

ELC Bristol - Advice for students in homestay and private home accommodation

Accommodation is so important and we want you to be happy. We visit and are in regular contact with all our accommodation providers. They are all quite different. Some of you may live with a family, others with a lady on her own. Some may live in flats 5 minutes' walk from school, others in large houses 30 minutes away. Some of you will be the only student in the house; others may live with other students. One thing they have in common is that students who have stayed there in the past have been happy and have recommended the accommodation.

Homes and customs are different all over the world. Try to be flexible. When you don't know what to do, ask! Remember the accommodation is not a hotel. Do not expect everything to be done for you. Try to help if you can, as if you were at home. The most important thing is that you are happy. Here are some guidelines to help you feel at home.

Your room: you should have a bed, desk, lighting and somewhere to hang and put your clothes. If something is missing, ask! In winter, central heating is provided but not overnight. If you are cold, ask for extra blankets. Your landlady will clean your room, but please keep it tidy and make your own bed.

Bathroom: Ask your homestay when it is convenient for you to have a bath or shower. Leave the bathroom clean and tidy and be careful not to get water on the floor. Sometimes the hot water supply may be limited so try not to spend too long in the shower!

Food and mealtimes: In England, breakfast is usually a 'help yourself' affair. In the evening you will eat with the family. If there is anything you cannot eat, please tell your landlady. Please be at home in time for meals. If you do not require a meal or if you need to eat early so that you can take part in the social programme, it is important that you tell your homestay in advance.

Meals: During the week and at weekends lunch is not provided, so you will have to make your own arrangements.

Washing: The arrangements vary. Normally your homestay will wash one load of clothes once a week. Ask which day you should put your washing out. Sometimes, the homestay will ask you to use the washing machine yourself. Students do their own ironing and also their own hand washing. Ask where you should do this. The important thing to remember is to ask!

Money/valuables: Don't leave valuables lying around. Ask your homestay where the best place is to put things. If you have cash, open a bank account. We will help you do this.

Telephone: It is best not to use the house phone to make outgoing calls except, of course, in emergencies. Most families do not mind receiving calls, provided they are not too long, too often, and not after 10.00 p.m.! If you need to use the phone on a regular basis, we suggest you get a mobile.

Visitors: If you wish to invite your friends round in the evening, please ask your homestay first. Also, if you have family or friends visiting you while you are here, please don't ask your homestay to let them stay. Ask in the office for a list of convenient hotels and bed and breakfast accommodation or look at this link.

<http://www.elcbristol.co.uk/accommodation/hotels-b-bs-and-hostels>

Staying out late: If you are going to stay out late, tell your homestay. Security is important so remember to lock the door when you come home and try to be quiet! If you decide to stay out all night, it is essential you let the family know.

Holidays: If you wish to go on holiday and it has been approved by the school, provided you give two weeks' notice and provided you are away for a full week, you will be refunded half the accommodation cost.

Changing accommodation: If, for whatever reason, you wish to change your accommodation, please remember that changes happen at weekends and that you have to give one week's notice within the first 4 weeks of your stay and two weeks' notice thereafter. If you do not give the appropriate notice, you will have to pay a week's accommodation charge.

We want you to be happy. If you have a problem, talk to your homestay first. It is surprising how many things are just misunderstandings! Remember, we are also here to help, so you can see Andrea, Andrew or Margaret at any time if there is anything you do not understand or feel unhappy about.