

ST CLARE'S



OXFORD

GUIDELINES

for hosting your student

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1. Introduction

St Clare's, Oxford has been providing courses for teenagers and adults since 1953. Most of our students live in residential accommodation provided by the college. However, some choose to stay in homestay which has many advantages: it offers the opportunity to meet native speakers informally, to learn more about British life and culture, and to feel more 'at home'.

As a 'homestay provider', we know you will do your best to help your students feel comfortable. We also know the importance of your role to the success of the programme. Students have fond memories of their hosts and often maintain contact long after their stay. We know too that misunderstandings occur from time to time and these Guidelines should offer some helpful tips. Generally, it is best to discuss little problems openly as they occur, with sensitivity.

Please remember that the team at St Clare's is always ready to help resolve difficulties, even before they become serious.

2. Living in the home

Students should be welcomed into your home and encouraged, as much as possible, to join in the routines of home life. Flexibility is required on both sides: the student should make every effort to adapt to a different home and culture; and the homestay provider should be ready to adapt to a newcomer in their home.

Please make sure that there is no other person of the same native language in your house, as this is usually an important condition of booking. You should not accommodate more than two students from abroad in your home at the same time without informing St Clare's.

2.1 Single room

Students expect a single room where they can study or spend time alone. Each room should be clean and tidy, contain a full-size, comfortable bed with sheets, pillow-cases and towels provided. There should be ample drawer and wardrobe space, a mirror, writing table or desk and lamp.

Heating is often an issue in winter. Adequate heating for study should be provided in the student's room during the evenings. However, many students find British houses draughty and cold especially at night. Please be sensitive to their request and discuss the alternatives (thicker duvet, extra blankets, hot water bottle) with them directly.

2.2 Using the bathroom

Students will normally use the shared bathroom and toilet facilities. It is often a good idea to demonstrate the use of these facilities and give guidance about the timing and length of showers/baths. Cultural differences may make it helpful to discuss flushing mechanisms, shower fittings and screens, disposal of toilet paper and sanitary towels etc.

2.3 Meals

Food is an important part of the homestay experience and students should eat the same food as you. However, some may have special dietary requirements, on grounds of health or religion. Whenever possible, we will let you know in advance, but it is a good idea to discuss preferences with the student on arrival.

Breakfast is hurried in most households and may be taken separately, but you should encourage your student to sit with you over the evening meal; it is a good opportunity to find out more about each other. Please be ready to adjust mealtimes as many students are used to eating later in the evening than is usual here and some may be engaged in college-based activities in the latter part of the afternoon. Students should always let you know if they intend to miss a meal. Do let us know if they are missing meals often.

British food has become far more international over recent years and is generally appreciated by students. Menus should certainly be varied and please ensure salad and/or vegetables are available with the evening meal, with fruit available for dessert. 'Convenience food' (baked beans, pizzas, sausages, pasties etc.) should be kept to a minimum.

2.4 Cleaning and laundry

Students should be encouraged to tidy their room so that you can clean it properly at least once a week. Bed linen and towels should be provided and laundered at least once a week. Generally, you should actively offer to wash one or two loads of the student's clothes each week. Some students may ask for a daily wash while others may attempt to hand-wash their own clothes. We consider that both requests are unreasonable. Please discuss options which suit your household or suggest alternatives outside. We would also not advise letting students use your washing machine. Students also appreciate the use of an iron from time to time.

2.5 Sharing the house

Students should have access to all shared areas of the house. They should be issued with a key to the front door and allowed to come and go freely. Please instruct them about the security features of your house: exits, burglar alarm, safety catches on windows, dead-locks on doors etc.

Television is a useful aid for language learners and can help to build a stronger relationship with you. Access to the television should be available either in the living room/kitchen or in the student's own bedroom.

Students at St Clare's are strongly discouraged from smoking on college premises or in the neighbourhood of the college. Likewise smoking must be prohibited in your home – it is a potential fire hazard. It remains at your discretion whether you permit smoking in your garden.

The routines of the house should be respected. Students should be quiet if returning to the house after 22:00, refraining from playing music, making loud telephone calls or taking showers after other members of the household are in bed.

When students arrive, please notify them of any additional house rules you have. It would also be helpful if you could inform St Clare's of these as well. This can help to avoid any confusion.

2.6 Communications

Most students can keep in touch with friends and family via mobile phone or internet in college. Incoming calls to the homestay address may be necessary on occasions, and particularly on arrival day. Outgoing calls should not be permitted, except in emergency. Please note that St Clare's cannot be held responsible for any calls made by the student. All communications should be kept to a quiet volume after 22:00.

Student access to the Wi-Fi in your home is an expectation in today's world. Please let us know at time of booking if this is not available.

2.7 Arrivals and Departures

On specific arrival days you may be asked to collect your student(s) from St Clare's. Likewise, some students may need to be dropped at St Clare's on their departure day. The Accommodation and Welfare Officer will contact you in advance with all the details. We ask that you try to accommodate these requests, although we appreciate that it is not always possible. In such cases, you should discuss this with the Accommodation and Welfare Officer. We ask all students to depart by 10:00 but please allow some flexibility and discuss their departure plans with them.

2.8 Getting to and from school

Students may be unfamiliar with using public transport and need reassurance. Please point out the nearest bus stops before the student's first day of lessons and recommend the best bus to catch for the journey between your home and school. It would be a great help if you could provide a local bus timetable.

2.9 Activities and Trips

The International College Activity Coordinator sends the official extra-curricular programme via Teams and puts up a poster in the student hub every week encouraging students to participate. If students on the Teenage Summer Courses wish to go on privately arranged excursions, they must get permission from the Summer Deans office two days in advance; the school will inform you of any such plans, so please go by what an under 18 tells you.

2.10 Doctors and dentists

Students qualify for free NHS service if stay for longer than 6 months in the UK and if they have registered with a GP. They should choose a GP near the homestay provider. If need be, students can seek help from office staff or the nurse to organise their appointments.

Emergency treatment is free for everyone. Emergency appointments with a GP for a student staying less than 6 months will not be free. If a student is ill, they should consult the college nurse between 8:00 and 17:00 on weekdays. They can message her at 07500 808 242 and she will arrange for the student to see a doctor, if necessary. If a student has a serious accident or emergency, an ambulance should be called immediately. Please also inform the office or out of hours emergency number (see below) as soon as possible, if your student is unwell or you have called for emergency help.

We recommend to students that they bring enough prescription medication for their whole stay, as it would be difficult for them to obtain UK prescriptions.

Dentists are private for all students.

3. Legal and contractual arrangements

3.1 Payments

Payment by bank transfer is made by St Clare's on behalf of the student on a weekly basis. Calculations are made on the number of nights of the stay. No additional charges may be levied on the student unless previously approved by St Clare's.

The agreement may be terminated either by you or the college giving seven days' notice, prior to or during the student's stay. You will, therefore, be entitled to up to seven days' compensation from the date of notification by the college. If a student fails to arrive or leaves through no fault of the homestay provider, we will try to arrange a substitute booking. If no substitute is available, then compensation will amount to seven days' payment.

If it is necessary to change an existing student's accommodation, for any reason, one week's notice must be given by one of the parties - homestay provider, student or St Clare's. Compensation will be withheld if breach of contract conditions has occurred. If payment has been made in excess of the notice period, you will be required to refund the difference to St Clare's.

Payment per week for a 'superior' bedroom, which offers the student sole use of a bathroom, or for a 'standard' bedroom, with shared bathroom, is shown in the host confirmation letter for each student.

3.2 Taxation

Letting a room to a student home can be very cost effective. Depending on your income from hosting students, you may have to complete the Land & Property pages of the self-assessment tax return from the Inland Revenue. For more information, go to www.hmrc.gov.uk.

3.3 Insurance & damage

You are strongly advised to inform your insurance company when you accept a student in your home and your cover for 'contents and buildings' will normally be extended accordingly. You need to be covered for loss or damage caused by the student or accident to the student within the house. Please note that St Clare's accepts no responsibility for such eventualities.

3.4 Safety in the home

Providers and students must be aware of the dangers in the home. This means fire risk assessments and fitted smoke detectors. Gas appliances should be installed and serviced each year by an approved gas fitter. A Landlord Gas Safety Certificate must be sent to us annually, as well as any other relevant documentation.

It might be appropriate to discuss hazards with your student: voltage and the dangers of overloading, switching off appliances, access to medication, trip hazards such as stairs and cables etc.

3.5 Disclosure & Barring Scheme

St Clare's is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults on all its sites. This means in practice that each person over 16 living at the homestay address must complete an enhanced DBS clearance and hosts should receive safeguarding training. We will also require two character references for adult hosts.

3.6 Under 18-year-olds

Any under 18-year-old is defined as a 'child' although the law recognises that the nearer a child gets to 18, the greater the child's ability to take decisions for him or herself. Each member of staff and each homestay provider have a 'duty of care' to protect children from harmful behaviour and influences. We take particular care that students aged under 16 are not placed in the same homestay as students aged 18+ and we ask you to advise us at time of booking of any potential conflicts.

While under 18-year-olds are in your care, you must provide appropriate supervision at all times:

- do not leave the student in the house alone at night;
- ensure that female students are supervised by an adult female; and
- make sure students return to the house by 22:30 every evening from Sunday to Thursday, 00:00 on Friday and Saturday. This is the official college curfew, and any infringements should be reported by 09:00 the following morning.

We all have a responsibility to protect children from harm. You will find below a list of practical advice about how to respond to help you keep children safe and how to react when faced with safeguarding issues.

Here are some basic principles to follow when reacting to suspicions or disclosures from students:

What to do	What not to do
1. Stay calm.	1. Don't panic. Don't over-react. It is extremely unlikely that the student is in immediate danger.
2. Listen, hear and be open.	2. Don't probe for more information. Questioning the student may affect how the informant's disclosure is received later.
3. Give time to the person to say what they want.	3. Don't make assumptions, don't paraphrase and don't offer alternative explanations.
4. Reassure that they have done the right thing in telling you. Explain that only those professionals who need to know will be informed.	4. Don't promise to keep secrets or that everything will be OK (it might not).
5. Record in writing as near as verbatim as possible what was said as soon as possible.	5. Don't make a student repeat a story unnecessarily.
6. Promptly share what the student has told you with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy, such as the Accommodation and Welfare Office. Email or ring the office saying you would like 'to report a safeguarding matter' so you can be directed to the appropriate person.	6. Don't try to deal with it yourself.

3.7 Radicalisation and Extremism

Please note that risk of radicalisation and extremism now falls within the 'safeguarding' responsibilities of the college.

In 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', published by the Department of Education:

Radicalisation is defined as 'the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism'.

Extremism is defined as 'vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our

definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas’.

As with managing other safeguarding risks, college staff and homestay providers should be alert to changes in the behaviour of students at St. Clare’s. Any concerns, however small they may seem, should be reported to the Accommodation & Welfare Officer (or Director of the International College) and they will, in the words of the guidance, ‘use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include making a referral to the Channel programme’. You are encouraged to follow this excellent online training programme:

www.course.ncalt.com/Channel_General_Awareness.

3.8 GDPR

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) tightens up the obligations on businesses that process personal data. This includes the data held by St Clare’s on you, the homestay provider, for the purpose of matching your information with the requirements of the students hosted by you. St Clare’s will keep this personal data securely and keep it only as long as required for this purpose. The full details are available on the website under <https://www.stclares.ac.uk/about-us/policies/college-wide-policies/>

You are, of course required to give your consent in writing when you apply to be a homestay provider.

4. Emergency contacts

St Clare’s has built strong relationships with its homestay providers over the years. We see it very much as a partnership and a member of our team is always ready to help if the need arises.

During office hours
08:30 – 17:00 weekdays
01865 517707

For emergencies
17:00 – 08:30 and on weekends
07354 903 300