



Gower College Swansea
Coleg Gŵyr Abertawe

Homestay Guide for Hosts

Would you like to become a host? All international students aged 16 – 18 will be placed with a homestay host for the duration of their studies which will provide them with the safe, caring environment they need.

What is the best thing about being a host?

Being a homestay host can provide you with the opportunity to learn about other cultures and to develop long standing relationships with students from around the world. Many of our hosts keep in touch with students they have hosted previously and have found the whole experience highly rewarding.

What is the best thing about staying with a Homestay family?

Homestay provides our students with an excellent opportunity to improve their English and to learn about our customs and traditions and to become immersed in our way of life. It is often the first time most of them have lived away from home and they learn how to become more independent, which will be a good grounding for life at University.

By welcoming the students into your home you will be helping them settle in and overcome any potential homesickness they might be feeling. It is important to have your evening meals together when possible, this allows you to get to know each other better and is another opportunity for them to practise their English.

It is important for you to include them in your family recreational activities where possible and this will help to enrich their experience here in Wales. Although the college organises a social programme for the students which includes a familiarisation tour of the City when they first arrive and visits to Cardiff, Oxford and Bath etc. the students have expressed their enjoyment when spending time with their hosts and the family.

What does homestay include?

Each student must have their own bedroom, with a wardrobe, storage space and a mirror. They should also have a study desk, chair and lamp and access to Wifi. They will need a house key for their own use and you may need to show them any additional security measures you would want them to adhere to. They are encouraged to let their hosts know if they might be late for meals or getting home, it is important that you endorse this for your own benefit and also to meet with college curfew rules of 22:00hrs on weekdays and 23:00hrs at weekends.

You will need to provide breakfast and an evening meal daily, we expect the students to eat the same food as the host family, however, it is advisable to discuss their likes and dislikes and maybe take them shopping when they first arrive. The student will require some space in the kitchen for them to store their snacks.

Fresh bedding and towels must be provided every week and you will also have to take care of laundry. It is essential that you respect the student's privacy, however, you should be given access to clean their room weekly, they will need to be informed in advance so they can tidy their room for you to be able to clean it.

How to become a Host Family?

You will first need to complete an application form and submit this to the International Department, the Accommodation Officer with organise a visit to carry out a risk assessment.

All homes must have an up to date Gas Certificate . The Government has produced guidance for people letting out rooms, in relation to fire regulations. Also there are laws regarding tax thresholds.

Exchange of information prior to arrival

We try to match hosts with students from their application form which we would send to you before they arrive. We also send the student your profile and once both parties have confirmed they are happy with the arrangements, we encourage you to make contact each other before the start of term. The student must provide you with details of their arrival which have full details of:-

- Arrival Date
- Flight Details (flight number, landing time)
- Arrival Airport
- Travel Arrangements from the airport to Swansea

If possible we would like you to collect the student when they arrive in Swansea unless their arranged transport bring them direct to homestay.

Agreement Forms

Once the student has settled in we will send you a Homestay Agreement Form stating the roles and responsibilities of the **host**, the **student** and **the College** which will be signed by all parties. It is important to use this form to cover house rules that will set the boundaries from day one. These may include the following:

Use of the kitchen and food:

Some students like to cook their own food, particularly their favourite dishes from home. Whilst many hosts allow the student access to the family kitchen, others prefer that students do not cook in the kitchen at all. Your preference would need to be discussed with the student, while there needs to be flexibility on both sides, common ground needs to be agreed. It is expected that students will at least have access to a microwave, toaster and kettle.

Laundry:

You will need to inform the student of an agreed routine for use of the laundry facilities and you will need to let the student know when they should strip their bed etc. It might be that the student would prefer to do their own laundry in which case you will need to show them how to use your facilities.

Sharing a Bathroom:

If the student doesn't have their own bathroom, you should discuss a mutually agreeable time for them to use the bathroom.

Telephone and Internet:

The student will have their own mobile telephone that is usable in this country, however they will need to have Wifi access for their studies and communication with family and friends.

Friends to visit / staying somewhere else:

Students may want to invite friends to your home, they should only do this if they have your permission beforehand. They may ask if they could invite a friend to stay over, this is down to your discretion, likewise, they may say they want to stay at a friend's house. Students are instructed to give the International Office and yourselves at least a 3 day notice period and if they are under eighteen years of age they will have to have written approval from their parents before they can stay overnight without adult supervision, or at an address other than yours.

Breakages / Damages

All rooms will be subject to wear and tear, however, if the student breaks or damages anything in the home they have been informed that they should report it. If they do damage an item it is reasonable that they will have to pay to replace or repair the item.

Issue arising with the student.

If you notice that the student is unhappy we would welcome you informing the International Team either by email or phone.

Holidays

Most students return home for Christmas, but this is not always the case. In the event of them staying here for that period and you are not able to accommodate them we would need to know as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.

If you are going away for the weekend or on holiday you will need to notify the International Office well in advance for us to make alternative arrangements. We would ask however that you consider not booking holidays in the last week of August and September, their first month in college.

Wellbeing and Health

The student will be given a letter by the college for them to register with a doctor, we would like you to arrange an appointment with your doctor for them to register shortly after they arrive. They will have paid for basic health care with their Visa Application. This will permit them to be seen without delay if and when they should become ill. If they feel too ill to come to college they must inform both you and the International Team and report it via the college app or website.

For your information there is a nurse at college and there are trained first aiders within the International Team, however if they do become ill in college they may be sent home.

Feedback and Complaints

We welcome feedback to improve our service, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire regarding your experience of homestay accommodation during the year and you can provide informal feedback at any time to our Accommodation Officer.

Useful Contacts: Gower College Swansea

Main Reception Gorseinon Campus: 01792 890700

Main Reception Tycoch Campus: 01792 284000

Main Reception Llwyn-Y-Bryn: 01792 284021

International Office: 01792 284007

International Office (Out of Hours / urgent matters): 0746369995

One of our new Hosts says ***“Being a host for Gower College is a great experience. The student is polite and very quiet - no bother at all - we are living together easily. I feel supported by the college staff and their efficient admin.***

A bonus is that my cooking skills are improving as I learn about Chinese food - I am enjoying this”. Dr Alyson Jenkins