Information for Homestay Hosts

This leaflet has been produced to help you understand what it means to be a homestay host, what you can expect from the experience, and what is expected of you. We hope you find the following information helpful in making your decision to become a host.

What Is Homestay Accommodation?

Offering a room for homestay accommodation is perfect if you have a spare room and a caring nature. You could host an international student for a short stay of just two weeks or for up to a full year. It is an exciting opportunity to welcome a new culture into your home, give a student a truly authentic experience, and learn a lot along the way.

At Itchen College, we truly value the hosts who welcome our international students. We understand that you offer so much more than a place to stay—you give your student the chance to experience everyday English life, culture, and language in the best possible way. To support you, we carry out a simple yearly check to ensure everything is in place and that all necessary documents are up to date, and we provide 24/7 support throughout your host journey.

Thinking of Becoming a Host?

If you are warm, welcoming, and curious about other cultures, you might be the perfect homestay host. We are looking for people who are caring, open-minded, supportive, and ready to share their home with kindness and enthusiasm.

If this sounds like you, homestay hosting may be a great fit. We ask that you take an interest in your student as if they were your own child, supporting their welfare and college attendance. You must also respect confidentiality by not disclosing a student's personal information, health details, or other private matters to anyone outside Itchen College, except for emergency or medical services.

What do you need to provide?

Bedroom The student's room should be clean, well-decorated, and comfortable—somewhere they can truly feel at home. It must include a single bed, adequate storage (such as a wardrobe or drawers), and a desk and chair (or access to a suitable study area within the home).

To support their wellbeing and studies, the room should also have:

- Internet access
- Good lighting
- Proper ventilation (such as an opening window)
- Sufficient floor space to move around comfortably
- Central heating (or a suitable alternative)

Meals Homestay is offered on a half-board basis: breakfast and dinner on weekdays, plus lunch on weekends and during Easter and Christmas holidays. We ask host families to reserve a small amount of kitchen space for students to store their lunch ingredients.

If a student has specific dietary requirements due to allergies or religious reasons, we will check with you beforehand to ensure you are comfortable accommodating them. In most cases, a weekly supplement is provided to cover any extra costs.

Facilities

- **Laundry:** Hosts should provide fresh towels and bed linen weekly and inform their student of designated wash days for both linens and personal clothes. You may decide whether you prefer your student to do their own laundry, but please make this clear when they arrive.
- **Bathroom:** Students need private access to a bathroom with a lockable door. If you have a busy household, it is a good idea to agree on bathroom schedules and inform your student of maximum shower times.
- **Kitchen:** Students should have access to communal areas, including the kitchen, to prepare and enjoy their meals. Please establish clear guidelines on appliance usage and provide instructions on how to operate permitted equipment. Additionally, ensure there is designated storage space for their food in both a cupboard and the fridge.
- **Keys:** Students must be given their own house key to grant them independent access to the home.
- **Communal Areas:** We ask host families to make students feel welcome in shared spaces, such as the lounge. We also encourage hosts to invite students to participate in family activities where appropriate, treat them as members of the household, and speak in English with them as much as possible.

Good to Know!

Payment: The rate of pay for the 2026-2027 academic year is £700 per student per month. If your student has dietary requirements, you will receive a supplement of £20 per week to cover the extra cost of specialist food. If your student stays with you over the Christmas or Easter period, you will receive an additional £10 for each weekday. The College Finance Department will pay directly into your account every four weeks.

Tax: Under the government's Rent a Room Scheme, you are legally entitled to earn up to £7,500 per year in tax-free rental income from your home. If you earn more than this amount, you must declare your earnings and complete the appropriate tax return. (*Correct at the time of printing, 111/11/2026. Please check if this figure remains current).*

Full-time students are exempt from paying Council Tax. If necessary, the International School Office can provide a letter confirming student status.

Queries: If you have any questions regarding becoming a homestay host, please contact the International Department, and we will be happy to help.

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