

# INFORMATION FOR HOMESTAY PROVIDERS

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## Accident and Sickness

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If your student has an accident at your home, please let staff in the International Office know, as an Accident Report form needs to be completed at the College. We also need to know if your student is missing classes due to illness (or for any other reasons).

Seeing a Doctor – see section on Registration with a Doctor.

## Arrival at Your Home

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In most cases, new students will be taken directly to your home by one of the College drivers who will have collected them from the airport. Before arrival, the student will have been sent an electronic handbook containing relevant information about studying at Boston College as well as about living in homestay accommodation.

Once at your house, it is important to make the student feel comfortable and at home. Many students may be shy and anxious about their new environment, so please bear this in mind and do as much as possible to make them feel comfortable.

## Attendance at Classes

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Unlike school, College hours depend on the course, subjects and level being studied. Normally full-time students will have between 18-22 hours class time per week, often spread over 3 or 4 days.

All students should attend all timetabled classes and 100% attendance is expected.

Where students have no timetabled classes, they may wish to spend time at home.

## Deciding to Become a Homestay Provider

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If you are considering becoming a Homestay Provider for the first time, it is important that you know what to expect and what is expected from you.

In the first instance you should phone Boston College International Office (01205 365701 ext. 3225). The International Office Manager will then make an appointment to come and visit you.

There are some initial points which are essential:

- You should live within daily walking distance of Boston College
- You should be able to provide a private bedroom with study facilities for the student with adequate heating/lighting

- You will be expected to provide a DBS check for every member of the household who is over the age of 18
- You will be expected to show a friendly and caring attitude towards the student.
- You should treat the student as a member of the family, eating together and sharing the common living areas.
- There should be regular change of bed linen and towels
- You will be expected to do their laundry
- You should provide breakfast and evening meal (Monday to Friday) and all meals at weekends and during College holidays
- To be available for College visits/inspections including bathrooms, kitchens, etc.
- To attend annual Homestay Providers' meetings and training sessions for Safeguarding, Prevent and Equality & Diversity. *(This gives everyone the opportunity of sharing tips, ideas, exchanging contact information and having a chat over a cup of tea).*
- Be able to provide an up to date Gas Safety Certificate
- Demonstrate a safe living environment, e.g. smoke alarms, etc.
- You will need to sign an Agreement between yourself and Boston College

Being a homestay provider is not just about renting a room to a lodger in your home. Most of the students will be 16/17 years old and this may be their first time living away from home. You should be willing to chat and get to know them and this could make the difference between them being happy or not. Talking to them will help with their English and your kindness may help them to avoid homesickness. If they become involved with your family and friends, this may give them an experience and memories for life.

Students are given a choice of accommodation when they come to study at Boston College (either to live in our Hall of Residence or Homestay accommodation).

There are several reasons why prospective students choose homestay. In some cases, their parents choose for them! They trust that the homestay family will take care of their child on his/her first visit to a foreign country. Also the student hopes to use this experience to learn about living in England and of course to help improve their spoken English.

Boston College will support you with any problems you may have. Occasionally there may be difficulties. In these cases, Boston College would mediate to try to find a solution. In rare events, nothing can be done except move the student. If you are not feeling comfortable with a student placed with you, then he/she may be moved, although we would ask for time (up to four weeks, unless mutually agreed) to find the student alternative accommodation.

Some Homestay providers have the availability to house more than one student. However, we would insist that students from the same country or speaking the same language are not placed together, unless they request this.

Current Rates are £125 per week which is payable by bank transfer at the beginning of each month, in advance.

## Details about the Student

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Prior to the student arriving, the College will usually receive an 'Application form for Homestay Accommodation' sent by the student or the Agency placing the student. The information we receive will include name, address, age, sex and intended course of study. The student will give details about their preferences, e.g. whether they like children, pets and whether they smoke. They should also give information about their food likes/dislikes, whether they have any medical problems and there is the option for them to tell us about their hobbies and other general information.

This information will be considered when matching with homestay providers.

As soon as you have agreed to accept the student offered to you, we will exchange contact information, and we will ask them to contact you prior to arrival.

## Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

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The College needs to have DBS checks carried out for all Homestay providers, including everyone over the age of 18 living in the family home. The International Office Manager, who is responsible for accommodation, will discuss this with you. This will entail you completing an online application form and providing documents such as passport, driving licence, birth/marriage certificate, recent utility bill, document with National Insurance number on, etc.

## Food

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Some of the students find it very difficult adapting to western food, for example traditional Chinese food is very different. I'm sure you will see the signs if your student is having problems eating a western diet, although it is unusual to dislike the majority of things provided. A suggestion from a Homestay provider is to take the student to the supermarket for the weekly shop and ask them to point out what they don't like (and what they really do like).

You will need to provide students with a healthy diet, including plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Breakfast is normally 'help yourself' to cereals, toast, fruit juice, etc.

You are not expected to provide lunch during term times, as students would usually buy their own food and eat at College. However, during any holiday periods or days when your student is at home, you should expect to provide a snack lunch such as soup or a sandwich.

Evening meals would be expected to include meat or fish as well as potatoes, rice, pasta and vegetables. Desserts should be offered but maybe a piece of fruit, or whatever the student likes and is reasonable.

Meals should be discussed with your student.

## Holiday Periods

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If you accept students into your home, it is expected that they will be able to stay with you during holiday periods. Some students decide to travel home, particularly at Easter/Christmas, although sometimes they hope to experience a traditional 'British Christmas'.

Accommodation fees will be paid even if the student is away during holiday periods.

## Homestay Meetings/Training Sessions

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Annual Homestay meetings will be held at Boston College which gives Homestay providers the opportunity to meet and have a chat over a cup of tea. If anyone has any ideas or handy tips here is your chance to share them.

You will also be able to swap contact details with other Homestay Providers.

There will be regular training sessions for Homestay Providers on important issues such as Prevent, Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity. As far as possible, these will be held in conjunction with Homestay Meetings.

## House Rules

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All Homestay providers will run their households in different ways, and it is expected that students feel part of the family. However, it is often useful (particularly where there is a language barrier) to have some basic house rules written down.

It is also important to set reasonable time restrictions for students to arrive home in the evening (particularly for those under 18). If your student is staying out overnight, parental permission should be obtained, and this may be discussed and arranged with the College International Office. Please note that the College does not allow non-residents to stay overnight in our Hall of Residence. All visitors should leave the College premises by 11pm Sunday to Thursday and 12.30am Friday and Saturday.

## If Things go Wrong

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Occasionally, you may find that for reasons beyond your control, your student wishes to leave you. Sometimes, a student is very unsuited to living in homestay, or there may be serious clashes of personality. If it is not possible to find a solution, then either party should give a months' notice, unless a different, mutually agreeable notice period is set.

However, it is expected that a student will stay for at least one academic year or the duration of their course, if he/she has selected Homestay accommodation.

## Internet Access and Use

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It is very important for all students to be able to use the internet and most students will bring a laptop computer or tablet with them from home. They will expect to be able to use their computers to keep in touch with family and friends, so wireless broadband is essential.

You will be expected to help ensure that any students living in your home use the internet safely by setting appropriate parental controls on all devices that are connected to the internet and by making sure that they know what to do if they want to report something inappropriate.

It is good practise to encourage your student, if under the age of 18, to use their computer in a 'family' area wherever possible.

## Level of English

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Most students coming to Boston College hope to improve their English and will be studying at different levels. Although there may be basic communication problems with some of the students when they first arrive, usually, this will improve when they start to attend their English classes, and as their confidence grows.

Please encourage and help the student by correcting their English in a positive and encouraging way.

## Payments for the Accommodation

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Homestay fees are paid every four or five weeks in advance.

Payments will be made to Homestay providers by bank transfer from Boston College.

You will be paid the full amount, even if the student is away or goes home during holiday periods.

It will be expected to refund to parents any money left at the end of the academic year, if the student goes home before the official last day of term. This should be arranged in conjunction with the International Office Manager

## Problems and Out of Hours Contact

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If you need any help or advice, or just to discuss an issue, then please telephone the International Office Manager on 01205 365701 ext. 3225, or email: [sue-h@boston.ac.uk](mailto:sue-h@boston.ac.uk). You will also be given an emergency contact number in case needed during nights/weekends.

## **Registration with a Doctor**

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At the start of each new academic year, we will arrange for all new International students or students in College arranged accommodation, to be registered with a local Doctors' Surgery.

Currently, students are registered with The Sidings Medical Practice, Sleaford Road Medical Centre, Sleaford Road, Boston, telephone 01205 362173.

## **Transport To and From the Airport During Holiday Times**

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The International Office will make a list of students wishing to travel to and from the airports at holiday times and wherever possible, book a mini-bus or taxis for people travelling on the same day. This will hopefully reduce the cost of travel and make sure they arrive at the airport safety.

## **Why Student Choose Homestay**

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Students are given a choice of accommodation when they come to study at Boston College.

There are several reasons why prospective students choose homestay. In some cases, their parents choose for them! They trust that the homestay family will take care of their child on his/her first visit to a foreign country. Also the student hopes to use this experience to learn about living in England and of course to help improve their spoken English.