



**Tailor-made learning
& cultural experiences**

Host Family Guidelines

**Host Family
Guidelines for all
Equinox Education
Services programs
2024-2025**



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Equinox Education Services Ltd
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Welcome and Introduction

On behalf of Equinox Education Services (EES) I would like to welcome your participation in our Host Family scheme. Being a host family with us is a unique, rewarding, fun and educational experience for all members of the family and an opportunity to create many unforgettable memories for our students. As an overriding principle for hosting, we ask families to remember to treat their own student as part of your family i.e. like you would your own family members.

You should use this guide as a reference tool for the simple dos and don'ts of your role and our expected standards. Good Luck!

Noel Doyle



Managing Director

Why become a Host Family?



When you are hosting a student or a visitor, you become an ambassador of our beautiful country. Irish People have a lot to offer and, as a host family, show the world what Ireland really means.

Each year welcomes an increasing number of students from all over the world to our language centres in Carlow. It is of utmost importance to the organisation that each student has individual care and attention so that they go home after their stay with us happy, satisfied and showing a marked improvement in their use of the English language.

We are very appreciative of the hospitality and friendliness our host families have shown students during the past years. We are particularly pleased when families recommend us to their friends and neighbours. During July in particular, we are in great need of good families. As many of our students return to us year after year, it is especially rewarding when they ask to return to the same family.

We cannot stress often enough that it is family accommodation that we offer our overseas students – **Where they will be welcomed as a member of the family and not as a mere lodger.**

Our students come to us on the understanding that they are to be part of an Irish family and they too must do their best to conform to that family's way of life. Students should not treat your house as a hostel – they also receive detailed notes on 'dos and don'ts' while living with an Irish family. A good general guideline for families would be to imagine how they would like their child to be treated if he or she went to live with a family abroad. The host families who show genuine friendliness and concern for their student's well-being are less likely to have problems and usually get considerable enjoyment from the experience of having an overseas student to stay.

We hope the notes included in this booklet will not only help new families but will also refresh others on the many aspects that the commitments of acting as a host family present. It is very important that all families read through these notes carefully. As usual, we will be only too happy to hear from you if you need any further advice.

We hope you will enjoy having your guest to stay with you and that the experience will be a rewarding one.

Before the Student Arrives

- Registering with US

Families wishing to accommodate a student may register with us by phoning our Office.

Our Coordinator will then send you an application form, giving details of our requirements and asking for information about the accommodation you have to offer. As part of being a EES Host family you will be required to be Garda Vetted.

- Visits

It is strict policy that all our families should be visited by our coordinator. A visit is obviously essential, both for us as an organisation caring for foreign students and for you, so that you can discuss the commitment entailed by taking in student guests. After the first visit, most host families will thereafter be visited every other year, unless they are in regular contact with the Coordinator during the season. We promise our students clean, comfortable homes in a family atmosphere, where they will be provided with a good standard of hospitality. This is what the Coordinator will want assurance of when she comes to see you.

- Change of Address

It is important that host families inform us of any change of address or telephone number.

- Processing Enrolments

When we receive details of students attending our courses, the information is processed on our Enrolments database. The Coordinator then has the task of trying to place the right student with the right family. In compliance with our Policy, your profile information will be sent to the client on confirmation of their booking to allow us to match the student's profile carefully to the right host family and also to encourage pre-arrival contact between yourself and the students.

- EES will keep the following Personal Data:-

Name
Address
Contact Number
Partners Name
Children Ages/Gender
Details of any pets
Room(s) available
Distance from school
Gender Preference

Financial Details: These are required to facilitate wire transfer payment for hosting. These details are stored in a secure locked location and are not shared with any third parties.

This information is the minimum ESS requirement to send to our clients and to facilitate our Academic and Cultural programmes. Please be assured that your Personal data is only sent to our partners overseas once you agree to host a particular student.

We work with overseas agents and educational institutions throughout the world some of whom are able to give us the names of students earlier than others. Some unfortunately, seem only to supply us with the student's names and addresses a month or two before the course starts. Then there are always last-minute applications to cope with! We know how important it is for you to receive your students name as soon as possible and appreciate how inconvenient it is for you when there are delays. However, we can assure you we do all we can in order to get this information from the agents. Please bear with us if there is a delay.

Accommodation



The student must be provided with a nice clean room with basic, furniture such as:

- Comfortable bed (including linen, duvet cover, blanket and two pillows)
- Night table, lamp, and alarm clock/radio
- Work desk with chair and desk lamp with sufficient lighting. This can be in their bedroom or in a quiet part of your home

We require good sized twin-bedded and single rooms with adequate space for clothes, etc. No more than two students can share a room. We only make an exception to this rule in the case of a special request from students (friends, brothers, sisters) to be placed in the same house. It is family accommodation, not lodging accommodation which is required. For our summer and Easter programmes, there will be mixed nationalities more likely than not and we try to organise things in such a way that students from the same nationality are not in the same host family.

When the Students Arrive

Irish families are kind, hospitable, and do not need to be reminded of their responsibilities. However, we have set the following guidelines for all host families to adhere to, as we set guidelines for the student or visitor, in order to make the best homestay experience possible.

The Welcome

First impressions are all-important! Please remember your student will be very eager to meet you, and anxious to feel that they will be happy with you during their stay.

Picking Up Your Student

All families are asked to meet their visitor at the pick-up point (make sure you know where this is- it is liable to change from centre to centre). You are also asked to deliver the student to the departure point at the end of their stay. It is also helpful when families can ensure their student arrives on time at coach park when leaving for an excursion. Those with no transport may be able to make arrangements with another nearby host family or with a taxi to be paid at your own expense.

Delays

If the plane/train/boat/bus is delayed, we do our best to inform you as soon as we have this information. We understand how tiresome it is waiting around without news. We do all in our power to avoid this situation, but as most of you will know, delays are a seasonal hazard! Individual students travelling alone are often unable to inform their host family of their arrival time. We do however stress the importance of keeping their host family informed of all travel details whenever possible.

Food on Arrival

Most students arrive tired, perhaps homesick and usually lost for words! Please offer them suitable food and drink according to the time of arrival.

First Day Practicalities

Host families should write their name, address and telephone number for their student (although most students should arrive with this information to hand).

Getting to the Centre

It is very important for the host families either to explain carefully or to show the students how to get to their Tuition Centre or School and how to return to their home. The students have a lot to cope with during the first few days and this sort of care is very helpful.

The Programme (Summer Schools & Special Groups Only)

All host families should receive a copy of the student's daily programme, showing exactly what they will be doing each day, including morning classes, afternoon sports and excursions, discos and parties. Please ask for a programme if you are not given one when you pick up your student on arrival. All events are compulsory – a wide choice of activities is usually offered once the course starts. Any student not knowing what they should be doing should always contact their Social Organiser, Director of Studies or class teacher.

Programme Changes

Students will inform you of any changes in their programme. Our teachers are asked to make the students write down the changes in case of confusion. We would be grateful if you could remind your student from time to time to inform you of all changes.

Day-to-Day Care

Food and Meals



You will appreciate that overseas students are usually going to find Irish food very different from their own, especially Asian students. Although this has been explained to the student as part of their preparation before arriving, it can still cause a problem. Most host families will ask their student on the first day to make a list of any specific dislikes, and by mutual co-operation any undue worry can be avoided.

Every day, the host family must provide nutritious meals, mostly homemade. The meals, especially dinner, should be served in a family gathering and the student or visitor must feel welcome to the table at all times. Healthy snacks such as yoghurt, fresh fruits, milk, juice, tea/coffee etc. need to be accessible to the student or visitor. No alcohol is to be offered to the student or visitor.

Payment & Cancellations

Please note that due to the nature of hosting students EES cannot be responsible if a student cancels before arrival as this will always be outside our control. As such host families are only paid the nightly rate for each night that they actually host a student(s). If a student cancels we will inform you straight away once ESS is made aware of the cancellation.

GENERAL

1. The host family must make sure that the student has a quiet environment in order to study and succeed in school, as well as quiet time to sleep and rest.
2. The host family must speak English with, and while in the presence of, the student.
3. The host family is not allowed to lend any type of vehicle to the student or visitor
4. If the host family has any concerns that they cannot discuss directly with the student please contact your Program Co-Ordinator as soon as possible.
5. Homestay minors must not be left at home without homestay provider supervision.
6. If a homestay student accompanies their host family on holidays, outings, or trips, the host family must pay for accommodation and food. The student or leader must pay for his or her own travel arrangements, admission tickets, or personal expenses without first receiving written permission from EES. If the student will not join the host family he or she must not be left alone.
7. Host families must be available for the full duration of the programme. If an emergency situation arises like family funeral etc host families must contact Program Co-Ordinator immediately.
8. The host family should familiarize students with the use of washer and dryer, so they can do their own laundry.
9. Upon a successful inspection by EES Accommodation office and all the relevant paper work you will be added to our host family database.
10. You can request to be removed from our host family database at anytime.
11. Host family must explain to the student how to evacuate the home in case of an emergency. The home must have functioning fire smoke detectors on every floor.
12. All members of the family must be willing to accept and host a student. Please make sure that all members of your family agree and are not just going along with the idea of hosting a student. It is such a wonderful experience, but the student must be welcomed by everyone in your household, including your pet!
13. While the student can be invited to attend religious services, the family should not apply any pressure to do so. The family should learn about the students' belief and culture, and respect them. The family should always be willing to direct the student to his or hers religion's place of worship if required. A host family must always respect the religious beliefs of the student.
14. The Program Co-Ordinators reserve the right to move the student if it is in the best interest of the student.
15. Termination of the homestay provider agreement can happen in case of a breach of the homestay agreement or the host family's guidelines and responsibilities.
16. Equinox Education Services Ltd. does not allow any discrimination against students including negative comments on social media, all families who wish to be recruited by Equinox Education Services Ltd must agree and comply with the above host family guidelines.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to working dealing with you.

Noel Doyle



Managing Director

Equinox Education Services Ltd.