



## **INFORMATION FOR HOMESTAY PROVIDERS, BATH 2015 (updated September 2015)**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Thank you for agreeing to host an Elac student. This document should give you all the information you need about hosting. Please don't hesitate to contact Elac if you have any further queries.

#### **1.1 About Elac**

The founders of Elac have been organizing and teaching English Language Courses for more than thirty years. We offer language courses in nine centres around the UK, some in residential and some in homestay accommodation. Our three main aims for our students are:

To quickly improve their English language skills  
To learn about British life and culture  
To make new friends from many different countries

Staying with a family is a great way for a student to meet these aims, as they settle into a family environment.

#### **1.2 Becoming an Elac Homestay Provider**

We hope the stay will be mutually rewarding and enjoyable! The most successful visits are often those where the student and host have developed a relationship based on trust and mutual understanding of expectations. The following information should help to clarify any questions you may have about hosting an international student. If you have any further queries, please contact our Homestay Co-ordinator, Ellie Thomas, on 07771 279608. An emergency number will also be issued to you when the students arrive.

#### **1.3 Correspondence and Communication**

The Homestay Co-ordinator will be in touch to give you information about your student. This may include if the student has any allergies or medical conditions, as well as date of birth and nationality. Sometimes, it is not always possible to give a student's name: this will be communicated nearer the time. We will also provide you with a programme so you have an idea of the student's activities and their timings. If this changes, you will be informed if necessary, either by a letter home or by text.

## **ARRIVALS**

Once we have the information confirmed, we will inform you of the time and date of your student's arrival, and whether they are travelling in a group, individually, or privately. You will be given the time and place to collect and drop off students. In Bath, this is usually the Avon Street Coach Park.

We try to ensure that the arrival is at a convenient time, e.g. after work if on a week day. For arrivals later than 11pm, we can assist you if you are unable to collect the students.

You will be expected to collect the student in person, and travel back with them to your home, either in a car, taxi, or walking if you live close by. If you cannot meet the student in person, please let the Homestay Co-ordinator know in advance who the person will be. If for some reason the coach is delayed, the Homestay Co-ordinator will keep you up-to-date, usually by text.

## **2. FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

Many students are very nervous at the beginning of their stay. They may feel homesick and shy about using English. For many it will be their first time in England and often the first time away from their parents. Please do your best to make them relax and feel welcome and they will soon settle in.

Students will be handed a Welcome Letter on arrival, together with a programme, map and sometimes a bus pass, as well as the location of the course.

Please help them to make their way to the course centre on their first morning, either by driving them there, helping them to get a bus (ensure they know the bus number and dropping off point) or giving them directions to walk on foot.

### 3.1 Expectations

The students have chosen a "home away from home" experience, and will be expecting to be treated as part of a family. They will have been reminded to treat their homestay provider and home with respect. It is always a good idea at the beginning of a visit to introduce all members of the household and explain your domestic arrangements, such as meal times, and any ground rules for the homestay, such as when to have a shower/bath. Most problems arise due to a lack of understanding and cultural differences rather than deliberate bad manners. Sometimes, writing them out is a useful way to share this information. Some students may not be used to making their own beds and tidying their clothes. Establish the ground rules for cleaning and ensure these are understood fully.

Please ensure that a responsible adult is present when under-16s are at home and that there is always a responsible adult present overnight.

### 3.2 Communication

Be patient and friendly, allowing your student time and space to gain confidence. They may not always understand you, so try and ensure that they know what you are telling them. It sometimes helps to write down what you want them to know (or use Google Translate!).

## 4. ACCOMMODATION

Visitors should have a comfortable bed with a good supply of blankets/duvet, drawer and wardrobe space, and somewhere to study (either in their room or elsewhere).

Their room should be clean with adequate lighting and heating. Be prepared for each student to bath or shower once a day and make sure they know how to use all the facilities. If appropriate, make sure you explain the arrangements for disposing of sanitary towels or tampons. It is also advisable to protect mattresses with a waterproof cover. Please change towels and bed linen once a week.

*To meet British Council criteria, the following should be adhered to:*

- **No more than two students should be accommodated in the same bedroom**
- **No more than four students should be accommodated in one house (Elac will remove students if this is found to be the case, without compensation)**
- **Under 16s should not be lodged with over 18s.**
- **There should be no adult lodgers in the house.**
- Homestay providers will be asked to sign an Agreement regarding the above.

Please note you are required to inform us if any additional adults are in the house during this time. Also, any other changes, such as pets etc., should be notified to Elac so that we can update the information we send to the students.

### 4.1 Nationalities

One of the conditions of being a homestay provider for Elac students is that there must never be more than one speaker of the same language staying in your family at the same time, unless we make special arrangements with you to the contrary. This is essential in order for them to maximise the opportunity to practise their English, both with you and any other students you may have staying with you. This is a contractual obligation we make to our students in our promotional material and therefore we must emphasise the importance of such arrangements.

### 4.2 Student Ages

Elac students staying in host families are usually 14 – 18 years old. We do, however, make some allowances for younger students, in the following circumstances:

Some students of 13 will be accepted where they are part of an older group and if a suitable homestay provider is available.

Students of 12 will only be accepted where a suitable homestay provider is available and if they are paired with another student of the same nationality.

We appreciate that younger students often do not have the maturity or independence to be placed on their own in family stay and this places a higher level of responsibility on the homestay provider.

## **5. MEALS and PETS**

### 5.1 Meals with the Homestay Provider

Meals are an ideal opportunity to sit down, converse with your student and make them feel welcome. We appreciate it is not always possible for everyone to eat together, but if your student has to eat earlier than everyone else, please also remain with them.

Please ensure that your student always has enough to eat and that meals are healthy and balanced. Appetites vary considerably with young people, but providing extra bread with meals, or an extra portion of potatoes, rice or pasta, may help. It is also useful to ask the students on their arrival if they have any particular likes/dislikes.

### 5.2 Breakfast

During the week you will probably find that a light breakfast of cereal and toast is enough for your student. However, many students are very eager to sample a traditional English cooked breakfast and would greatly appreciate the chance to have at least one or two during their stay.

### 5.3 Lunches

A hot or cold meal will be served daily at the centres. Usually on Saturday, there is a full day excursion, for which your student will require a packed lunch. A suggested meal would consist of 2 large bread rolls/French stick/ baguette/2 rounds of sandwiches, a packet of crisps, piece of fruit, cake or biscuit, fruit drink or water bottle.

### 5.4 Pets

Students and leaders from some cultures are not used to pets or animals living in houses. They may see this as unhygienic, or see dogs as guard dogs, therefore something to be afraid of. Students will inform us if they have pet allergies, but some may just require a little time to get used to a pet. If possible on arrival, please keep your dog in a separate room, and introduce it gradually to the student until they are comfortable.

## **6. COURSE PROGRAMME**

You will be supplied with a course programme at the start of the course, and updated regularly should any times and activities change.

### 6.1 Weekends

Please be aware that our fees include full board at weekends. Every Saturday during your student's course will be a full day excursion. Please give your student assistance in getting to the departure point in good time for the excursions and be prepared for your student to arrive late for the evening meal after the London trip.

Sundays are free days for your student and we would therefore ask you to do your utmost to include them in your normal activities as this is a further opportunity for them to experience English life. You may find, however, that if your student is part of a group, the group leader may arrange an

extra Sunday excursion for the group independent of Elac. In this situation you should be informed by the group leader of the details of times of return, etc., and a packed lunch will normally be required. If, however, you are in any doubt, please feel free to telephone the Homestay Co-ordinator and we will endeavour to help.

## 6.2 Curfews in the Evenings and Weekends

Elac Evenings: Elac runs 2 or 3 evening activities a week. These usually commence between 7.00 and 8.00 pm so please ensure students have enough time to eat then return to the centre.

Over 14s should be home by 10.45 pm

Over 16s should be home by 11.15 pm

If they have not turned up by these times, you must contact the Elac duty mobile. Once they return, please call the duty mobile again to inform Elac so this can be followed up the next day with the student.

The only exception to this rule is if the student is taking part in an excursion or activity with Elac or a group leader which finishes later; in this case you will be informed by Elac in advance.

Free Evenings: Students are expected to stay with their hosts. However, with parental consent and by agreement of Elac and the group leader, students may go out with other students. The above curfew times apply.

Weekends: Students are expected to stay with their hosts when there is not an Elac excursion/activity. An alternative activity may be organized by the group leader; in this case you will be informed by Elac in advance. With parental consent and by agreement of Elac and the group leader, students may go out with other students, as long as you know where they are going and when they will return.

## **7. HEALTH AND WELFARE**

### 7.1 Illness

If your student is unwell, please inform the Elac office immediately and then, if necessary, make an appointment for them to see your own G.P. Please keep us informed of the situation at all times. If you have to leave the student alone in the house for any length of time, i.e. if you are going out to work, please make sure we have a number where we can contact you. It is imperative that an Elac member of staff or a group leader is able to check personally on a student who is confined to bed, and it may therefore be necessary to arrange access to your home.

### 7.2 Safety

Basic safety procedures should be explained to visitors, such as how to use electrical appliances. You should have smoke alarms fitted throughout the house, and also a gas appliances certificate from a Gas Safe-registered supplier. We also expect you to conduct a fire risk assessment so that you and the students know the best way to evacuate the building if there is an emergency.

### 7.3 Privacy

Please also respect your students' privacy when they are in their bedrooms and the bathroom. Bathroom doors must have a lock on them.

## 7.4 Emergencies

The students will have an emergency contact number on the Elac cards they are issued with, together with the local police station's number and your number. They will also have been told about keeping safe on the roads and at night. If your student has something stolen and is the victim of any crime, report it to the police immediately.

## 7.5 Child Protection

The main carer within the homestay will need to have a current enhanced DBS (this used to be known as CRB). This can be from another organization, but we would need to see a copy. We can organize and pay for DBS checks for homestay providers if necessary. This DBS check will also include records of any incidents related to that address. We also need to take up a suitable reference before a student can be placed with you. All homestay providers are also required to complete a declaration form relating to the Children Act and their suitability to host students, including all other adults in their home, and that they have read our Safeguarding Policy.

Some students may report or experience abuse whilst on an Elac course, in different forms: bullying, racism, physical, sexual or emotional. If you have any concerns about your student's welfare, please contact the Homestay Co-ordinator or Elac's designated welfare officer, Elaine Wickens. All concerns will be treated confidentially and seriously.

## 7.6 Alcohol, Drugs and Smoking

Drinking alcohol is strictly prohibited for all Elac students. All Elac activities serve soft drinks only. If you suspect that your student is drinking, please remind them of the English laws on alcohol (they will already have been informed about this by our staff) and inform the Homestay Co-ordinator immediately. We will then take appropriate action. All of our students have signed a code of conduct regarding this, and are told not to smoke at their homestay provider's house and have been told of the law banning smoking in a public place.

## **8. DEPARTURES**

You will be notified when and where your student will be leaving from. Please ensure they have all their belongings with them when you drop them off. Many farewells can be emotional, and many students remain in touch with their English family.

## **9. PAYMENTS**

### 9.1 Payment

The payment for 2015 is £120 per week per student during the low season (outside July and August), and £133 per week during the high season (July and August), which includes a packed lunch on excursion days. A £4.00 supplement will be paid for additional packed lunches unless these replace a meal which would otherwise have been provided by the homestay provider. There is also an increment for hosting students with different diets. Payment will be made to you by BACS approximately half way through your student's stay. However, in our peak times slight

delays do occasionally occur and we would ask you to be patient if this happens. If your student stays for slightly more or less than a full week, you will be paid on a pro-rata daily basis.

## 9.2 Problems with Students

If you experience a problem with a student, please contact the Homestay Co-ordinator as soon as possible so that it can be resolved - we have a procedure for dealing with complaints. We prefer to resolve a problem that may be caused by misunderstandings rather than move a student immediately. If in the unfortunate event there is need to move a student, we will endeavour to place another student with you, or compensate you for any loss of income.

## **10. GENERAL INFORMATION**

### 10.1 Attendance

A strict register of attendance is kept by Elac every day. If your student is absent for any reason and we have not been informed, please expect a telephone call to find out why. Conversely, if your student stays at home, or you suspect for any reason that he is not attending, kindly inform the Homestay co-ordinator or Course Director immediately.

### 10.2 Religion

Visitor's beliefs should be respected and if your student wishes to practise his or her religion during the homestay, then please help him/her to do so. You may wish to contact Elac for guidance. We have a list of local places of worship.

### 10.3 Pocket Money

If your student appears to run out of pocket money during his stay with you, please contact the Homestay Co-ordinator. We will take steps to contact your student's parents or group leader. Please do not lend your student large amounts of money as Elac cannot accept responsibility for the repayment of such loans. Also, please encourage your student to leave money with their Group Leader.

### 10.4 Keys

It is your decision whether or not you wish to give your student a house key. However, please be aware that if you do not give a key, you should make sure you are always at home whenever the students return from their various activities. Also, if you will be out all day, please try to ensure that your student has all he needs for the day's activities, e.g. Sports clothes and shoes, money for snacks and lunch, etc., and that he knows he will not have access to the house during the day.

### 10.5 Laundry

Please offer to do your student's laundry for him on a regular basis during his stay, and show him where the laundry should be left.

## 10.6 Use of Telephone/Internet

If your student does not appear to have a mobile phone, please allow him one free call to his parents on the evening of his arrival, to let them know he is safe and well. From then on, if your student wishes to make any further calls, first check he has a special account number so that you will not be charged for the call. He may also need advice on where to buy phone cards. The internet is also a good way for the student to communicate with her/her parents. Remind the student to ask you first though!

## 10.7 Insurance

**It is your responsibility to ensure that your insurance companies are aware of the presence of students and that you have adequate insurance cover to compensate for:**

- injury suffered by the student in your care
- damage to your possessions (accidental or otherwise)
- the loss of your house key
- Please also ensure that your car insurance is adequate.

Elac cannot accept responsibility for any of these matters, but we can give our assurance that we will do everything possible to ensure redress on the part of the student should any unforeseen incident occur which is caused by this student.

### Cancellations

Although Elac **cannot** accept any liability for cancellations, we will always endeavour to replace bookings as quickly as possible whenever a cancellation should occur.

We appreciate that sometimes at short notice families have to cancel a student. If you have to cancel for any reason, please notify Elac AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

## **CONCLUSION**

Many thanks for hosting Elac students. Please keep this document to hand so you can refer to it regularly. We hope you have an enjoyable and rewarding experience.