



Richard Huish College

Guidelines for International Students and Parents

Your accommodation in Taunton is one of the most important parts of your time here. A good home will help you settle into English life quickly and help to improve your language skills.

When you are notified of your Homestay provider, we ask that you send a letter or email of introduction to them about yourself. This will provide an opportunity for you to get to know more about each other prior to your arrival. You may also wish to exchange photographs.

Declaration

We do our very best to recruit Homestay providers that are in the vicinity, however, we cannot guarantee that all accommodation will be within walking distance of the college.

All our Homestay providers are checked by the Business and Professional Development Office to ensure an acceptable standard of living. All members of the household that are over 18 years and over will be checked by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB).

Accommodation

One of the best ways to improve your English is to live with an English family in their home. You will have the opportunity to get involved in everyday life, from eating together to watching British television. You will either live with a single person or with a family.

You will normally have a bed, wardrobe, desk and chair in your bedroom. You will share the kitchen and bathroom with the other members of the household. If there is no desk in your room, a designated study area will be provided for you to study quietly. Students are expected to tidy their own desk and make their own beds.

Students are treated as a full member of the household, eating together and sharing the common living areas. Students are expected to talk in English when there is more than one student of the same nationality residing in the household so that they are continuously enhancing their English skills.

You will be required to pay a fully refundable deposit of £100.00 and this will be returned to you at the end of your programme as long as you have paid your fees in full, your room is clean and tidy and nothing has been damaged.

Our Homestay providers can offer a variety of options:

Full Board - Your Homestay provider will provide breakfast, lunch and an evening meal 7 days a week.

Half Board - Your Homestay provider will provide breakfast and an evening meal 7 days a week. You would have to provide your own lunch.

Self Catering - You will have to cook for yourself. You will have space in the fridge and freezer, as well as the cupboards in the kitchen for you to keep your food. You will be expected to tidy up after yourself in the kitchen.

Please remember that as you are living in someone else's property to treat them with respect. Remember to tidy the kitchen and bathroom once you have finished, and to keep your bedroom tidy. Tell your Homestay provider if you will be out late or if you won't be coming home in the evening.

Bathroom and Toilet

Students should have free access to the bathroom in the same way as the family, but Homestay providers may have to work out a rota for baths and showers. Students should be able to have a daily bath or shower, but please bear in mind that your Homestay provider may have hot water restrictions or a water meter. Your Homestay provider will inform you of this when you first arrive. Please limit the time spent in the shower/bath as there may be other members of the household wanting to use it and please leave the bathroom clean and tidy after use.

Bicycles

Please make sure that you are fully acquainted with the British Highway Code. For further information, please ask your Homestay provider or the college.

Culture Shock and Homesickness

Homestay is more than merely providing accommodation. It is, as the name suggests, about providing a home and not just a bed.

Many students experience culture shock when they arrive in a different country. Students may start to miss friends, family and places and failure to adjust can bring serious problems for students and they may experience insecurity, panic and depression.

If you feel homesick please contact the college for support. Successful adjustment to a new culture is essential but there is no one way of achieving this. Remember – we are here to help you.

Differences in culture

Differences in culture can lead to misunderstandings for students as well as their Homestay providers. We can feel offended when things are said in the wrong way. Homestay providers in the UK, expect their guests to use 'please' and 'thank you'.

In many cultures requests are expressed much more directly – for example A student who says "give me the salt" at the dinner table may merely be unaware of what is polite and impolite language to the British culture.

The college does provide cultural awareness sessions for International students at the beginning of the autumn term within the EFL lessons.

Friends

If you would like to bring friends home, you should make sure you ask your Homestay provider for permission before doing so. Please ask your Homestay provider about how many friends you are allowed to visit as one time, and what time you are able to entertain friends to. Please keep the noise to a minimum in the evenings.

Homestay providers are not responsible for providing meals for your friends when they visit, please make the necessary arrangements for this.

Holiday

Students are expected to return home during the main holidays (Christmas, Easter and Summer). If a student wishes to stay during one of these, they will need to liaise with their Homestay provider to see if accommodation is available.

[Richard Huish College cannot guarantee that we can find alternative temporary accommodation during this time.](#)

Hygiene and Health

People's hygiene and health differs around the world on many things which we take for granted.

Please talk to your Homestay provider if you require a pillow case to put your underwear in prior to doing your laundry.

Insurance

Please ensure you have the necessary insurance to cover your belongings whilst in the UK. Some household insurances do not cover 'lodgers' and therefore you will need to ask your Homestay provider if you are covered by their policy.

The UK National Health service will provide limited health care during your study period, so we also recommend that you have your own health care insurance.

Internet

Not all Homestay providers have wireless internet access. It is your Homestay provider's decision as to whether you are allowed to use their internet provision. Some Homestay providers choose to restrict the times that their internet can be used, again, you must respect their decision.

There is access at college (including a wireless network across the whole of the campus) during opening hours.

Keys

All Homestay providers have been advised that students should be provided with his/her own front door key. You should return at the end of your stay.

Your Homestay provider will also explain any arrangements for household security to you e.g what should be locked by the last person leaving or entering the house and if there are any security alarms to be set. If you are unsure about how to use the key or alarm system, please ask them to explain this to you.

Please note that it is your responsibility to look after your key. If you lose it, you will be expected to pay for a replacement key.

Laundry

Your Homestay provider will provide you with clean bed linen and clean hand and bath towels every week. It is also expected that your Homestay provider will take care of a reasonable amount of the personal laundry each week and no extra charge should be made. If you would prefer to do your own washing, please ask your Homestay provider for permission and instructions on how to use the washing machine, drying and ironing facilities.

Leisure time

Your Homestay provider may be happy for you to accompany the family on outings where possible. If you wish to visit any place in particular, please talk to your Homestay provider about any local places of interest, activities and sports facilities.

Richard Huish College provides facilities and enrichment activities that you will be encouraged to participate in. Please see your personal tutor or the Business and Professional Development Office for further information.

Meals

The evening meal should always be a substantial dinner including meat, chicken, fish or cheese. You will be expected to have the same meals as your household and to eat with them. If you have any particular dietary needs or allergies please inform the college so that this can be discussed with the potential Homestay provider prior to arriving. **Please discuss with your Homestay provider any foods you like and dislike when you first arrive.** We will endeavour to match the dietary needs of the student with those of the Homestay provider e.g placing a vegetarian student with a vegetarian Homestay.

Mealtimes are an excellent opportunity for you to communicate and socialise with the members of the household and you are therefore expected to eat the majority of their meals together with members of the household. You must let your Homestay provider know if you intend to miss a meal or be late. You may also wish to offer to share your culture by preparing a meal for your family on occasions.

Definitions of accommodation provided are:

Self catering – the students will have to cook for themselves. Space in the fridge and freezer will be provided, as well as the cupboards in the kitchen to keep food. Students are expected to tidy up after themselves in the kitchen.

Half board – the Homestay provider will provide breakfast and an evening meal 7 days a week. Students would have to provide their own lunch.

Full Board – the Homestay provider will provide breakfast, lunch and an evening meal 7 days a week. Students are expected to make their own lunches.

If you want to eat large quantities of extra food e.g biscuits or other snacks we expect you to buy this for yourself and suitable storage should be made available to you for this.

Medical Treatment

If you are ill you must ring the college reception on 01823 320800 to report your absence from college.

Your Homestay provider will let us know if you are seriously ill as we may need to inform your family. Students whose course of study is for 6 months or more will qualify for NHS medical treatment on the same basis as anyone who is ordinarily resident in the UK. Please ask the college for advice on medical insurance if you have any doubts.

[All students staying in the UK for longer than six months should register with a doctor on arrival.](#)

Your Homestay provider's family doctor may be able to take new patients or you can ask the college or your local chemist for a list of doctors. If any medicine is prescribed to you, make sure dosage instructions are understood and the medicine is kept in a safe place – if you are unsure, please talk to your Homestay provider or seek advice from the college. If you need to see a dentist, it is usual to see the dentist used by your household, you will be expected to pay for treatment, and you should establish the cost and extent of treatment in advance.

Please inform the college and your Homestay provider if you are allergic to anything just in case your Homestay provider has to administer some first aid or provide you with some non-prescription medication. Ensure that medication is kept in a cupboard, in its original packaging, with any instructions or information that came with the medication.

Money

We advise that long stay students should open an account with a bank or building society; the college will provide the necessary reference for this. Students are strongly advised not to keep large sums of money in their rooms.

Payment and Charges

The payment contract is between the student and their Homestay provider. Upon request the college will forward weekly direct debit payments to the Homestay provider which is paid by the student's family. Currently fees are between £85.00 and £110.00 per week depending on the type of accommodation offered. (Please refer to our 'Meals' section for further information e.g Full board - £110.00 per week). If you are unsure, please talk to your Homestay provider or contact the Business and Professional Development Office at college.

The college will provide an 'expectation agreement form' that outlines the costs and notice requirements and this will be signed by yourself, and/or your parents and the Homestay provider.

We recommend that there is a regular payment day which you agree with your Homestay provider, this is usually the day that you arrive in the property (e.g a Saturday). We also recommend that your Homestay provider keeps a duplicate receipt book so that you can also keep a copy of the payments made. Your Homestay provider should provide you with any extra charges (e.g use of their telephone) carefully itemised. There should be no extra charges for laundry or heating unless this has been agreed with the college.

Should the college receive notification from a Homestay provider that the student has fallen behind with the rent payments, the students' parents will be notified immediately.

Two week's notice on either side is a good general rule for notification of leaving, or two week's money to be paid in lieu of notice unless there are special circumstances or if your host has indicated differently on the 'expectation agreement form'. The college should be notified immediately if notice is given on either side.

DEPOSIT: Richard Huish College will now require a £100.00 deposit from all students which will be refundable to them at the end of their programme, and as long as the student has paid his/her fees to date, and nothing has been damaged.

Students are expected to pay advance weekly payments to their Homestay provider on time. Students, who wish to go away for several days (either at the weekend or during the week), or overnight and leave their belongings in the Homestay property, are still expected to pay a full week's rent (7-days) unless agreed otherwise with their Homestay provider.

Rebates and Retainers

If you wish to retain your room during college holidays (e.g half term and *main holidays), leaving your belongings there so that your Homestay provider cannot use the room, it is up to Homestay provider to charge a retainer fee or not. Please contact the college for advice if you are unsure about this. The current retention fee payable is £30.00 per week.

Students are expected go home at the main holidays (*Christmas, Easter and Summer). If you wish to stay during one of these, you will need to liaise with your Homestay provider to see if accommodation is available. The college is unable to guarantee alternative accommodation during these holidays.

Religion

Although not all members of a religion are equally dedicated in practice, for some religion is not merely a code of conduct, but it dictates their way of life. Homestay providers are expected to respect and receive different religions with an open mind and vice versa. Religion can also provide security for some in an alien environment. Richard Huish College may be able to help students contact local community groups if they wish to practise their religion.

Safety

Homestay providers are expected to make students aware of the risks of fire and any other hazards in their home. Please ensure that you are aware of the means of escape and the actions to take in the event of a fire etc. Homestay providers will explain any special safety rules and if they have small children please make sure that keep hazardous items out of reach, and ensure stair gates etc are used correctly.

Please do not leave any electrical equipment (including laptops) and any room heaters, water heaters, on while you are not in the room or using them.

Smoking

If you smoke, please make sure you are aware of whether you are allowed to smoke on the premises or not.

Telephone

If there is a telephone connection in the property, Homestay providers are expected to allow students to receive incoming phone calls as it is important that the college and members of their family can contact them. We have recommended though that students are not allowed to make outgoing calls unless agreed in advanced by the Homestay provider, and in such cases the student is expected to pay for the call.

We advise that the students use their mobile phone for any calls. However, if you do not have a mobile phone, please talk to your Homestay provider about what whether you can or can't use their land-line and under what circumstances. You must always ask before using your Homestay provider's private phone.

Transfer of Students

Not all Homestay matchings work, although the Business and Professional Development Office tries to ensure compatibility, there may be many different reasons for students'/Homestay providers request for transfers and these should not be taken personally. We will do our best to support the student and the Homestay provider if any disagreement arises resulting in the student needing to move to a new Homestay provider.

Travel

Taunton has a good transport system, with regular bus or train services. Journey time is usually between 10 – 20 minutes, making travel around Taunton quick and easy. There are opportunities to buy train or bus discount cards making travel cheaper.

Homestay providers are not expected to drive students everywhere but instead we expect students to walk, cycle or use public transport where possible.

Your Homestay provider will help you when you first arrive to find your way to college, town and local amenities, where to catch their bus and how long the journey will take etc. Please contact the college if you require assistance with this.

General Welfare

Under the Education Act 2002 and the Children's Act 2004, the college has special responsibilities to students under 18 years of age and/or students who are considered vulnerable, to safeguard and promote their welfare at all times, including time spent out of college and away from lodgings. As your Homestay provider is caring for you, this responsibility is also theirs and so we have asked them to always report anything of concern. In extreme circumstances the College may contact other agencies to discuss your welfare.

Close liaison with the College avoids many problems. Most students' stays are happy and uncomplicated, but from time to time problems may arise.

If you wish to go away for several days or overnight it is essential for your Homestay provider to know where you are with a contact telephone number and address. It is your responsibility to provide accurate information to your Homestay provider. If Homestay providers are unsure about the suitability of the arrangements they will inform the college and we will make enquiries and gain parental permission if necessary.

You will need to discuss with your Homestay provider a suitable curfew and agree this on arrival.

If Homestay providers are planning to go away overnight or for a longer duration, they have been advised to inform us so that any necessary arrangements can be made. In the case of students who are under 18 years of age, an adult who has a CRB certificate must be on the premises overnight. If this is not possible, it will be necessary for us to find temporary accommodation for you.

If a student is over 18 and is happy with the arrangements the student can be left alone for a night or two. We have advised Homestay providers that it is important to tell us when they are going away, and how we can contact them in an emergency and what arrangements have been made for the student e.g in respect of food etc.

We will not tolerate the miss-use of alcohol or drugs, if students are caught doing so we have requested that the Homestay provider contact the college immediately. The student's parent will be informed.

Student Services

We have a support network for students and a team of qualified college Counsellors who students can contact confidentially. If you require any further information, please see our website www.huish.ac.uk or contact the college.

Feedback

Finally, we will contact all Homestay providers once a term to check that everything is okay. We welcome feedback from our students and parents, so if you have any questions, or would like to talk to a member of the team, please contact us.

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