



Information and Guidelines for Homestay Providers

Suzanne Sparrow Plymouth Language School
72-74 North Road East
Plymouth, PL4 6AL
Tel: 01752 222700 Fax: 01752 222040
Email: study@sparrow.co.uk



The Suzanne Sparrow Language School was established in 1978 to provide a friendly family environment in which students could feel at ease to improve their English language skills. These criteria still exist today, and the students' educational needs and welfare are of the utmost importance to the school.

Thank you for your interest in hosting international students. Please read the enclosed information carefully. If you find you have a question which we have not covered in this booklet please feel free to contact us.

Once we have received your completed application forms we will contact you to arrange a time to visit your home, we will then be able to discuss bookings with you.





ACCOMMODATION REQUIREMENTS AND INFORMATION

HOMESTAY VISITS

The school will visit every new family before they host their first student(s). We subsequently visit every 2 years.

WHAT STUDENTS EXPECT

Every student should have a comfortable full size bed (3ft minimum). Camp beds or futons are not acceptable and bunk beds are not suitable for adult students. All rooms should have ample space for storage of personal belongings, good lighting, and adequate heating. Bear in mind that many students are from warmer climates and may need an extra cover in winter. Students also require a quiet place to study within the home.

Adult students generally prefer a single room and should not be asked to share unless this has been arranged in advance.

British Council regulations state that there should not be more than four students in the house at any time. *It is very important that students are not placed with others of the same nationality unless requested by the student.* The school is penalized if this occurs. Please inform the school if you intend to host students from other organisations.

COMMUNICATION

The main objective of each student's visit is to improve their level of English. Staying with a family is an ideal opportunity for students to practice their speaking skills and as a homestay provider you are expected to encourage communication on a daily basis. Some students may be shy or nervous when they first arrive and will need a bit more encouragement to speak English.

MEALS

Daily breakfast, (packed) lunch and a main evening meal should be provided. *Students will expect to have the same meals as your household and to eat with them.* It is advisable to ask your student if they have any dietary needs for religious or medical reasons (the school will try to give you details of this prior to arrival) and what are their likes and dislikes.

BATHROOM AND TOILET

Students should have free access to the bathroom in the same way as the family, but you may have to work out a rota for baths and showers. Your student should be able to have a bath or a shower daily. It may be necessary to explain how the facilities work.

LAUNDRY

Reasonable and regular access to laundry facilities should be provided. For long stay students it may be convenient for you to wash the students clothes with the family wash or the student may prefer to do his/her own washing if acceptable. Drying and ironing facilities should be explained and made available to the student. Bed linen and towels should be changed once a week.

SUNDAYS

Students do not usually have activities planned on Sundays. Instead it is expected that students will spend Sundays with their host families.

TELEPHONE

When your student first arrives he/she may be anxious to call his/her family. If this is the case please would you allow your student(s) to call home by reverse charge call. Students are encouraged to use international phone cards which they can purchase from local newsagents.

INTERNET ACCESS

Internet access is at your own discretion. Many students like to email family and friends whilst away from home. The school has internet access for the students to use in their free time.

KEYS

Adult students should be given a front door key. Junior students should not expect to have a key, but you must be there to let them in when they are expected home. Please consult your programme for times.

SMOKING

Please make your wishes regarding smoking clear to us and ensure your students are aware of your policy on smoking.

ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

Ask if the student has any electrical equipment and check it for differences in voltage.

GENERAL WELFARE

Homestay is more than merely providing accommodation; it is about providing a home for your student(s). A friendly and secure base for the student is important, especially if they may be feeling alienated or even experiencing culture shock. If you feel your student is struggling to settle, please contact their group leader or the school.

DIFFERENCES IN CULTURE

Please be aware that students from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds often express themselves differently. Sometimes this can give rise to misunderstandings for both homestay providers and students alike. If this should happen, please talk the issue through with your student. You will find that you may learn something interesting about each others culture.

STUDENT BOOKINGS

HOW IS A BOOKING MADE?

Accommodation bookings are made in advance by telephone.

We send your details to the student(s) you will be hosting (i.e. your name, address, age of children at home, pets, etc). Some students contact the families before their arrival.

Shortly before your student(s) is due to arrive we will telephone you with details of the time, meeting place and any additional information about your student(s) i.e. any medical conditions, allergies, dietary requirements. We endeavour to give you as much information about the student(s) as possible.

MEETING YOUR STUDENT/S

Meetings and departures are usually at Brittany Ferries car park outside the main Terminal building entrance, or at the Train Station. A representative from the school will be at the meeting point and will introduce you to your student(s).

As a homestay provider, you are expected to meet your student(s) upon arrival. If for any reason, you are unable to meet your student, you must notify the office as soon as possible. The school will arrange for a taxi to collect and deliver your student to your home. *Please note that you will be responsible for covering the cost of the taxi.*

At the end of the stay, homestay providers are also expected to take their student(s) to the departure point. If for any reason, you are unable to do this, you must notify the office as soon as possible. The school will arrange for a taxi to collect and deliver your student to their meeting point. *Please note that you will be responsible for covering the cost of the taxi.*

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU MEET YOUR STUDENT?

When you meet your student(s) you will be handed two envelopes. The coloured envelope is for your student(s) and contains a map of Plymouth, a course programme, a welcome letter and an identity card.

Please ensure your student(s) fills in their identity card and keeps it with them at all times. Please also mark your home on the map and the route to and from the school.

It is also helpful to exchange telephone numbers wherever possible.

Your envelope will contain the following:

- *A detailed course programme including arrival and departure information.*
- *A cheque for payment/part payment*
- *Any additional personal information we have about your student(s) **
- *Details about where your student(s) will be studying – if not at the school**
- *Bus route details/ bus pass (Citybus) or money for bus (First) if you are not within walking distance of the school. **

** if applicable*

TRAVEL

As a homestay provider, you are expected to assist with your student's orientation. *Please ensure your student(s) is confident in using the clear route to and from school that you have shown them by escorting your student(s) to and from school on their first day.*

Most students are expected to walk to school, however, some homes are not within walking distance and therefore a bus pass (*Citybus*) or bus money (*First*) will be provided in your envelope. If your students are taking a bus to school, please be clear in showing them the bus route they must follow.

Some groups bring their own coach which will collect and drop off your student(s) every day from certain meeting points. We will provide details in your envelope if this is the case.

PAYMENT

Homestay providers are paid on a nightly basis. You will receive cheque payment for the stay in advance upon the student's arrival. If the duration of the stay exceeds 14 nights, 7 nights will be paid in the first instance and the remainder of the balance will be posted to you on day 7.

STUDENTS LESSONS

Most lessons are held at the School: 72-74 North Road East, Plymouth. However, during our busy summer period we also operate from Plymouth College – please check your programme carefully to check the location, start and finish times. We also run tutorial lessons in various central locations– please read the information below for more details.

TRANSFER OF STUDENTS

Although we try to arrange the best possible compatibility between students and homestay providers, not all placements are successful. If you have any problems with your student(s) please speak to the Accommodation Team who will try to iron out the issues. If we fail to do so we can arrange for the student(s) to be moved to another family.

MEDICAL TREATMENT

Should your student become ill or involved in an accident, please refer them to your own doctor or take them to the hospital. Please also inform the group leader and the school if this happens. Contact telephone numbers will appear on your programme.

PERMISSION TO GO OUT IN THE EVENINGS

It will normally be stated at the bottom of the course programme if students have permission to go out in the evenings. Students under the age of 18 are generally not allowed out in the evenings unless given prior permission by their parents or group leaders. This does not include activities organised by the school.

Some students may wish to bring friends home and you should make clear arrangements with student(s) at the beginning of their stay if this is acceptable or not.

If your student(s) fail to come home by the specified time please discuss this with your student, if this fails then please inform the group leader of the situation.

EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

In the event of an emergency outside of school hours please ring the school emergency mobile. This information is available on the programme. Please note that these numbers are *strictly for emergencies only*. If you have any concerns about your student and the school is closed please contact the group leader directly or call the office the next working day.

CANCELLATION POLICY

If you need to cancel a booking please contact the office **as soon as possible** so that we can make alternative arrangements. This is extremely important during busy periods. Likewise, we will notify you as soon as possible should a student cancel his/her stay with us. If this occurs we will try our best to arrange an alternative booking wherever possible.

CHANGES TO YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS

We would be very grateful if you could keep us informed of any changes to your personal circumstances, particularly if this involves a family pet, as we endeavour to make compatible matches between hosts and students and cannot do so if we do not have your correct details. If you available accommodation changes, it is very important that we are notified of this especially if the amount of accommodation available changes.

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