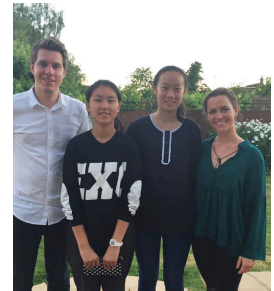


HOMESTAY FAMILY GUIDE

Opportunity Education



EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBER (24hr): 07854309235

Email: homestay@opportunity-education.com

Website: www.opportunity-education.com

Address: 4 East Street, Havant, Hampshire, PO9 1AQ

Contents

Introduction	3
Top Tips for Successful Hosting	4-5
The English UK Homestay Code of Practice	5
Safeguarding & Sickness Policy	6-8
Sickness Policy	8
Setting Ground Rules for your Home	8-9
Meals	10
Typical School Day	10
FAQs	11
Cultural Challenges Specific to Chinese Students in the UK	12

Introduction

Firstly, thank you for your interest in becoming a host family for Opportunity Education.

A very warm welcome! Opportunity Education is a network of schools from across the world, with a mutual goal of international collaboration and cultural exchange. We strive to enable students to have global and immersive experiences, achieving the international perspective required for success in today's globalised society. Our students come from diverse cultural backgrounds and are typically aged between 12 and 16, though some may be slightly younger or older.

Our primary concern is that the homestay experience is fun, enjoyable, and safe for all involved, and that our homestay families feel supported in their hosting role.

We pride ourselves on our high standards and therefore require all our hosts to carefully review this guide, our contract and consider whether they are willing and able to agree to the terms, many of which are based upon the English UK Homestay Code of Practice, to which we strictly adhere.

By hosting our students, you are in a position of trust. This is one reason why we select our hosts so carefully. Hosting a young student from a different country and culture is both an enriching and challenging experience and helps develop friendships that can last a lifetime.

How will this benefit you and your family?

- The chance to meet students from all over the world and experience different cultures and traditions
- The opportunity to share the UK's traditions and cultures
- An active, experienced, and caring support team to rely on for advice, help or resolving any issues.

Opportunity Education looks forward to a mutually rewarding partnership with you. We encourage you to contact us should you have any questions.

Further information can be found on our website:

www.opportunity-education.com/homestay

Top Tips for Successful Hosting

Upon arrival...

- Upon arrival, show your students around your house, introduce them to family members and let them know your house rules. Let students know where they may find available appliances and make sure they understand how to use them.
- Provide home Wi-Fi log in details promptly – students will want to let their parents know that they have arrived safely.
- Keep in mind the students may be tired or jet lagged. You could offer your students a drink and snack, they have had long plane and bus journeys so keep in mind they may be tired.
- The food in the UK may be very different from the food in the students' home country. Try to discuss likes/ dislikes with your students. Please do not be offended if the students do not like some dishes. Many hosts advise doing the food shop after the first day, when they have more of an idea of what the students would like to eat.

Laundry and Housekeeping...

- Please ensure that your house and the student's bedroom is clean and tidy prior to arrival, and the bed made up and ready. This will show them that you really care about them.
- Students are responsible for keeping their bathroom and bedroom clean. You may assign chores to your students to help keep all communal areas clean and tidy. This should be communicated in a warm and friendly conversation and could be followed up in written form depending on the language level of the student.
- Explain how clothes washing will work: one load per week. Show students how to use the washing machine if they will do it themselves. Explain they should not wash items in the sink.

Privacy and boundaries...

- Clearly tell your students your ground rules.
- Students' privacy must be respected, and the host should not enter the student's room except to clean it.
- Do not discuss your finances or payments with your students. This information is confidential and can make your student feel uncomfortable. This is a breach of your hosting contract.

General advice...

- Promote and encourage English in the household.
- Communication is key! Open communication between you and your student is crucial for a successful hosting experience.
- Students must not be left alone at home.
- Students must not be left unsupervised with adult visitors in your home.
- Family harmony is important. It can be frightening for a student to witness an argument, however minor, as they may not understand what is being said.

Ideas for cultural immersion...

- Watching a film or playing a board game is a useful way to give further insight into British culture and language
- Take your students for a walk in the park or local area to show them around and let them familiarise themselves.



The English UK Homestay Code of Practice

We require all homestay hosts to abide by the English UK Homestay Code of Practice for providers of homestay accommodation for English language students.

- To encourage the student/s to speak English as much as possible in your home.
- To encourage the student/s to feel at home and to treat them as a member of the family, rather than as a paying guest.
- To provide a clean and comfortable student room, meeting the requirements laid down by the British Council.
- To provide a home environment in which it is possible for the student to carry on his/her English studies properly.
- To provide the student/s with a balanced and appropriate diet.
- To show due concern for the welfare, safety, and security of the student during their stay.
- To give the student reasonable and regular access to bathroom and laundry facilities.
- To maintain a close liaison with the student's programme provider so you can be able to help resolve any problems that the student/s may encounter during their stay.
- To respect the student's different cultural background and to be sensitive to the needs of the student/s.
- Students should be allowed to share all the communal areas in your home e.g., living room and/or lounge.

Safeguarding

At Opportunity Education, the safety and well-being of our students is our highest priority. As a host family, you play a crucial role in creating a secure and supportive environment.

You may already be familiar with the term '[Safeguarding](#)'. But to put it simply, this means that everyone who is responsible for children or vulnerable adults also has a responsibility to keep them safe.

Opportunity Education believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice which protects them. A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 years old.

We seek to maintain a safe and supportive environment, and all employees and homestay families involved with Opportunity Education accept and recognise these responsibilities.

Safeguarding & Reporting Concerns

If you ever have any concerns about a student's welfare—whether related to their well-being, behaviour, or something they have shared with you—it is important to escalate this appropriately and without delay.

What to Do if You Have a Concern

- **In an Emergency:** If a child is in immediate danger, call **999**.
- **For Non-Urgent Concerns:** Contact Opportunity Education's **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** as soon as possible: 07854 309 235 (24-hr emergency number), homestay@opportunity-education.com
- **Do Not Investigate Yourself:** Your role is to report concerns, not to question the student or try to resolve the issue independently.
- **Maintain Confidentiality:** Any safeguarding concerns should only be shared with Opportunity Education's team.

Examples of Safeguarding Concerns

- A student returns from school appearing distressed, withdrawn, or unusually anxious.
- A student discloses something that suggests they may be at risk of harm.
- You witness inappropriate behaviour from another adult towards the student.

Your vigilance and quick action can help ensure the safety and well-being of the young people in your care. If in doubt, always report—it's better to raise a concern that turns out to be nothing than to miss something important.

OE recognise that:

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents/ carers, and their agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

When you host students aged under 18 years then you are responsible for helping us in these practices, by taking the following steps:

1. **Read and Sign our Safeguarding Children Policy** – This contains useful information on what Safeguarding is, how to protect children and vulnerable adults and what to do should you suspect that someone is at risk.
2. **DBS Checks** – We will need to perform an Enhanced DBS check (Disclosure and Barring Service Check, previously known as a CRB check), for all household members aged 16 and above. You don't need to have one prior to becoming a host, OE will provide guidance and facilitate an application for all members.
3. **Training:** We strongly encourage all hosts to complete [this safeguarding training course](#) for good practice.

4. **Changes in circumstances** – It is important that you keep us informed of all relevant changes to your situation, such as anything which could affect your DBS record, or anyone else coming to live in your home.
5. **Supervision** – Students must not be left unsupervised with any adult visitors, within or outside your home.

If you have any questions about safeguarding, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. Thank you for your commitment to providing a safe and welcoming home for our students.

Our team is on hand to support you if you have any questions or concerns about safeguarding, at any time. Please call us on our 24-hour contact number 07854309235, or email homestay@opportunity-education.com

Sickness policy

If your student(s) becomes unwell while in the UK and feels unable to attend school, please contact a member of our staff as soon as possible.

In most cases, we advise bringing the student to school as usual, where our OE staff and visiting school teachers can assess their condition and seek medical attention if necessary. The school has an on-site nurse and medical room available for support.

If a student is too unwell to remain in school and you are unable to stay at home with them, one of the visiting group leaders will be assigned to accompany them. This may mean that a teacher will need to stay in your home during school hours to look after the student.

In the case of an accident or injury outside of school that requires hospital treatment, please call an ambulance or, if appropriate, take the student to the nearest hospital.

For any emergency situation, contact the emergency number **immediately**.

Setting Ground Rules for your Home

Opportunity Education provides students with a set of general homestay rules, in their own language.

Host Families are strongly advised to provide their own ground rules to each student staying with them from the outset; to avoid misunderstandings and to ensure that students are clear on the house rules. New host families sometimes feel that ground rules are quite a formal introduction to the home and their family life. It is, however, advisable to have some structure and guidelines that help avoid misunderstanding and possible cultural differences.

Try to use clear language and write down any specific rules so that they can be translated if required.

We would suggest that these are discussed upon the student's arrival in the home, and that

it is of course done so in a very friendly way! Ground Rules should be set based on the parameters of the OE Host Family Contract that you will have signed, this Guide, and any house rules that are particular to your home.

Areas to consider when setting Ground Rules for your home:

- Policy for Wi-Fi usage
- Times for using the bathroom
- Keeping the bathroom tidy
- Times for breakfast and evening meals
- 1 x laundry load allowed per week
- Noise levels at particular times of the day
- Guidelines on where food will be stored
- Whether food is allowed in the student's room
- For younger students, they have been informed their phones will be handed over to you overnight and returned in the morning.

Generally, the more flexible a Host Family is with a student, the more they feel at home. At the same time, it is important that students understand the boundaries and fit in with the normal running of your home.

Please try and run through Ground Rules in a way that is informal and welcoming. Ground Rules can form part of an overall welcome and introduction to life in your family home.

Opportunity Education's guidelines concerning behaviour, mobile phone use, sickness, and complaints are also provided to the visiting students in our pre-departure guide. Students are informed that our simple behaviour policy is to treat all members of staff, fellow students, and providers of homestay, with respect, and to follow the instructions of an adult.

If an extreme case of poor behaviour arises, students may be moved from homestay accommodation to accommodation with a visiting adult. Students are also aware that keeping their valuables safe is their own responsibility.

Mobile Guidelines & Internet Safety

Some hosts decide to turn off their internet at bedtime or implement a phone curfew to encourage better sleep routines. Younger students have been informed that homestay parents will ask for their mobile phones to be handed in at night before they go to sleep and will be handed back in the morning.

Some hosts also choose to update their internet settings to ensure that all content students access is child-friendly by adding filters to block inappropriate content.

This is entirely at your discretion, and we trust you to use your best judgment in deciding what works best for your home and the students in your care.

Meals

We know that many hosts are concerned about what to feed their students.

Try to discuss likes/ dislikes, as it's a great way to practice English.

Some hosts prefer to wait for the students' arrival before going to the supermarket, so that they can choose the food that they would like to try. You could also show pictures of food on your phone.

Please do not overthink mealtimes – these are a key element of experiencing life and culture in the UK and can be simple home-cooked food.

Breakfast – Cereal/ toast/ porridge/ fruit, or similar

*Please note that you do not need to provide lunch.

Dinner – Meals could include rice, pasta, curries, stir-fries, meats, vegetables, or familiar dishes like pizza and burgers. Hosts advise a simple meal like spaghetti often goes down well on the first day. Other example meals: chicken stir-fry with rice, pizza night, jacket potatoes, chili con carne.

Typical School Day

During the school programme, the visiting students are fully immersed in school life and accompanied by their assigned 'British buddy' during lessons and activities throughout the day.

Lessons typically start at 8.40 and finish at approximately 4pm. The students then participate in after-school activities at the school until pick up time.

Here is an example schedule:

Monday	Welcome presentation, school tour, meeting the British buddies. Immersion in a typical school day and lessons. Music-based after school activity
Tuesday	Immersion in typical school day and lessons Sports-based after school activity
Wednesday	Immersion in typical school day and lessons Art-based after school activity
Thursday	Immersion in typical school day and lessons Sports-based after school activity
Friday	Immersion in typical school day and lessons Closing presentation - visiting students present their reflections, performances, opportunity for photos and goodbye celebration. Drama-based after school activity

FAQs

> **What are the ages of the students I could be hosting?**

- Most are aged 12–16, though some may be slightly younger or older. This will be confirmed with you prior to the booking. There are also a small number of adult Group Leaders who will be staying with host families.

> **Do I need to transport the students to and from school?**

- All hosts are expected to be able to drive their students to school and be able to collect in the afternoon. If a school trip is run, the pick-up time may be a little later. A programme schedule will be provided to you in advance. **If we are running late back from a day trip**, we will endeavour to text you well in advance to advise about this.
- We expect all hosts to meet and greet their students upon arrival.

> **Your Home**

- It is imperative that insurance cover is maintained (Household Buildings and Contents, and fully comprehensive motor insurance) at all times whilst you are hosting.
- It is your responsibility to make sure all electrical appliances are safe, particularly in the student's room and we recommend PAT testing each electrical appliance annually. All gas appliances are to be inspected annually by a Gas Safe registered plumber. Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors must be fitted in the property and be checked regularly prior to student arrival.
- Medicines and/or chemicals must not be stored unlocked in the student's bathroom. Explain basic fire escape routes, access to the outside doors, and the location of any necessary keys. Please also ensure that they know to dial 999 for Police, Fire or Ambulance should any such emergency arise whilst they are staying with you.

> **The student's room**

- Each room must be well decorated and maintained with good lighting, curtains, or blinds at windows (windowless rooms are not acceptable), a wardrobe, storage space such as a chest of drawers. The room should be for the student(s) exclusive use, and storage space should be empty for their use.
- Students are expected to keep their own room tidy, but they are not expected to clean it. The room should be lightly cleaned once a week by the host. Bed linen, which is provided by the host, should be clean and in good repair. Sheets and pillowcases should be changed and laundered weekly by the host.

> **What happens in the case of an issue or emergency?**

- In case of any difficulty with a student, which you cannot resolve yourself, speak to a staff member during the daily drop off or email us at homestay@opportunity-education.com.
- For some students this will be the first time they have been away from home, and they may feel lost, homesick, or overwhelmed. We count on our hosts to give our students a warm welcome. They are likely to have had a very long tiring flight, followed by a coach journey, so will be tired and may appreciate a snack and drink.
- We are here to help you if there is a problem and have bilingual speaking staff on hand. We

- may be able to assist by speaking directly to the student, possibly in their own language.
- Misunderstandings may occasionally occur over cultural differences or language. Hosts should try to resolve these sympathetically and cheerfully and try not to appear impatient or judgmental.
- Please note that the student will also be provided with a 24-hour emergency number and will also have the telephone number and contact details of their bi-lingual Group Leader.

Cultural Challenges Specific to Chinese Students Face in the UK

As many of our students are from China, here you will find specific cultural differences to be aware of when hosting Chinese students.

- **Attitudes to alcohol** – Many Chinese students are not used to witnessing those over the age of 18 being drunk, either in their own home or out. We ask that hosts consume a minimal amount of alcohol in front of students, so as not to make them feel uncomfortable.
- **Parents** – Chinese parents will keep in close contact with their children and are likely to take a keen interest in you and your home via the photos their child sends over.
- **Technology** – Like children in the UK, Chinese children are usually glued to their smartphones and the first thing they will want to know is the Wi-Fi password! Do establish any rules regarding Wi-Fi/ internet usage early on. Students also typically take many photos, so don't be alarmed at the (literally hundreds) that get snapped!
- **Food** – It goes without saying that students have a very different palate and will be used to different food types, therefore enjoying British food is one of the key challenges faced by Chinese students. Where possible, we ask that hosts try to be sensitive to this, as well as to not be offended if students do not appear to enjoy the food you give them. Chinese children typically eat quite a lot and eat hot food for all meals.
- **Water** – Many Chinese people prefer to drink warm water and may ask you to partially boil a kettle.

Basic Mandarin Chinese Words and Phrases

- **Hello: Nǐhǎo (Nee how)**
Use this to greet your students when they arrive
- **Thank you: Xièxiè (Shieh-shieh)**
- **You're welcome: Bù kèqì (Boo kuh-chi)**
- **Good morning: Zǎo (Zhow)**
- **Goodnight: Wǎn'ān (One-un)**
- **My name is...: Wǒ jiào... (Wuh jeow...)**
This literally means "I am called..."