

Itchen College Guide to living in Homestay Accommodation



WELCOME

The international team warmly welcomes you to Southampton, Itchen College and your homestay accommodation. Your homestay will make your stay here a real 'home from home' experience and provide you with the opportunity to practise and speak English in a relaxed and friendly environment.

As a student living in homestay accommodation, you will be provided with a profile of your homestay host which will include a picture and contact details. We highly recommend that you make contact with your host to say hello prior to your arrival.

We hope you enjoy your time with us and create many new friendships and lasting memories that you will treasure for many years to come.

The International Team

Marie-Flore Hodgson



Lynne Jones



Helen Sullivan



Pauline Lau



Life in the UK

Living in England may be very different from what you are used to. Our way of life, the food we eat and our customs will be different. Your homestay host and staff at Itchen College want to help to make your experience of living and studying in the UK both enjoyable and successful.



There may be misunderstandings and things that you are not sure about: if so, then ask us, and we will be pleased to explain and help you in these situations. We expect your hosts to provide you with good accommodation, good food and help you feel at home. Your homestay hosts are asked to treat you as a member of their family and you must also treat them with consideration. 'Good manners' are one of the British customs that you will quickly experience, and 'please' and 'thank you' are essential words to add to your vocabulary.

A homestay does not provide 'the services of a hotel'. **Your host is there to help you, but not to serve you. Politeness and friendliness are a normal part of English family life, and it is customary to say 'Good morning' and 'Good evening' each day.**



Climate

The UK is well known for its changeable weather. Be prepared. It can be quite wet and cold in the winter (approx. November to March). A warm, waterproof coat, umbrella, hat and gloves are a good idea. It also gets dark early in the winter months. Summers can be showery they are mostly warm but rarely extremely hot. The days are long and it stays light until late into the evening.

Meals

In half board catered accommodation, you will be provided with breakfast and evening meals Monday -Sunday. You will be given a light lunch on Saturdays and Sundays. Lunch during the week and snacks are your own responsibility.



Meal times in the UK vary from family to family. Generally speaking, English families eat earlier than, for example, in continental Europe. It is important that you check with the family as soon as you arrive, what time breakfast and dinner are served. If these times conflict with your study schedule, you should discuss this with your host. You will be expected to be punctual at mealtimes so please tell your host in advance if you cannot get home on time on a certain evening. They may be able to leave your dinner ready for you to reheat when you return. Breakfast times are normally arranged according to the time that your host has to get to work. If breakfast time is too early or late for you, you may have to prepare your own breakfast. This should be discussed with your host who will explain where to find the breakfast ingredients. It is important to note that few English families still provide a traditional English cooked breakfast. Your accommodation includes breakfast which normally consists of cereal or toast with butter, marmalade or jam and tea or coffee.



You are expected to sit and eat your meals with your homestay host. It is a great opportunity to chat and practise your English. It is good manners not to use your phone during meal times. English food may be different from what you are used to. It may be necessary for you to adapt to the new flavours or way in which food is cooked. British families drink the tap water, which is safe and palatable.

Dinners will usually consist of meat or fish with vegetables. If there is anything you particularly dislike or cannot eat, please discuss this with your host.

A typical lunch may consist of a sandwich, salad or soup and a piece of fruit. Lunch IS NOT provided on weekdays or during holiday periods (with exception of the Christmas and Easter period).

Please do not take any food from your host's kitchen without asking first. Your host will provide you with the meals but this does not include snacks throughout the day. Please do not invite friends to eat with you without asking your host.

Please do not store or eat food in your bedroom without first checking with your host.

Students on half board basis will not be guaranteed use of the oven/hob to cook during their stay. You **may** be able to use the toaster and microwave if available for snacks etc. You should discuss this with your homestay host.

During quarantine, all your meals will be provided, including lunch.



What to expect on arrival

You will have your own bedroom, access to common areas (i.e lounge/dining room), adequate heating & lighting, storage for clothes, a desk for studying, sufficient washing facilities and access to a bathroom with showers/bath available daily, a change of towels and bed linen each week and laundry facilities.



Your room

This is your own private area for studying, relaxing and sleeping. You will be expected to keep it tidy. Bedrooms do not usually have a lock on the door but your privacy will be respected. Friends should not be brought to your room, either to visit or stay overnight, without your host's permission. You are not entitled to use the room to accommodate anyone other than yourself. You MUST NOT use personal kettles, other cooking equipment or candles in your bedroom.



Personal Hygiene

Your own personal freshness is most important as you will be in close proximity to others. However, consider others who need to use the bathroom facilities, by not spending long periods of time in there if your homestay members have to get ready for work or school. Water is metered in the UK and every drop of water costs money; because of this, your host will ask that you keep showering times and water usage to a minimum. Please do not leave taps running.

It is normal to flush the toilet after use. Used toilet paper is flushed away and not disposed of in the bathroom rubbish bin.

For disposal of feminine sanitary/hygienic products, it is best to wrap them in paper or in a disposal bag, and place them in the dustbin. Please check with your host what you should do if you are unsure.

You should purchase your own 'toiletries' such as toothpaste, shower gel, shampoo, deodorant etc. All toiletry products can be purchased quite cheaply in local shops. Please do not help yourself to other people's toiletries.

You will be expected to leave the bathroom as you would wish to find it, in a clean and tidy state. Take care not to leave a wet floor, which could cause someone to fall.

Telephone

Use of your hosts' telephone is not included, and you **must not** use their phone without permission. To preserve your hosts' privacy, please do not give their telephone number to friends. You should be able to receive incoming calls from family members at a reasonable time of day. In order not to inconvenience your host, you are advised to limit the number of calls you receive, and to restrict them to a reasonable length, so as not to tie up the telephone lines for long periods.

Mobile Phone Debt

We advise that you purchase a 'pay as you go' mobile phone for your use in the UK. If you register any mobile phone under your homestay address, you must tell your homestay host you are doing this and make sure all your bills are paid before you leave. This is a serious issue.

Insurance

We advise all students to take out personal contents insurance before they come to College. This is to insure expensive items such as laptops, tablets, mobile phone and ipods etc.

Damages

We all know accidents do happen but please report any damages immediately to your host as it is easier to resolve an issue straight away. It may be necessary to provide a replacement/payment for the damaged article.

Laundry

Your homestay host will do your laundry for you or show you how to use the facilities if this is agreed. This will generally be one white wash and one coloured wash done weekly. It is a good idea to check laundry facilities with your host upon arrival as some hosts do the weekly wash on a specific day each week. Hosts do not normally do ironing for you but can usually lend you an iron and ironing board. **Wet clothes should never be dried in bedrooms, and you should never put wet clothing into drawers or cupboards to dry.**

Bed Linen

All bed linen is provided by your host who will also be responsible for laundering it and providing a fresh change of bedding on a weekly basis.

Fire Safety

Your host will show you the fire exits within the house. This will include where any keys are kept to unlock doors or windows. Please make sure you note this information in case of an emergency whilst you are staying in their home. If you hear the smoke detector going off, you must leave the house as quickly and safely as possible.

Heating

In winter, homes are centrally heated. Heating is normally regulated by a timer and set to go off at certain times of the day when the family is not at home. If you are not warm enough, please discuss this with your host. It is advisable to keep a woollen cardigan or jacket handy for extra warmth in or out of the home. Heating is normally switched off at night when you are sleeping. English homes are not usually air-conditioned in summer but the climate is rarely unbearably hot and rooms can be cooled by opening a window.

Distance

We try our best to allocate accommodation within 20-30 minute walk/cycle to Itchen College. However, occasionally homestays may be slightly further and students must accept they may need to travel by college/public bus (additional cost) where necessary.



Friends

If you should wish to invite a friend over to visit, **you must** first ask your host's permission. Please bear in mind that the entertaining of friends by students in a family home is not an entitlement of your stay as some families feel it is an invasion of their privacy. If they allow you to have visitors, they will expect your guest to leave by a reasonable time.



Rules



Some hosts will provide you with written information 'House Rules' which are designed to help you settle into their home and adjust to your new surroundings. If there is anything that you do not understand or are not happy with, please talk to your host or to staff in the International office at Itchen College. Misunderstandings may occur due to language difficulties, and it is best to sort out a small problem before it develops into a big one

In addition to your homestay house rules, you will have signed the rules and guidelines provided by Itchen College before your arrival. You are reminded that you have agreed to the following:

- Arrive for meals on time
- You will notify your host if you are going to be late home
- Never to help yourself to food unless you have been given permission
- To return home by 10.30pm Sunday to Thursday and by 11pm on Friday and Saturday (unless your parents have specifically requested earlier curfew times)
- You will not disturb your host after 23.00hrs with unnecessary noise
- Stop computer activity by 23.30hrs daily
- Not to use the homestay hosts' telephone without consent
- To respect all homestay members
- To inform the college if you are absent from lessons
- To communicate with your host and provide them with your contact details at all times
- Not to invite friends to visit you at your hosts house without your homestay hosts consent

If you do not return to your homestay by the agreed time and do not contact them to inform them of your delay, the following action will be taken.

- **1. Your homestay will attempt to call you. If they are unable to contact you, they will call the emergency phone holder.**
- **2. A member of Itchen College staff will telephone you. If they are also unable to speak to you, they may feel it is necessary to contact the police and report you as missing.**
- **3. Your parents and agents will be informed and college action will be taken.**

You must not stay out overnight from your homestay accommodation without written permission from your parents. This should be provided on your signed rules and guidelines which your homestay host will be given a copy of. We ask that you ensure your parents are aware of and agree to, each individual trip you arrange as they happen.

Drugs and illegal substances

Students must not use any drugs or illegal substances whilst studying at Itchen College nor bring any drugs into the homestay. Students using drugs will be asked to leave the homestay and will be referred to the Colleges disciplinary process.

Attendance

You will be expected to attend all your lessons and to arrive promptly. If you are ill, you must contact the college each day you are absent.

Holidays

You need to advise the International office/homestay host of any dates that you plan to be absent from your homestay accommodation. This includes any overnight absences along with returning home to visit your family. You are asked to give the International office a minimum of two weeks' notice of any travel. You must attend all lessons during term time and therefore **NO** refund will be given should you decide to leave the accommodation before the end of term to return home early for the Christmas, Easter or summer holidays. Returning late for the beginning of any term is also not subject to any reduction in accommodation rates.



If parental consent is given for independent travel, parents/guardians accept sole responsibility for any incident, loss or injury and that Itchen College, its employees and host families hold no responsibility for the student during the period of independently arranged trips.

Itchen College is not responsible for the supervision of students out of lessons or scheduled activities, or during half term and other holidays.

Keys & Security

Upon arrival you will be given a key to the home. Please keep this key safe and do not lend it to anyone or make additional copies. Your host's address should NOT be attached to the keys in case they get lost. If you should lose your key, you should report it to your host immediately and expect to pay for a replacement. Please take great care to lock the door of the home behind you whenever you go out. **If you are uncertain as to how the locking system works, please ask.**



Inspections

All of our hosts and their homes are inspected every academic year. Everyone living in the household will complete regular DBS checks to ensure that they do not have any criminal convictions. Students' bedrooms will also be checked to make sure everything is provided as requested by the college.

Doctor/Dentist

Some treatment is provided by the UK's National Health Service (NHS) free of charge for everyone but for other treatment, there are fees for 'overseas visitors'. If you are studying on a Short-Term Study Visa you must take out medical insurance before you travel to the UK.

People who hold European Health Insurance Cards (EHIC) can access free NHS care. Please ensure you bring your EHIC with you.

Problems

If you have any problems in your homestay, you can talk to your hosts directly or visit the International office for help.

We will ask you to complete feedback every term to make sure you are happy. Your host will also be asked to provide regular feedback too.

IMPORTANT

Always carry your host's name, address and telephone number with you. Southampton is a safe place but you should not walk alone at night. Do not carry your passport and lots of money on you and keep all personal possessions like mobile phones and cameras safe.

In the event of an emergency the out of hours contact number is **02380439203**

This is for genuine emergencies only. Please save this to your mobile phone.

Safeguarding

It is important to us that you are safe. If for any reason you do not feel safe or you suspect someone you know is not safe, we can help. The International department have our own designated safeguarding officer, Neil Buchanan who you will meet on arrival. Neil is part of a safeguarding trained team. His email is nbuchanan@itchen.ac.uk



Neil

Local Area Information and contact details

<u>Transport</u> Bitterne Cabs (Taxi) Rail Bus Southampton Airport National Express - Southampton	02380448888 02380226872 08458942469 08444817777 08717818181	Local trips Train information Bus times & fares Airline information National Coach travel
<u>Medical Information</u> NHS Direct Bitterne Health Centre Peartree Dental Practice Specsavers Minor Injuries Unit	111 02380442111 02380447753 02380425150 02380540087 02380777222	Telephone medical advice Registering with a doctor Dental treatment Eyesight tests/glasses Minor injuries Accident and emergencies

Southampton General Hospital		
<u>Hotels/Guest Houses</u> Travelodge Hotel Highfield House Hotel Hunters Lodge Guest House	08719846212 02380554223 02380227919	accommodation accommodation bed & Breakfast accommodation
<u>Banks</u> Natwest Lloyds HSBC	08453009841 08453000000 08457404404	Banking Banking banking
<u>Post Office</u> Bitterne Post Office Thornhill Post Office	02380433138 02380462912	Letters/parcels/passport application forms etc
<u>Job Centre</u> Southampton Jobcentre	08456043719 08000556688	To look for work To claim benefits
<u>Police</u> Police non emergency	<u>999</u> 101	<u>Emergencies</u> Non emergency matters
<u>Tourist information</u>	02381781017	Visitor information
<u>Library</u> Bitterne Southampton Central	02380833007 02380832664	Books and information
<u>Sports facilities</u> Woodmill activity Centre The Quays The Rosebowl Stoneham Golf Club Southampton Football Club (premier club) Bitterne Leisure Centre Pure Gym Southampton Alpine Centre	03000200135 02380720900 02380472002 02380769272 08002800050 02380437647 08450268256	Outdoor activities such as climbing, canoeing, team building Swimming, diving Cricket ground Golf Premier football matches Swimming, tennis, etc Gym membership Ski slope practice

<u>Places to visit</u> Titanic Museum Leisure World West Quay Bowling & Lazer Quest Portsmouth Historic Ships Bournemouth Isle of Wight London	02380833007 08712244007 02380236789 08712210000 02392839766	History of Titanic Cinema Shopping Ten pin bowling Naval Base/historic ships Beach/Seaside
<u>Places of Worship</u> Shahjalal Mosque Above Bar Church St Edmunds R C Church United Reformed Church Thekchen Buddhist Centre Kingdom of Jehovah's Witnesses	 02380332979 02380228275 02380333589 02380678570 02380557077 02380343403	

Outside agencies offering support

You can get help for physical, emotional or sexual violence from all of the following support services:

Southampton Women's Aid Helpline - 08088 01 03 34

South Hampshire Women's Refuge - 02380637550

Community Support Team, Southampton Police - 02380674198

Childline - 08001111

No limits - for young people (11-25)

Men's Advice Line - 08088010327

Samaritans - 0845 07909 090

Forced Marriage Unit - 02070080151 or out of hours 02070081500

Getconnected.org - (confidential helpline, offers listening ear) - 0808 808 4994

Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse - 02380636313

YMCA- help with depression, anxiety, stress, anger and bereavement - 02380639966

DASH - Drugs and Alcohol Support - 02380224224

Emergency Services - police, ambulance, fire

999

Non-medical emergency advice - 111

UKBA/Home Office - 0870 606 7766

Citizens Advice Bureau—Southampton - 02380221406

Embassies:

Chinese-020 7299 4049

U.S – 020 7499 9000

India – 020 7836 8484

Brazil – 020 7747 4500

Top Tips For A Successful Stay

- Arrive for meals on time
- Notify your host if you are going to be late home
- Never help yourself to food unless you have been given permission
- Return home by 22:30 Sunday to Thursday and by 23:00 on Friday and Saturday
- No to disturb your host after 23.00hrs with unnecessary noise
- Reduce computer activity by 23.30hrs daily
- Respect all homestay members
- Inform the college if you are absent from lessons
- Communicate with your host and provide them with your contact details at all times
- Do not invite friends to visit you at your hosts house without your homestay hosts' prior consent

- Remember that lunches are not provided by your hosts Monday - Friday
- Remember to purchase your own toiletries
- Cooking facilities are not provided in catered accommodation
- Try to get to know your hosts
- Check your college emails regularly for important information/messages
- Two loads of laundry is included in your homestay accommodation per week
1xwhite & 1xdark items.
- Remember to swap contact details with your homestay

Living in a homestay is like living with your own family.

Debbie, homestay mother about her student **Gloria**: *My student Gloria is from Italy and we had already communicated by text before her arrival to introduce ourselves. I wanted Gloria to feel comfortable in her new home and she has settled in so well, she is very much part of the family. My daughter went to Itchen College so she was able to talk to Gloria about college life. We both have a passion for cooking so we love to cook together and she has even cooked me a few meals, which is quite a treat. It has also been lovely meeting Gloria's family on FaceTime and I am even trying to learn some Italian!*



Michelle, homestay mum about her student **Giulia**: *Giulia has been an absolute pleasure to host over the past 10 months. She has fitted in very well with the family and all aspects of our very busy family life. Giulia recently joined us on a family camping holiday in North Devon and enjoyed it very much. Giulia is a mature, considerate and independent young lady.*



Antonino learning to bake with his homestay mother **Mary**.



Francesca learning to make a traditional English white sauce.



Trine walking with her host dad **Darren** on a rainy day.

