
Homestay – Terms and Conditions

1. What is homestay accommodation?

One of the most popular types of accommodation is staying with a local Irish host. This means you live with the host as a household member and eat and relax with them. The Irish are renowned for their warmth, generosity and friendliness. Staying in an Irish homestay is a very enjoyable and beneficial means of getting to know Irish people and an excellent way to use and practice your English.

2. What to expect from a homestay?

Homestay Hosts provide students with:

- Breakfast
- Packed lunches (full board students)
- Evening meal 7 days per week
- A fully furnished bedroom with bed linen that is changed regularly
- The use of utilities and laundry facilities (within reasonable limits as set by the household for all household members)
- Students are liable for the cost of all telephone costs, and excessive use of electricity, water and gas incurred during the homestay period.

The host will treat you as a guest and you will be expected to obey house rules. All homestays provide a private or shared room (depending on location) with access to all living areas in the house and family meals. In most cases; students will be expected to share the bathroom. Experience has shown us that living in a homestay is the most interesting and effective way to become fully immersed in your host country's language and culture.

Your host family will always do their best to engage you in daily conversation while making you feel as though you are in a "home away from home". Remember your host will have different customs and habits than perhaps you are accustomed to, and meals will be prepared according to local custom.

All homestays are within 30 minutes travelling time of the school.

3. Minimum stay

Students are required to stay with their host for a minimum period of two weeks to give themselves and the family time to adjust to each other. However, if exceptional circumstances require the student to be relocated within this period, this will be arranged promptly at no charge.

Please note that it is not possible to relocate a student during a weekend or holiday.

4. Holiday/breaks

If a student takes 1 week or longer holiday during a homestay, they will still be required to pay the weekly homestay rate in order to maintain the homestay.

5. Meals

The host family is expected to provide a healthy breakfast, lunch and evening meal each day. Please check meal times. If you are not able to be at home for the usual evening meal, let your host family know and they should provide a cold meal/salad.

Typical meals would include:

Breakfast Toast/breads, cereals, tea/coffee

Lunch Light lunch e.g. sandwich, drink, fruit, cereal bars.

Evening Meal – At least 2 courses e.g. meat/fish, vegetables including potatoes/rice or pasta, dessert or fruit and coffee/tea.

If you have special dietary requirements, such as serious allergies, intolerances or religious dietary requirements these should be noted at the application stage. For some requirements, there may be a dietary supplement charge.

6. Problems: Changing homestay

Students can only change host for a valid reason.

The following problems are **not** reasons to move homestay:

- You don't like the food
- The distance to the school (all homestays are on an accessible bus route)
- You want to be with another friend in the group
- Pets or pet hair: All students should specify any allergies or dislike to animals in their enrolment form. If a homestay without a pet has not been requested, then it is not a reason to move.
- Carpets or dust: Almost every single house in Ireland has carpeted floors which gather dust.

If a student has a serious problem or minimum standards have not been met by the homestay provider:

- Foyle International staff should be notified as soon as possible
- A meeting will take place with the Accommodation officer at Foyle and the student to talk about problems
- If a serious problem arises then Foyle will find another suitable alternative as soon as possible. Reasonable time must be given to find an alternative – at least 1-2 days
- Changes in accommodation cannot be made over the weekend – this includes a Friday afternoon.
- A student will be removed from a host family and placed in temporary accommodation immediately if there is a serious safeguarding or welfare concern. In

this case, Foyle International will cover the cost of the temporary accommodation i.e. hotel. Students must not move to temporary accommodation without agreement from Foyle International. In the case whereby a student moves to temporary accommodation i.e. hotel without agreement from Foyle International then Foyle will not be responsible for covering the costs of the hotel.

Summary of Homestay Rules

Hosts will discuss their own house rules at the beginning of the homestay to avoid misunderstandings. Areas that might be discussed are:

- Times for using the bath/shower
- Keeping the bathroom tidy and clear of toiletries
- Where, if at all, smoking is permitted
- Whether visitors are welcome and until what time
- Guests of the opposite sex
- Times for breakfast and evening meals
- What to do when a student expects to be home late
- Rules on overnight guests
- Number of wash loads allowed per week
- Noise levels at particular times of the day
- Reminder to return house keys before departure

Practical matters:

- At the time of booking, Foyle International will request your personal information. You must provide us with information regarding any medical issues, allergies and special diets. If you do not provide this information at the time of booking then you cannot expect your host to accommodate your special diet.
- If you are unhappy with something, please discuss it with your host family. If the problem continues, speak to the Accommodation Officer and alternative accommodation may be sought.
- If you are not planning to eat a meal at home, let your host family know beforehand so that they do not prepare a meal for you.
- Show respect for the host family home and property. If you break or damage anything, tell your host as soon as possible. You are responsible for all damages or breakages.
- If you are cold, ask them for extra blankets in your room.
- Do not leave lights, electric or heaters on when you are out.
- Do not leave windows open in our bedroom when you are out.
- Be mindful of fuel and electricity costs i.e. don't take very long showers.
- Be on time for meals.
- Do not use the kitchen or help yourself to food unless you have agreed this with your host family.
- Keep your room tidy.

-
- Make your bed and change your bed linen yourself (the host mother is not a chambermaid!)
 - Leave the bathroom clean and tidy after using it. If you have any queries regarding the use of bathing/toilet facilities, discuss these with the host family. Women should enquire about the arrangements for the disposal of sanitary towels.
 - Do not put pictures on the wall unless you have agreed this with your host family.
 - Observe the safety rules of the house. If there are any small children, please be extra vigilant about leaving any dangerous items (eg medicines) out of their reach.

You should seek permission if you wish to have any visitors. It should not be a problem but it is good manners.

Remember:

- **Homestay is not a hotel, don't treat it like one**
- **Have realistic expectations**
- **Be respectful and open-minded**
- **Be patient with yourself, a new environment can take a few days to get used to**
- **Don't compare your homestay to your own home, or to other students' homestays. Every house is different**
- **Day-to-day house rules will vary from homestay to homestay i.e. access to bedrooms, laundry routines, meal-time routines etc.**