

How to be a *perfect* guest!

Your stay with a British host will be an exciting experience. This information sheet includes suggestions and ideas from other international students to help you prepare for the stay so that you and your host enjoy it even more. It will help you be the *perfect* guest. The most important things to remember are:

Be polite – understand the unwritten and invisible cultural norms

Follow the house rules – respect the host's home

Arrive on time – do not be late

Talk to your host – take a break from your mobile phone

Take photographs and videos with respect – check protocols and etiquette

Before the visit

Now that you have been matched to your host, please take time to prepare for your trip carefully. Here are a few things to do and keep in mind:

- ✓ **Contact your host immediately** to accept the invitation and discuss your travel arrangements.
- ✓ **At least one week before**, check your travel plans and inform the host about your arrival time.
- ✓ **Check that you have the medicine you need to take with you** and tell the host about any illnesses and conditions, however minor they are. Include phobias, allergies, dietary requirements and religious practices.
- ✓ **Inform your host of anything that you cannot or do not wish to do** during your visit. For example, some hosts attend Church and will invite students to accompany them. Please inform the host in advance if this is something that you do not want to participate in.
- ✓ If possible, **bring a small and inexpensive gift** to thank your host. For example, a souvenir from your home country, flowers or chocolates.
- ✓ **Any extra guests** who wish to visit with you, such as a family member or fellow student, **must be booked in advance**.

Cancellations

- ✓ Cancel your visit only if it is impossible for you to attend.
- ✓ If you need to cancel, **please inform your host immediately**. Your host is looking forward to meeting you and will be preparing for your visit. Sadly, some hosts whose students cancel at the last minute decide not to offer any more invitations to other students in the future.
- ✓ **Email HOST UK at hostuk@eiluk.org** too, so we can pass the invitation to another student.

During the visit

- ✓ **Be the best ambassador that you can be** - you may be the only person from your country that your hosts will ever meet.
- ✓ **Show curiosity** by talking to your host and asking questions. Some topics to get things started: your family, home, studies, your hobbies, films you have seen, holidays you have been on. Your visit is a great opportunity to find out more about the country's history, traditions, as well as a unique opportunity to explore people's way of life, so just ask!
- ✓ The visit will be full of surprises and is a great chance to do things you may never have tried before. **Communicate any problems as soon as possible** and tell your host if you do not feel comfortable with certain activities or conversation topics.
- ✓ The visit is also an ideal opportunity to **give your phone some rest** (unless you are taking photos or videos of course!), so switch it off and enjoy your stay. If you need to make some calls, texts or posts, please ensure that you are on the phone for a short time, especially when speaking a foreign language. Your hosts may feel uncomfortable, thinking that they did something wrong or that you are not enjoying your stay.
- ✓ If you are visiting with a friend, it is polite to **speak English in front of your host** (unless you are translating).
- ✓ **Offer to help** by laying the table, washing dishes, etc. The offer may not be accepted, but the host will appreciate your kindness.
- ✓ **Take some money** with you so you can offer to pay e.g. your entrance fee, in case you are out sightseeing with your host. If you are concerned about additional costs, please speak to your host before the visit to find out if they plan to take you somewhere where you will be expected to pay a small additional amount.
- ✓ **Show your appreciation** by saying **thank you** as often as possible. This way your host will know that you are enjoying your visit. Also, a gentle reminder that you can never use the words **please** and **sorry** too often in the UK.
- ✓ **Relax and have fun!** Enjoy your visit as a new and interesting experience.

After the visit

- ✓ **Contact your host** soon after your stay to **thank them** for welcoming you to their home.
- ✓ **Complete the evaluation** so that you can tell EIL what you thought about your HOST visit and **send us lots of lovely photos!**

We hope that you enjoy your stay and ... *thank you for being a perfect guest!*