



# Student homestay accommodation handbook



This handbook has been designed to help you understand:

- What you can expect of your homestay accommodation
- What your homestay provider can expect of you

## 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

A homestay provider does not provide guests with a service like a hotel, but they are there to help you enjoy your stay in Cardiff and to ensure your safety whilst staying in their home.

If you are under 18 years of age there are certain restrictions that will apply during your stay. Please follow any guidelines your homestay provider gives you.

We do, however, promise you a high standard of accommodation with friendly homestay providers, all of whom we know personally.

Your homestay provider is there to help you but not to be a servant for all your needs. Politeness and friendliness are a normal part of British family life and it is customary to say “Good morning”, “Good evening” and “Thank you” to your homestay provider when they have been helpful.

It is understood that you will find things in a British family very different to what you are used to. Your homestay provider will treat you as a member of their family and it is up to you to fit in with their ways of doing things.

If you are not sure about anything, please do not be afraid to ask your homestay provider or housing officer.

All our homestay providers have been personally inspected by our housing officer and all meet the guidelines set by the British Council.



## **2. CONTACT INFORMATION**

WE Bridge Academy, Floor 10, Southgate House, Wood Street, Cardiff,  
CF10 1EW

Richard Eastman, Housing Officer

[richard@we-bridge.co.uk](mailto:richard@we-bridge.co.uk)

Phone: +44 (0) 292 022 5656

Mobile: +44 (0) 7908 1397 16

**24-HOUR EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBER: +44 (0) 79603 922 33**



If Richard is not available then please contact Paul Stephens, [paul@we-bridge.co.uk](mailto:paul@we-bridge.co.uk), Student Support Officer, at reception.

## **3. EARLY DEPARTURES**

If you wish to leave your homestay provider before your booked departure date you must complete the Notice to leave homestay form, which can be found at reception. You must give one week's notice.

## **4. YOUR ROOM**

You will have your own room and this will be your private area for sleeping, relaxing and studying. Your homestay provider will clean your room before you arrive. It is your responsibility to keep the room clean and tidy during your stay.

If your bedroom has a lock, please do not lock it during the day as your homestay provider may need to enter the room for different reasons. Your privacy will be respected.

## **5. THE REST OF THE HOUSE**

You will be welcome to use the main living areas of the house; however, sometimes the homestay provider may want privacy in their living room so please respect that. You will be expected to take your meals with the homestay provider.

Bedrooms are always private and students must NEVER enter the bedrooms of their homestay provider or any other members of the house.

You must ask your homestay provider's permission before you bring friends home. You are not allowed to have friends stay with you without the homestay provider's permission.



If you wish to play music, computer games, or watch television, please keep the volume low and respect your homestay provider's need for quiet, both at bed-time and possibly at other times during the day.

It is important to let your homestay provider know when you are at home or when you go out.

If you are under 18 you **MUST** inform your homestay provider where you are at **ALL** times.

## **6. BATHROOMS**

Bathrooms may be very different to what you are used to in your own country. Bidets are not common and not all have a shower.

The number of bathrooms per home will vary; some have just an extra downstairs toilet in addition to the main family bathroom. You will have to share a bathroom, either with the family or with any other students staying in the house. This means you will need to be considerate of other people wanting to use the bathroom, so please do not spend a long time bathing or showering.

Mornings are usually a busy time for the bathroom to be in use. Your homestay provider may suggest a time that is best for you to use it to ensure that everyone in the house can get to work or school on time.

Your homestay provider is responsible for cleaning the bathroom(s), but please leave the bathroom as you would wish to find it. Please take care not to leave a wet floor. Your toothbrush and other items should be left tidy.

Your homestay provider will have toilet paper, but you should provide all other toiletries, such as toothpaste, shower gel etc. It is normal in the UK to put toilet paper in the toilet and to be flushed away (not in the rubbish bin) while feminine sanitary/hygiene products and cotton wool should be disposed of in the bathroom rubbish bin (not in the toilet). Your homestay provider will advise you of their preferences for the disposal of such items.

## **7. WASHING YOUR CLOTHES (LAUNDRY)**

Your homestay provider will provide a laundry service or allow you to use the laundry facilities once a week free of charge. Your homestay provider will inform you what they want you to do.



You will normally have to do your own ironing, but you will be allowed to use the iron and ironing board. The use of a tumble dryer is not included in your payment.

If you require this facility (should it be available) you will need to discuss with your homestay provider and may incur an additional charge, as will any additional requirements for washing clothes.

Your homestay provider will provide you with a change of bed linen each week. Some will change the bed linen for you others will require you to do it. The washing of bed linen is not part of your washing allowance.

## **8. HEATING**

In winter, homes are centrally heated. Heating is normally regulated by a timer and set to come on and go off at certain times. Please do not change this unless your homestay provider has given you permission and shown you how to use the system. If you are not warm enough, please tell your homestay provider.

British homes do not usually have air conditioning and rarely is the temperature unbearably hot, rooms can be cooled by opening a window. If you do open a window, please turn the radiator in your room off so as not to waste the energy; gas and electric energy is very expensive in the UK. Remember to close any windows when you leave the house.

## **9. ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES**

Please note the UK appliances use 220-240 volts, which is different from other countries. Please check with your homestay provider BEFORE you plug anything into an electric socket.

Please note: In the UK, gas, water and electricity are very expensive. Do not leave items plugged in and/or switched on when you go out. Do not be surprised if your homestay provider goes around switching things off. Your homestay provider will remind you of these things.

## **10. MEALS**

Generally, British families tend to eat earlier than families in other countries. On your arrival, your homestay provider will advise you of the time they normally serve their evening meal. You are expected to be home in time to eat with the family. If for any reason, you will not be home for a meal please tell your homestay provider as soon as possible. This avoids food being wasted or they may leave it for you to reheat later.



Under 18s are expected to eat with the homestay provider.

British food can be very different to what you are used to. It is necessary for you to adapt to new flavours or ways food is cooked. Most British families drink tap water, which is perfectly safe to do so. If there are things you particularly do not like or cannot eat please discuss beforehand or tell your agent/school.

## **Breakfast**

Breakfast in the UK is normally cereal and/or toast with a hot drink. It is common practice for you to prepare your own breakfast from the selection of items your homestay provider will leave out. Always remember to clean up after yourself and tidy things away.

## **Lunch**

Lunch is available for full board only.

## **Evening Meal**

The evening meal or dinner will be prepared by your homestay provider. You will be told what time you are expected home and it is polite to inform your homestay provider if you will not be home at this time, or if you do not want a meal that day. This is an opportunity for you to sit with your family and use your English. Usually the evening meal in the UK is between 6pm-7pm.

Please note:

- Always check first before bringing food items into the house as some homestay providers have restrictions on certain foods.
- You will be allowed to use the kitchen to make drinks for yourself but you may need to check first before cooking for yourself.
- Do not help yourself to food from the kitchen without first getting permission from your homestay provider.
- You will be expected to help your family wash dishes and clean the kitchen after mealtimes. If you reheated your meal later you must wash your dirty plate etc.
- Do not eat or store food in your bedroom.



### **11. TELEPHONE**

You will be able to receive calls from your family and close friends on your homestay provider's telephone.

Any other telephone calls must either be with your homestay provider's permission or on your own mobile telephone. It is polite to find out what are the most convenient times for you to receive calls on their land line and to restrict them to a reasonable length so as not to tie up their telephone line.

Please always ask permission before using the house telephone.

### **12. INTERNET**

All our homestay providers have internet access. Please check on arrival if there is a download limit as your homestay provider may incur charges for exceeding this, which they may pass on to you. If you require internet access at all times, we recommend you purchase a USB dongle or personal Wi-Fi device, available from most phone shops. WE Bridge Academy cannot be held responsible for any lack of internet connection.

Please note you must not use your homestay provider's computers/laptops without their permission.

### **13. ARRIVING HOME LATE AT NIGHT**

If you are planning to return home late, please advise your homestay provider. Be respectful when you arrive home late as some may already be in bed.

Please note if you are under 18 you MUST be home by 10.30pm. If you are late your homestay provider will inform WE Bridge Academy.

If you are going to be late for any reason or because of an emergency, please call your homestay provider or the emergency phone number: +44 (0) 79603 922 33

### **14. VALUABLES**

We Bridge Academy and your Homestay provider cannot be held responsible for your personal possessions. You are advised to arrange your own insurance for the time you are in the UK. If you have valuable items, you may ask your Homestay provider for a safe place to keep them.



### **15. HOUSE KEY**

You will be given your own house key. Please remember to always lock the doors and windows when you leave. Please keep your key in a safe place and remember to return it when you finish your stay. Any lost keys must be replaced at your expense.

### **16. ALCOHOL AND DRUGS**

If you are under 18 it is illegal to buy and/or consume alcohol in the UK.

If you are over 18, please remember that excessive consumption of alcohol will not be tolerated.

Non-prescribed drugs of any kind will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Use of such drugs may carry a heavy CRIMINAL penalty in the UK. Any failure to comply with these rules, you will be asked to leave your homestay provider immediately without a refund and you may also be arrested by the police.

### **17. SMOKING**

In the UK, it is illegal to sell cigarettes, tobacco or cigarette papers to anyone under the age of 18.

You are not allowed to smoke in public premises; this includes restaurants, pubs, bars, shops, cinemas, leisure centres, workplaces, on public transport and in railway stations.

If you are a smoker you must ask your homestay provider where you can smoke, please obey the rules in this regard. Be sure to dispose of your cigarette butts in the appropriate place.

### **18. PRACTISE YOUR ENGLISH**

Homestay providers are aware you want to practise your English as much as possible and are happy to help you. Please remember that homestay providers are not teachers and some have busy schedules so they may not always have the free time to talk at the time that is convenient with you. By sharing in activities, when invited, and helping clear up after meals, you will have plenty of opportunity to talk with your homestay provider.

### **19. UNDER 18s**

Please note that in the UK anyone under the age of 18 is considered to be a child and therefore needs a higher level of care. You will be placed with a homestay provider that has a police check and you must stay with the homestay provider booked for you.



You will be expected to inform your homestay provider and WE Bridge Academy of where you are at all times.

If you want go away for a weekend you must ask for permission from WE Bridge Academy before you make any arrangements. You will need your parents/guardian's written permission to stay out overnight or go away for the weekend AT LEAST ONE WEEK before. You must inform your homestay provider and WE Bridge Academy and leave an address with them of where you are going to be staying, who you are going with and what time they can expect you back.

Remember the laws in the UK may be different to what you are used to in your country. If you are not sure what you can/cannot do please speak to the housing officer or another member of WE Bridge Academy staff.

Please also read the Rules for Under 18s that are available in the Student's handbook.