

# STUDENT GUIDE



WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR HOMESTAY IN IRELAND



You are very welcome to Ireland and at HFDI we want you to have a memorable and enjoyable stay. Please read this guide to ensure you understand what you can expect from a homestay and what our hosts expect from you.

We want you to enjoy your stay. We feel it is very important that everyone understands prior to travel what homestay means and not to confuse homestay with staying in a hotel. Below are some important guidelines.

## ABOUT OUR HOSTS

Our hosts rent out their rooms to earn extra income.

Our hosts come from different social demographics and backgrounds and offer a variety of homes, with a broad mix of Irish and international hosts.

Hosts fall in to many categories including:

- **Hosts with children 0 - 18 years of age**
- **Hosts with grown up children (18+)**
- **Single parent families**
- **Hosts with no children**
- **Retired hosts whose children have grown up and left home**

Our hosts' homes vary in location and are spread all over Dublin and throughout Ireland. The commute could take from 45 mins to 1hr.20 mins from the hosts' homes to colleges and work placements. You can take the bus, train or trams and use a pre-paid travel card (Leap Card) or pay cash for fares on public transport.

Homestay types include houses and apartments, both traditional and more modern styles.

Our hosts have a variety of room types with a broad mix of accommodation provided.

Among the types of accommodation are:

- **Single room**
- **Twin room**
- **Triple room**
- **Quadruple room**
- **Self-contained studios in their gardens**



All our hosts offer:

- **Clean, basic room and wifi**
- **Bathroom** - most homes have a shared bathroom and, with energy bills at an all time high, please make sure you understand that showers should be no longer than 5-10 minutes
- **Hosts will show you around the local area and where you can catch the bus or train. You should download the Dublin Bus app from various app stores to assist with travel planning. Your host will also assist you with planning routes to colleges and work placements**
- **Your host should be the first person you speak to if you have any questions or issues**

You should remember you will be staying in a home, not a hotel, and all hosts' homes will be different. For the best experience you should embrace the living situation whilst being a guest in their home.

Please make sure you add your host's mobile number to your phone contacts and also give them your mobile number. Please make sure you have a note of your address so that you don't get lost on the first day/night. Host families get paid a very small income for renting their room, and providing meals (where applicable). They will do their very best to ensure your safety during your stay and will give valuable guidance to you. Please ensure that you discuss, and understand, all house rules, curfews, etc. with your host.



Common house rules include:

- **No smoking and if you do smoke discuss options with your host**
- **No drinking alcohol in your host home**
- **You must adhere to your host's rules for returning home in the evening, regardless of your age.**

Usually your hosts will provide you with a key, please make sure you can lock their home securely and understand alarms if they have them. **Security is very important!**

Most host families work and have young children and go to bed early. We ask that you are respectful of your noise levels in their home and keep noise to a minimum after 9pm.

Please keep your rooms clean and tidy and leave the communal areas how you would like to find them.

Laundry can usually be accommodated once a week and you can ask your host if you can use the washing machine to do your own laundry. Your host family is not expected to do your laundry for you, unless they offer.

**Please note - disrespectful behaviour will not be tolerated, and your host family can ask for you to be removed from their home.**



If you have an issue, please speak to your host. They prefer it when you ask them directly to solve any issues in their home. They do not like it if you take photos of their home and then share them with your teacher.

If you do not like a food that they prepare or need some other type of food - **please speak with your host.**

If something in the hosts home is not clean and needs attention **please speak first with your host who will try to rectify it.**

If you are cold or need extra blankets **please speak with your host.**

If the water in the shower is not hot **please speak with your host.**

For any issues **please speak with your host first.** If the issue is not resolved then please contact either our office or your teacher and we will try our best to help resolve the issue for you.

**For long term students - If you wish to stay out later than usual or overnight elsewhere your leader must ring the host to approve this and we also need written confirmation from your agency.**

If you are an Intern doing work experience **you must leave the house at approximately 8:30 and return at approximately 17:00 unless otherwise agreed with your agency and our host family in advance.** Hosts expect interns to be out of the house during the day.

You must always communicate with your host in relation to:

- Feeling unwell - please let them know and they will try to assist you
- If you need to stay home from work due to being sick you also need to inform your work experience manager
- If you need to come home early due to feeling unwell, please inform your host and your work experience manager



In Ireland we like to say please and thank you - good manners make the experience better for everyone.

If you wish to get the most from your homestay experience, and practice your English language skills, talk to your host. They may ask you a lot of questions but remember, you can also ask them some questions. Find out about your host and the area you live in with questions such as:

- How was your day ?
- What professions do you and your family do?
- Where do you like to go on holiday?
- What are your children studying in school
- Whats sports and hobbies do you like to do?
- Ask about the local area, and places that they would recommend you visit.

Irish hosts like to chat and children love when you play simple board or card games with them. Don't be shy and get involved to ensure you have a wonderful experience. Remember that some hosts may be very busy with their own schedule so don't be offended if they haven't got time to chat as much as you would like. Just like in your home country people are different, and some will be easier to talk to than others.

## ITEMS TO BRING WITH YOU

- A refillable water bottle
- A lunch box if you are having a packed lunch
- A Towel
- Toiletries (deodorant, toothpaste, shampoo, etc.)
- A smile



## PETS

Many hosts in Ireland have dogs and cats which live indoors. **You should inform your agent or teacher before you travel if you have any allergies or major fear of animals.**

# MEALS

Meals are provided based on the booking type which has been made for you and include:

- **Half Board** - Breakfast and evening meal
- **Full Board** - Breakfast, packed lunch and evening meal

Typical meals ( which vary from host to host) are as indicated below:



## Breakfast

Cereal, Toast with butter and jam, Tea, coffee or water

## Packed Lunch

Sandwich, crisps, biscuits, fruit

## Evening Meal

Whatever the host cooks for the family, for example - Pasta, pizza, meat and vegetables, salads, etc, and a drink.

**Please note that it is not the host's responsibility to provide any other food, and it is not acceptable to help yourself to food from the fridge or kitchen. If you require extra snacks please buy these for yourself.**

Your host will usually be present for mealtimes, however ,sometimes due to work or other commitments their schedule may not align with yours. Hosts with children may be busy dropping and collecting them to sports and clubs etc.

Please talk to your host about foods that you dislike and they will try to accommodate. Some hosts cater for vegetarian, lactose intolerant, coeliac and vegan diets provided that your teacher or agent informed us in advance. Please note we do not offer Halal diet.

# HEALTHCARE AND EMERGENCIES

You should be registered for the **European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)** if you are an EU citizen. This allows you to receive medical care as you would in your home country. You can get details of the EHIC from [here](#).

In Ireland if you are sick with a cold, flu or other viruses you are advised to stay at home, rest and take paracetamol. You should ask their host for advice.

If you are under 18 years of age and you need to go to hospital, you must be accompanied by an adult. This can be a leader, teacher, fellow student or your host. Waiting time in Accident and Emergency can range from 5 to 24 hours depending on the severity of the symptoms and the day and time of your visit. Accident and Emergency departments tend to be busier in the evening and at weekends.

### Here are some useful contact numbers and web links:

- Emergency Phone Number - 112 or 999
- 24 Hour Doctor Phone Number - 1850 22 44 77
- HFDI office emergency number - 01 4446045
- <https://www.transportforireland.ie/>
- <http://www.irishrail.ie/timetables/live-departure-times>
- <https://www.luas.ie/times/>

**We wish you a very safe and happy stay in Ireland. If you have any questions you can contact us on 01 4446045**



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