



Welcome to your homestay!

We wish you an enjoyable stay here.

Please take the time to read through this guide, which is designed to help you make the most of your homestay experience.

The London School of English homestay guide

We have produced this guide to help you to understand what you can expect from your London School of English homestay experience.

Your homestay host will treat you as a welcome guest and you should feel able to participate in their home life as far as is practical for you and your hosts. Naturally they will expect you to be courteous and respectful of the home and behave responsibly at all times.

The following pages should help you to understand what you can expect from your hosts and what they can expect from you. The objective is to help avoid any misunderstandings. If in doubt, please feel free to discuss anything you like with your host – it's always better to ask than assume!



Feeling at home...

We know that an important reason many clients choose to stay in homestay accommodation is to have an opportunity to experience British home life and practice their English. Please bear in mind that many of our hosts are working professionals, but although they may have busy lives, they will set aside some time each day to be able to speak with you. Some hosts spend time talking with their guests over breakfast, others make time in the evening over dinner. If you are keen to have as much contact as possible, discuss this with them and try to understand how this can be achieved while also respecting their busy schedules.

You may not be the only guest staying in this accommodation. If there is another visitor he or she will speak a different language to you, so you will have plenty of opportunity to practice speaking English.

You may find the home and lifestyle different to your normal routine, but remember that this is all part of the experience. Your host will make you feel welcome, but will also want some privacy, so do not expect them to be there just for you all the time.

Remember that you are staying in a private home, which is not a substitute for a hotel. You should not expect the same services and facilities that you might get in a hotel and you should be prepared to adapt to your homestay host's way of doing things.

House rules...

Every home has its own rules. In most homes these are not written down, but understood by everyone living in the home. To help you understand your host's routines they may include a list of house rules which will apply to everyone.

If no additional rules are included, you might ask if there is anything you should know about to help you integrate into their home life.

Meal arrangements...

If there is anything you particularly dislike or cannot eat, please feel free to discuss this with your host – they would rather know than discover that you are eating out of politeness. All meal options include a daily continental breakfast (typically fruit juice, cereals, toast with jam or marmalade and tea or coffee). The various meal arrangements are as follows, so you can be clear about what you have chosen:

Bed and breakfast (B&B): You will have breakfast with the family, but you will make your own arrangements for all other meals. You might also like to check what time the family eat in the evenings or at the weekends, so they can have the space to eat without feeling uncomfortable that you are not eating with them.

Bed and breakfast with 3 evening meals: The evening meals will be at an agreed time and almost always eaten with your host. Please speak with your host to agree which three days and what times are suitable.

Occasional meals: You might be able to add some occasional meals if you don't want to commit to meals before your booking. Each meal should be arranged between yourself and your host for a mutually convenient time and you will pay your host direct at the school's current agreed rate.

Freshly cooked evening meals will be prepared by your host, and you should not expect to be eating commercially packaged meals on a regular basis apart, perhaps, from the occasional home delivery.

Using the kitchen

You will be allowed to prepare drinks in the kitchen, but please make sure that you leave the kitchen as clean and tidy as you found it. Do not assume that you can use the kitchen to prepare your own meals. If you do wish to use the kitchen facilities you will need to agree this with your host.

About the living arrangements...

Laundry

Your weekly accommodation charge includes one clothes wash per week. Your host will either show you how to use the washing machine, or may offer to wash your clothes for you. It is a good idea to check laundry arrangements with your host, as some hosts do the weekly wash on a specific day each week. If you need to use the washing machine or have your washing done for you more than once a week, you should ask your host if this would be possible. Homestay hosts do not usually do ironing for you, but you will be able to use the iron and ironing board.

Internet / phone

If you have brought your own laptop computer, you will be able to have internet access at your homestay. You will be able to access a wireless connection free of charge. You should not expect to be able to use your host's home computer. Please be aware that some hosts may have guidelines regarding downloading materials using the home internet connection, so please respect these.

You can expect to be able to receive telephone calls within reasonable hours. Some hosts may allow outgoing telephone calls to UK numbers (e.g. if you have to contact the school or call a local taxi company). If you are staying in the UK for a longer period, you may wish to purchase a 'pay-as-you-go' SIM card for a mobile phone. The school can advise you about this.

Heating

Most British homes have a central heating system controlled by a single boiler and central control systems. Often the heating is switched off or turned low at night, which may not be usual in your own country. Your hosts will want you to be comfortable at night, so please feel free to tell your host if you would like additional blankets at night or are feeling cold at any time.

Being green

Please be responsible for taking care of the environment by remembering to switch off lights and helping your host to recycle where possible.



What if things go wrong?

Problems are very often due to misunderstandings or cultural differences. Where issues arise, you should discuss them if you feel they are making your homestay experience less positive.

A good way to start discussing a slightly uncomfortable issue might be to say something like: "It may be a misunderstanding, but..." or if you raise an issue you could always add something at the end such as: "... but perhaps these are cultural differences that I don't yet understand."

If you feel that an issue cannot be resolved by talking to your host, please contact the school as early as possible so that we can help to find a solution. You can contact the accommodation team through our main number: +44 (0) 20 7605 4123.