



EnglishinYork



Accommodation Handbook 2019

Accommodation in York

Staying with a host family, or 'Homestay', is an excellent way to practise your English outside the classroom.

English in York pay special attention to our Homestay accommodation service. Our **Accommodation & Welfare Officer, Ms Rebecca Dunmore**, inspects and selects all of the families and their homes, in accordance with British Council guidelines.

What can you expect from Homestay accommodation?

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Care and conversation! Your family will make you feel welcome and try to include you in normal family life.	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All students will have their own bedroom unless they request otherwise. There will be an appropriate area to study, either in the bedroom or elsewhere in the home. Students will usually share the family bathroom.	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There will be no speaker of the same first language in the house, unless specifically requested.	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breakfast and evening meal will be provided every day.	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lunch is provided on Saturdays and Sundays. If you are going on an excursion you can politely ask your host for a packed lunch.	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lunch is <u>not provided</u> on school days (Monday to Friday). Students are expected to purchase their own lunch.	✗
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All bedding and towels will be provided. The family will also be happy to include your laundry with the family wash, or allow you to use the facilities.	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All families hosting students under the age of 18 are DBS approved (which means they have passed criminal records checks) to ensure that they are fit to accommodate children.	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All properties are required to have a Gas Safety certificate, to ensure appliances in the property are safe.	✓

If you have any **medical conditions or special dietary needs**, we must be notified at the time of booking. Please complete and return the medical information request form. A lot of our host families have dogs as pets. If you have an allergy to dogs we will ensure that your host does not have a dog. It is not always possible to provide pet free homes as a preference.

Homestay Accommodation

Our Homestay families live in many different areas around York. The majority of students travel by bus to school. The centre of York is not a residential area and very few hosts or other York residents live there.

Payment of Homestay accommodation fees

Payment for Homestay accommodation is made direct to English in York: students should not pay their host family.

Accommodation usually begins on the Saturday or Sunday evening preceding the course and is charged for at the daily rate. If you want to arrive on a different day, please contact the person who has processed your booking.

Information about living in Homestay accommodation

Your host family will do their best to make you feel 'at home', but some things may seem strange at first. Please ask your host if there is anything you are unsure of.

British families

Many different people choose to become Home stay providers, some will be older people whose children have grown up and left home, some will be single people who live alone and others may be one parent with children. All of these people are able to offer a warm welcome to International students.

What to expect from your homestay

The host agrees to provide the following for the student;

- A clean and tidy private bedroom (unless the student has requested to share)
- A bed
- A table or desk (or a suitable place elsewhere for student to study)
- A chair
- A Wardrobe (or adequate hanging space)
- A mirror
- A chest of drawers (or similar)
- Adequate heating and Lighting
- Privacy from members of the opposite sex.
- Access to WIFI
- Access to a bathroom with baths or showers available daily.
- A change of towels and bed linen each week.
- An adequate supply of duvets or blankets.
- A weekly laundry service or clearly explained laundry arrangements.

There should be no more than 4 students in the home stay at any one time.

Students with the same first language will not be accommodated in the same home at the same time unless pre arranged with the student or agent.

Contact with your Host

You have chosen to stay in home stay accommodation in order to learn more about British culture and to have the opportunity to practise your spoken English. We expect that your host will treat you as a member of their family and include you in family life as much as possible.

We ask that English is the only language spoken in the home and that you are willing to spend time chatting each day with the hosts. We find that most families are able to do this in the evening around meal times. You may also like to ask for help with your homework.

We encourage you to spend time with your host chatting and watching TV together sometimes but also to respect their right to privacy as appropriate.

Important

Remember that you are sharing a home, not staying in a hotel.

Remember it is polite to always ask first. If you are not sure about something, just ask. You can begin: 'Is it OK if I....'.

Ask your host what you may or may not do in the kitchen.

Usually you will be allowed to make hot drinks and snacks by yourself, but don't take food from the cupboards or fridge without asking first.

Keep the kitchen clean and tidy. If you have a drink or a snack, put glasses, cups and plates away when you have finished.

It is polite to offer to wash up or dry the dishes after a meal. Both males and females do this in Britain.

Meals

The host will provide breakfast and an evening meal 7 days a week with an optional light lunch or pack up at the weekend. The food provided should be nutritionally balanced and take into consideration any specified requests such as no pork / Vegetarian etc.

The host family is NOT obliged to provide Halal meat. Halal meat is not widely available in York and most families do not buy Halal. There is a shop in York called Freshways where you can buy Halal food. Your host may be happy to cook it for you if you go and buy it yourself but check with them first and respect their decision if they say no.

Expect the food to be different. Try to be 'open-minded'. Take the opportunity to try lots of new, different foods. You might like them. Be prepared to try everything once. You only have to taste it. If you don't like it, you won't have to eat it. If you really miss food from your country, offer to make your host family a meal. Most supermarkets sell international food and spices. There are several international supermarkets in York.

Breakfast

During the week this is often a quick meal, usually between 7am and 8am. Notice that this is a cold food breakfast. For example; cereal (such as cornflakes, muesli, etc) with milk, toast and jam or marmalade, a glass of juice (orange, grapefruit, etc), tea or coffee. Tea is usually black with milk added and sometimes sugar.

Lunch

During the week you will buy your own lunch from one of the many shops near our school. At the weekend you may be offered a light lunch at home or a packed lunch if you are going away for the day.

Dinner

Dinner is usually eaten in the early evening at any time between 6pm and 8pm. Some families call this meal 'tea' or 'supper'.

If you are not going to be home for dinner please let your family know in advance.

Using the bathroom

Just as you do at home, think about others. All families have slightly different ways of doing things.

If you share a bathroom with the rest of the family it is important to know the house rules or customs. You should ask your host what times are best for you to use the bathroom for a shower or bath.

Try to keep the floor dry: remember to keep the shower curtain inside the bath tub. If you spill any water on the floor you should dry it up straight away.

If there is anything that you are not sure about please ask your host family, they have lots of experience hosting students and will be happy to help you to settle in.

If you have any problems or questions about your stay with a host family, please contact Rebecca in the school office, or on: 0044 (0)1904 636771 / rebecca.dunmore@york-associates.co.uk

What other accommodation options are available?

We believe that Homestay accommodation is an excellent choice for students. It is a safe and economical option, and it encourages the maximum use of English during the evenings and weekends.

However, we realise that Homestay does not suit everyone, especially those students who plan to bring their family to York. Whilst English in York does not make hotel or rental property arrangements for students, we are happy to offer assistance and advice.

We recommend that students visit the following websites for initial information on prices and availability:

Bed & Breakfast / Hotels – www.visit-york.org

www.booking.com

Student Residences - <http://www.studentcastle.co.uk>

<http://freshstudentliving.co.uk/location/york/foss-studios/>

<http://www.unite-students.com/york/the-boulevard>

<http://www.crm-students.com/crm-accommodation/york/the-brickworks/>

Short / long term Property Rental –

<http://www.savethestudent.org/letting-agents/york>

<http://www.linleyandsimpson.co.uk>

<http://www.cityletsyork.co.uk>

Advice about renting private accommodation

Renting a property in the UK is not as straightforward as it is in many other countries. It is a good idea to ask us to check any documents before you sign anything.

Before you visit any properties you should consider the area you wish to live in, make sure it is safe. Consider how you will travel to School – is the property on a regular bus route or within walking distance?

You will need to look for a furnished property which will provide you with the basic things that you need such as a bed and a table and a settee etc. Unfurnished is basically an empty house. If it is a student property it may have pots and pans but if it is not, you may have to supply these yourself.

When you go to visit a property check that the house is clean and dry. Look out for any signs of damp or condensation. Are the doors and windows secured? Is there a fire alarm? Is the central heating gas or electric? Is there a washing machine in working order? Are the white goods (fridge, freezer, and cooker) of a decent standard? Is the bathroom shared or private?

Apart from the property itself you should also consider how much money you will need to pay the rent plus bills for gas, electricity, water, council tax, TV licence, internet provider, food, laundry, contents insurance and travel expenses.

Tenants must open accounts in their own name with the utility providers, pay every bill during the contract period, and at the end of the contract, organise and pay the final bills.

Signing a Contract

Often contracts are more for the protection of the landlord/agency than you, the tenant, so before you sign a rental contract you should be fully aware of what you are signing. If you wish, the Accommodation Officer in English in York can do a check for you, but remember that this is not a legal check and once you have signed the contract it is legal whether you understand everything or not!

If you give the landlord/agency the details of a Guarantor, please remember that he/she will be responsible for your debts!

Ending the Contract

Contracts are usually for six months or a year. Once you sign the contract, you must pay for the full term of the contract even if you decide to move to another property or a new city.

For every contract, you must give **one month's notice** to the landlord/agency **in writing**, giving clear details of when you will be leaving the property.

Rent and deposit

You will usually pay **at least** one month's **rent** in advance and an additional sum of money, **a deposit**, will also be required in advance. Rent is usually paid by standing order through your UK bank.

Rents and deposits are very different things! Rent is the monthly money you pay the landlord/agency to live in a property. A deposit is money collected and banked by the landlord/agency – it is kept separate and is used at the end of a tenancy to pay for the landlord's/agency's expenses – for example, if the property is damaged, needs cleaning, or for the payment of any bills which you have not paid such as gas, electricity etc.

Return of the Deposit

The landlord/agency will deduct their expenses and pay the rest of the deposit into your bank account. **You will not get your deposit back on the day you leave the property.** By law, the landlord/agency must pay the balance of the deposit into your bank account within a month of the end of the tenancy. Please make sure that you provide your bank information to the landlord/agency before you leave!

Inventory

This is a check-list which you will use twice – once when you move into the property and again on the day you leave the property, so remember to keep your copy!

When you do the first inventory, you should do it together with the landlord/agency. You should take the time to check that everything on this inventory is:

- a) Already there (e.g. knives, cups, chairs etc)
- b) Very clean
- c) Stain-free
- d) Complete, no faults (e.g. chipped plates)
- e) In good working order (e.g. vacuum cleaner)

Make a note of everything on your copy and ask the landlord/agency to sign it as a true record of the property on that date.

When you **leave** the property and do the departure inventory, you can check it against your original check-list. If something was broken when you moved in, and it is broken when you leave, your deposit should not be affected.