

Host Family Guidelines

2018-2019

Every Host Family must ensure that their Services comply with the following requirements. These requirements in turn comply both with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools set by the Department for Education and with the guidelines of the Association for Education and Guardianship for International Students (AEGIS).

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1. Host Family conduct:

- The Host Family should at all times act as a positive role model, behave respectfully towards the Pupil and towards the College, and make sure that the Pupil is treated as a reasonable adult would treat his own children.

2. Accommodation requirements:

- Accommodation provided to Pupils must comply with any requirements set out in law.
- Accommodation must be appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, cleaned and maintained, and reasonable adjustments must be made to provide adequate accessible accommodation for any boarders with restricted mobility.
- Accommodation must be suitably furnished and of sufficient size for the needs and ages of Pupils accommodated, with appropriate protection and separation between genders and age groups.
- Toilet and washing facilities must be easily accessible to Pupils and must provide appropriate privacy.
- Each Pupil should have his own room unless alternative arrangements are agreed in writing with the College.
- A room is to contain the following, for the sole use of the individual Pupil: a single or double bed and mattress, a pillow, a duvet, a study desk of a reasonable size, a chair, a study lamp, and a wardrobe. (Please note that sofa beds, divans, and open clothes-rails are not acceptable.) There must be sufficient space in the room for the pupil to be able to make use of all these items comfortably. All furniture provided should be intact, presentable, clean, and suitable for the purpose of hosting children. All bedding should be clean and sufficiently warm. Suitable facilities for both organized and private studies are available to Pupils.
- There must be at least a part of the room (of reasonable size) which the Pupil is allowed to personalize with suitable posters and personal items if he wishes.
- The Pupil's room must be reserved for the sole use of the Pupil designated to use it and be protected from access by unauthorized persons. Any visitors to the Host Family's Home must not be allowed substantial and unsupervised access to Pupils or their rooms.
- Adequate laundry provision must be made for Pupils' clothing and bedding. Host Families are expected to launder Pupils' personal items and change their bedding at least once per week, although on occasions laundry may be required more frequently.
- Reasonable protection must be provided for Pupils' personal possessions, especially for any money or valuables.
- Any use of surveillance equipment (e.g. CCTV cameras) or patrolling of Host Family premises' grounds for security purposes should not intrude unreasonably on Pupils' privacy.

3. Hosting multiple pupils:

- Host Families hosting any Pupils of the College who are under 18 years old must not host any lodger or paying guest over the age of 16 who is not also a Pupil of the College or has not been DBS checked.
- The Host Family must not host more than 3 Pupils in their Home at any one time, unless this has been discussed and agreed in writing with the College.
- Any Host Family hosting more than 3 Pupils who are under 18 years old without a specific exemption from the Local Authority is considered to be carrying on a Children's Home, must be registered by Ofsted for this purpose, and must comply with all associated regulations.

4. Health and Safety:

- The health, safety, and welfare of pupils must be reasonably assured in the Host Family's household or car (with seatbelts and, where appropriate, car seats used at all times).
- Pupils should be given age appropriate information on safety, including: behaviour near windows and on stairwells; potential hazards near your Home, including but not limited to rivers, beaches, canals, railway lines, stray animals; not going out alone without asking permission from the Host Family and telling them where they are going; not carrying large sums of money or displaying expensive items; never speaking to strangers, accepting lifts from them, or allowing them into your Home.
- The Host Family must consult a member of the College's staff if they are unsure of any aspect of Health and Safety that may be relevant to the Pupil.

5. Insurance:

- Host Families must make sure that adequate insurance has been taken out in respect of their household, its contents, and their car(s). The College will not accept any liability for damage, theft, or loss of the Host Family's household, its contents, or any other of their possessions.
- Host Families must make sure that insurance providers are fully informed of the people, including Pupils, who are to be covered by the insurance and of the purpose for which the insurance is being taken out. For example, car insurance providers may insist on including cover for "travelling for business".
- The College will bear no responsibility if a claim is not satisfied because the Host Family failed to notify their insurance provider of important details.

6. Provision and preparation of food and drinks:

- All Pupils, including those with special dietary, medical, or religious needs should be provided with meals which are of adequate nutritional value, quality, size, and variety.
- Beyond the main meals provided for them, Pupils must have access to drinking water and to food or the means of preparing food in the Home at reasonable times. It should be made clear to Pupils which of the food and drink stored in the Home they are allowed to consume freely.
- There must be adequate facilities for the hygienic preparation, serving and consumption of food. All food must be prepared so as to avoid cross contamination from bacteria. Please make sure all members of the Host Family know about how to avoid cross contamination as follows:
- You must clean all work surfaces, chopping boards and equipment thoroughly before and after you have used them to prepare raw food. Ideally, you must use different chopping boards and knives for raw and ready to eat food.
- You and anybody else who prepares or handles food must always wash their hands thoroughly beforehand.
- All food areas and equipment must be cleaned between tasks, especially after handling raw food.
- Please keep raw ready- to-eat food apart at all times and store raw and ready to eat food in the fridge.
- Always put food that needs to be chilled in the fridge straight away, for example food with a 'use by' date, cooked dishes and other ready-to eat food such as prepared salads and desserts.
- It is extremely important to make sure food is cooked properly. This is especially important when cooking poultry, pork, rolled joints and products made from minced meat, such as burgers and sausages.
- When cooking or reheating food, always check that it is piping hot (steaming) all the way through.

7. Fire precautions and drills:

- It is essential that the Host Family's Home contain fully operating and maintained smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.
- All Pupils must be given detailed instructions on what to do in the case of a fire, and all available exits must be made known.
- For Pupils occupying rooms on the first floor of the Home and above, Host Families are required to ensure that there are suitable exits available in the event of fire and that Pupils are made aware of these. Host Families may like to consider keeping portable fire escapes in bedrooms, ready for use in case of emergency.
- Any Host Family whose property relies on gas heating (or makes use of other gas operated devices, including ovens, etc.) must ensure that all legally required checks are conducted as appropriate. Any certificates issued following inspections must be provided to the College.

8. Medical treatment:

- The Host Family must monitor the general health of Pupils staying with them, and should maintain particular awareness of the health of younger pupils, noting any sickness or injury as soon as possible.
- In any cases of medical emergency, Host Families should first dial 999 and then notify the College using the emergency number provided. In less serious cases, Host Families should contact the College first, after which they may be required to help the child receive appropriate medical treatment.
- Children under the age of 16 may not be of sufficient maturity to give consent to some medical treatment, and in cases of emergency the College may give consent on their behalf if, after consultation with medical professionals, it appears to be in their best interests. You must allow those Pupils who are able to consent to medical treatment the right to give or withhold this consent. (A child is considered to be able to consent to treatment if he or she has sufficient understanding and intelligence to understand fully what is proposed.)
- The Host Family should keep a well organized, individual file for each Pupil. The Host Family should keep in the file any and all important information about the Pupil which has been provided to them. The Host Family should record in the file any important events relating to the Pupil, including any accidents or bouts of illness, together with all relevant details, and should keep a record in the file of any medication or medical treatment which has been administered to the Pupil under their supervision, including any regular prescribed medication. The Host Family must share the contents of this file with authorized College staff when called to do so.
- The Host Family must ensure that all medical information relating to Pupils is kept confidential and only shared with people other than authorized College staff if appropriate consent has been given by the Pupil or by an authorized person on the Pupil's behalf.
- The Host Family must only give medical care to Pupils which they are adequately qualified to give.
- The Host Family must ensure that Pupils have access to local medical, dental, optometric, and other specialist services as necessary.
- Prescribed medicines must only be given to the Pupil for whom they are prescribed. Pupils must only be allowed to self-medicate if they have been assessed as sufficiently responsible to do so. Where a Pupil needs to be given a regular course of prescribed medicine, the Host Family must ensure that there is a clear agreement in place with the College as to who is responsible for administering each dose, and should keep a record of this agreement, as well as all doses administered, in the Pupil's individual file.
- All medication should be kept out of reach of Pupils and no medication should be made available to Pupils without written instruction from a general practitioner or other qualified individual.

- Other than in emergencies the Host Family should check with the College before arranging a medical appointment for a Pupil. GP surgery registrations and other routine medical arrangements are managed centrally by the College, unless an alternative arrangement has been explicitly confirmed to the Host Family.

9. Induction and support:

- On the arrival of a new Pupil, the Host Family must exchange telephone numbers with the Pupil and make sure that the Pupil has recorded the following telephone numbers: the main contact number for each contactable member of the Host Family, the Family's landline number, the emergency number provided by the College, and the College's office number.
- The Host Family must introduce new Pupils to other members of the family and any other Pupils staying there as soon as reasonably possible, and make sure that they feel welcome and at home.
- As soon as reasonably possible, the Host Family must show new Pupils how to use facilities in the Home, access to public transport and important local amenities
- The Host Family must inform Pupils directly and clearly of any curfew or other 'House Rules' applicable to them and must explain the consequences of breaking these rules.
- If the Host Family gives the Pupil a key to the Home, it should be made clear to the Pupil that the key must be kept responsibly and returned to the Family prior to the Pupil's departure. Pupils aged 16 or over might reasonably be expected to be given their own key to the Home.
- The Host Family must ensure that they provide appropriate support for new Pupils and are able to direct them to an appropriate member of the College's staff for personal guidance or help with a personal problem. The Pupil must know who that person is and how to contact them. Host Families must also try to provide Pupils with one or more appropriate helplines or outside contact numbers to ring in case of problems or distress.

10. Supervision and curfews:

- The Host Family must provide supervision appropriate for the age of each Pupil, as would a responsible and caring parent. Younger Pupils (those below the age of 16 and especially below the age of 14) should not be left unsupervised for long periods of time and should have earlier curfew times than older children would be expected to have.
- The Host Family must be aware of where, or in whose care, each Pupil under the age of 18 is at all times.
- Families hosting younger Pupils are expected to be at Home, or to have made suitable alternative arrangements for the care of those Pupils, whenever the Pupils return Home. Pupils under 14 years old must be Home by 8pm; 14-to-15 year olds must be Home by 9pm; and 16-to-17 year olds must be Home by 10pm. For Pupils over the age of 18, Host Families should agree a reasonable curfew with the Pupil directly or follow instructions given by the College.
- It is required that the Host Family check and confirm that each Pupil is at Home by the time specified and notifies the College promptly of any occasion when this does not happen. These guidelines may be altered in some cases in consultation with the College's staff. In such cases, revised guidelines should be confirmed in writing.
- If a Pupil has not returned Home by the designated time, or goes missing the Host Family must notify the College using the emergency number provided. Failing that, the Host Family should call the police.

11. Sleep and bedtimes:

- Quality and quantity of sleep are important to a person's general wellbeing and cognitive performance. Host Families are expected to satisfy themselves that Pupils are sleeping well, and to notify the College of any concerns over a Pupil's sleeping pattern.
- Host Families should agree clearly on an expected bedtime for each Pupil, taking into account their sleep needs and the time when they will have to wake up.

- NHS guidelines suggest that children aged 11 to 13 should sleep for around 9 ½ hours and children aged 14 to 16 for around 9 hours each night.
- The use of electronic devices (e.g. televisions, computers, mobile telephones, etc.) can distract children and prevent them from relaxing and settling down to sleep. Studies have also suggested that the artificial light from the screens of these devices can affect the body's rhythms and make it harder to get to sleep. Therefore, Host Families should seek to limit the use of such devices, especially in the hour before sleep, and should notify the College if any problems are encountered with this.

12. Younger and more vulnerable pupils:

- With younger Pupils it is important for particular efforts to be made to involve them in the life of the Host Family and to help them settle into a way of life which may differ greatly from what they are used to in many respects. Host Families may need to have closer contact with the Pupil's Guardian than would be necessary for older Pupils.
- While Host Families are unlikely to be asked to accommodate any unusually vulnerable Pupils, they should be aware that the degree of vulnerability may vary with the age of the Pupil and other circumstances (e.g. pre-existing ailments or disabilities, whether mental or physical) and should adapt their approach accordingly.

13. Pupils from overseas:

- Host Families should be sensitive to the fact that Pupils, especially those from overseas, may not be accustomed to the way of life which they will be expected to lead in Oxford.
- Basic notions of courtesy and appropriate behaviour vary from country to country, so Host Families should be tolerant within reason, while making expectations as clear as possible.
- Pupils may have particular needs associated with their cultural or religious background (for example, particular culinary requirements or religious observances); Host Families should respect and, where possible, attend to these, while encouraging Pupils to engage as far as possible with the local culture and way of life.

14. Contact with parents:

- Pupils must be able to make regular contact with their own family, in particular their parents (or other designated carers), in private. Bear in mind that younger children may want to keep in closer contact with their parents than older children.
- Most pupils will have a mobile telephone and this may be their primary means of contacting their parents. Pupils may prefer to communicate with their parents by alternative means, for example by writing letters, or via the Internet, and so should be given adequate opportunity to do so.
- Host Families should nevertheless take proportionate measures to monitor and control the use of electronic communications in order to detect abuse, bullying, or unsafe practice by Pupils.

15. School attendance, homework, and other requirements:

- Host Families must make sure that they are aware of when each Pupil is expected to be in school. This should generally be clear from the Pupil's timetable. Host Families must take all reasonable steps to make sure that Pupils attend school and any other commitments as expected.
- Host Families must make sure that Pupils put reasonable time and effort into the preparation of homework. It is recommended that Pupils in full time schooling aged 11 and over spend a minimum of 1.5 hours on homework at the end of each school day. Older pupils will usually need to spend longer, up to around 3 hours per day in the Sixth Form. On occasions the College may ask the Host Family to make special arrangements to supervise homework preparation.
- Host Families must notify the College immediately if they become aware that a Pupil has missed or is planning to miss lessons or other commitments.

- Pupils are expected to dress neatly and respectfully when attending school, and may not be allowed to remain on school premises if they are dressed provocatively or in a fashion likely to cause offence. Host Families are asked to support this requirement and ensure that Pupils do not leave the Home dressed inappropriately.

16. Holidays and half-term:

- It is expected that Pupils who are studying on long-term courses (i.e. for a minimum of one term) will take a half-term break in the middle of each term, as well as Christmas, Easter, and summer holidays. (Holiday and half-term dates are usually listed on school or college websites.)
- Half-term weeks are considered to be **outside** of term time, just like the Christmas, Easter, and summer holiday periods. Pupils are not expected to pay for accommodation if they are away over these periods.
- Host Families will therefore not ordinarily receive payment for periods outside of normal term time when Pupils are not staying with them in the home.
- Pupils' parents are expected to notify the College in advance if they wish their child to stay on in their Host Family accommodation outside of term time. In turn, the College will notify Host Families as far in advance as possible about any such requests, and expects that in such cases Host Families will, wherever possible, agree to continue accommodating pupils over these additional periods.
- If a Pupil stays with a Host Family outside of term time, the Host Family will be paid the usual weekly or daily rate for these additional periods. (5 days or more per week will be paid at the weekly rate.)
- If a Host Family is informed directly by a Pupil or by parents that the Pupil wishes to stay on outside of term time, the **Host Family should notify the College of this as soon as possible** and should not assume that the arrangement has been authorized unless confirmed by the College.
- Host Families should notify the College as far in advance as possible of any periods outside of term time when they will be unable to host pupils.
- Pupils will expect to be able to leave their belongings safely and securely at the Host Family's home over periods when they are away (e.g. over half-term and holidays). Host Families should notify **both the Pupil and the College**, as far in advance as possible, if it will not be possible for a Pupil's belongings to be left in the Pupil's room over any of these periods (e.g. if the room will be needed for some other purpose).

17. Activities and free time:

- Pupils must have access to a range and choice of safe recreational areas both indoors and outdoors. These may include, for example, shared areas of the Home and the garden. Any access to nearby public facilities, such as playgrounds, should be appropriately assessed and monitored by the Host Family.
- Host Families are expected to organize and supervise activities for Pupils, and to encourage Pupils to spend time productively outside the Home. Appropriate activities may vary according to age, but some examples are as follows: a walk in the park; visiting a nearby museum, gallery, or other tourist attraction; going to the theatre or the cinema; going to a local sporting, social, or cultural event; having a barbeque; preparing a meal with food from different countries. Activities need not be expensive or extravagant, but should provide the appropriate measure of edification and entertainment, while helping the Pupil to feel part of the Family.
- It is expected that the Host Family give each Pupil the opportunity to join in at least one appropriate activity per week.
- Pupils should be encouraged to spend time with other young people of a similar age.
- If English is not the Pupil's first language, he should be encouraged to use English as much as possible in his free time rather than seeking to fraternize with others who share the same native language.

- Host Families should make clear to Pupils any rules on bringing friends into the Home. It would be normal to expect Pupils to ask permission from the Host Family before hosting any significant gatherings.
- Under no circumstances should any of the Pupil's friends or acquaintances not being hosted by the Family be allowed to stay in the Home overnight without specific prior permission. The Host Family should check with the College first if there is any doubt over the appropriateness of such an arrangement.

18. Alcohol, smoking, drugs, and sexual activity:

- There must be no smoking within the Home.
- It must be strictly forbidden for Pupils under the age of 18 to smoke in general.
- Host Families must make Pupils aware that buying alcohol or tobacco products when under the age of 18, or buying them for someone else who is under the age of 18, is illegal in the U.K.
- The consumption of alcohol must only be allowed under supervision and in doses appropriate to the age of Pupil: under 14 – strictly none; Pupils aged 14 to 18 may, for example, be given a small glass of beer or wine on special occasions such as a birthday celebration; Pupils over the age of 18 may be allowed to consume alcohol responsibly in a social context with the permission of the Host Family. The College may sometimes issue specific guidance in relation to a particular Pupil on the request of parents, and Host Families should follow this strictly.
- The use of any type of illegal drug, “legal high”, or other harmful substance must be strictly forbidden.
- It is not permitted for Pupils of any age to engage in sexual activity in the Home of the Host Family. Any concerns about sexualized behaviour (including, for example, inappropriate dress or online activity) should be reported to the College.
- Host Families should report immediately to the College if they suspect that any of these rules has been breached.

19. Access to age-restricted videos, DVDs, computer games, and Internet sites:

- Pupils should not be allowed access to videos, DVDs, computer games, or Internet sites that are unsuitable for their age. The use of such media should be appropriately supervised by Host Families.
- Host Families must take reasonable measures to restrict access to adult websites. This can usually be arranged through the Internet service provider.

20. Pupil behaviour management

- Pupils are expected to behave respectfully, and in accordance with ‘House Rules’ at all times.
- Good behaviour should be rewarded by praise.
- The Host Family should express clear disapproval of any bad behaviour and may apply simple sanctions such as restriction of privileges provided that they are proportionate. The Host Family must keep a record in the Pupil File of any sanctions applied, and should inform the College directly of any serious incidence of bad behaviour or persistent repetition of low-level bad behaviour. Any more drastic sanctions must be agreed in advance with the College.
- Host Families may use reasonable force to control or restrain Pupils in order to prevent them from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder. Host Families should not use more force than is needed in the circumstances, and should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, although in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil concerned.
- Force must not be used as punishment. Any form of corporal punishment is strictly forbidden.

- Host Families may search a Pupil or his/her possessions without consent, and may use reasonable force to do so, only if there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the Pupil may have any of the following prohibited items:
 - knives or weapons
 - alcohol
 - illegal drugs
 - stolen items
 - tobacco and cigarette papers
 - fireworks
 - pornographic images
 - materials relating to extremist ideology or terrorism
 - any article that the Host Family reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the Pupil).
- Host Families should immediately confiscate any of the above listed prohibited items found in the possession of a Pupil, and should notify the College of this as soon as possible.

21. Child Protection Policy:

- The College's Child Safeguarding sets out what to do in case of any concern about a Pupil's welfare, which will usually be to inform the College's Designated Child Protection Officer.
- Host Families must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of Pupils staying in their Home.

22. Equal opportunities:

- No Pupil should experience inappropriate discrimination because of differences arising from gender, pregnancy or maternity, disability, race, religion or belief, cultural background, linguistic background, special educational need, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, or academic or sporting ability. Host Families must take these factors into account when caring for Pupils, so that care is sensitive to different needs.

23. Emergency contacts:

- In cases of emergency Host Families should contact the Emergency Contact listed for the Pupil in the Confirmation of Stay Letter or the College's Emergency Telephone line, which is also provided in the Confirmation of Stay Letter.
- If a situation requires immediate emergency assistance or is life-threatening to any party, the Host Family should call 999 for fire, police, and medical services.