speak to the host family organiser who will contact the group leader and try to resolve any problem. A problem may simply be the language barrier. The host family organiser and the group leader will be very happy to help with anything that may be worrying you. We would draw your attention to the fact that Work Placements UK Ltd only acts as a mediator between the student and the host family. We regret that Work Placements UK Ltd cannot be held responsible for any damage or additional expense which a student may cause to the host family. Any damage has to be covered by your own insurance. The group leader will give any help they can to resolve problems.

We hope these guidelines cover all the details you need to know and will help you to have a successful time with your student. If you intend to host a student for the first time you may worry that it will be a difficult task – actually it's very rewarding and with a little care and attention may be something you look forward to doing. Work Placements UK Ltd are proud to have families on our books who repeat the experience of hosting year on year as they enjoy it so much.

Thank you for your kind attention.