



WESTBOURNE SCHOOL

WESTBOURNE HOMESTAY HANDBOOK

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1. Introduction

1.1 Definitions

The “School” means Westbourne School, Hickman Road, Penarth.

The “Parents” mean the parents or guardians of the student.

The “Student” means the child to whom the student is provided with homestay accommodation during the programme.

The “Host Family” means any family with whom the student is provided with homestay accommodation during the programme.

The “Programme” means the education provided by Westbourne School during the stay of the student.

1.2 Contact Information

Your immediate point of contact for any issues related to your student should be the Head of Boarding, Miss Ceri Angell. The Boarding House mobile number is 07480 108763. This will allow you to contact whoever is on duty in the Boarding House on a given day. If you would like to contact the Head of Boarding directly, the email address is ceridwenangell@westbourneschool.com.

If you are contacting the school regarding absences or general administration, our front desk staff would be delighted to help. Their email address is enquiries@westbourneschool.com and the main school telephone number is 02920 705 705.

In case of emergency, ensure the student is safe, contact emergency services if needed (999), and immediately notify the School and Boarding House Parent.

1.3 About our Students

We understand that some students feel more comfortable in a smaller, family-style setting, and staying with a host family can offer a truly enriching experience. For many of our international students, living with a local family provides a unique opportunity to experience British culture firsthand, practise their English in a natural setting, and gradually build their confidence in a warm and supportive environment.

When a student first arrives, it’s natural for them to feel a little anxious. Being welcoming, patient, and approachable can go a long way in helping them settle in. While they may sometimes retreat to their room to study or unwind, being invited into your living space, included in everyday conversations, and welcomed into your family routine can make a big difference to how quickly they feel at home.

Some students may initially struggle to express themselves in English, but a little encouragement and kindness can help them gain confidence. Many are keen to share stories from their home country and are often just as interested in learning about you. Simple gestures—like asking them to help set the table, inviting them to make tea, or encouraging them to join family outings—can help them feel included and valued. Activities like going to the cinema, shopping, cooking together, or even just chatting can become meaningful moments. At the same time, it's perfectly normal if the student needs some quiet time to relax or recharge—school life can be quite full-on, and a bit of downtime can be very welcome.

1.4 Cultural and Religious Differences

As a host family you may find that the most difficult part of hosting a student will be resolving cultural differences, knowing a little about some of these cultural differences may help you identify a misunderstanding before it becomes a problem.

Common Challenges & Tips:

- Food Preferences: Ask about religious or cultural dietary restrictions early.
- Communication Style: Some students may be shy or deferential; use gentle encouragement.
- Personal Space: Respect the student's need for privacy, especially early on.

Helpful Questions to Ask:

- "Tell me about meals in your country."
- "What do you usually do in your free time at home?"

Religious differences

The topic of religion can be sensitive and sometimes controversial and naturally you might have different views from your student and they may not wish to follow your religious practices and activities. We ask that you respect their beliefs and religious preferences.

2. Our responsibilities as a School

- To act as liaisons between the Student, Host Family and the Students parent/guardian(s).
- To assist in booking transfers between airports and the Homestay location as needed, but particularly at the start and end of each school term.
- To provide pastoral care at all times during the student's stay.
- To appropriately inspect homestay homes and families to seek a good match between family and student.
- To pay in a timely manner for homestay services. The school will remit for any period of time that the student resides at the homestay address.
- To inform the host family of any dietary or medical needs of the student.
- To carry out regular catch-ups with our Host Families and the Head of Boarding.
- To move the student if things do not work out between student and family, where this is in the best interest of the student.
- Not to be held liable for any additional costs in the provision of homestay care.

3. Your responsibilities as Host Family

- All Host Parents must be DBS Enhanced checked.
- To inform the school within an appropriate time to make arrangements if they are to be away from the home for any length of time (including weekends).
- On arrival, exchange contact details and ensure that whenever the student is away from the home that they have access to a phone and can contact you in case of an emergency.
- To care and be responsible for the student at home – including matters of behaviour and discipline. The school will support the host family in this regard. If there is a change in address or circumstance (e.g. any additional people coming to stay in the house), this should be communicated to the school at least three weeks in advance.
- To make necessary arrangements for the student to have medical attention, if required. Host parents should register the student to their local doctor's surgery.
- Always respect the rights, religion and culture of the student. The host family should respect the student's religious beliefs, rights and cultural differences, and students should respect theirs.
- When providing accommodation in the home, the host family should take day-to-day responsibility for the student while he/she is residing there, assimilating the student into the family as far as possible and being available and willing to receive a student into the home when necessary and as agreed.

3.1 Arrival Checklist

Welcoming a student into your home is a special experience, and a little preparation can help them feel settled and secure from the start. Below is a simple checklist to help you get ready before your student arrives and to guide those important first moments together. A warm, thoughtful welcome goes a long way in setting the tone for a positive homestay experience.

Before Arrival:

- Prepare a clean, comfortable bedroom.
- Stock basic toiletries (toothpaste, towel, shampoo).
- Write a short welcome note with your contact details.

First Day:

- Show the student around your home
- Explain the weekly routine and house rules
- Share emergency contact list and how to reach you

3.2 Daily Routine

Establishing a simple daily routine can help students feel more comfortable and confident in their new environment. While every household is different, the sample routine below offers a helpful starting point to show what a typical day might look like during the week and at weekends. Flexibility is key—just having a general rhythm can provide a reassuring sense of structure for your student.

Weekdays:

- 7:30 AM: Breakfast
- 8:45 AM: Registration at school
- 4:30 PM: End of the school day
- 5:00 PM: Free time/study
- 6:30 PM: Dinner

- 9:00 PM: Wind down
- 9:30-10:30 PM: Curfew/Lights out (depending on year)

Weekends:

- Morning: Relaxation / family time
- Afternoon: Optional activities, outings
- Evening: Family dinner / curfew as above

4. What Students can expect from Host Family

4.1. Bedroom

Each pupil should be provided with either a single bedroom or a bedroom shared with one other pupil of similar age and the same gender.

Bedrooms may not be shared with any member of the “host” family.

Apart from the normal furniture (bed, wardrobe etc.) this should generally contain a table or desk and chair for study. There should also be adequate lighting for this purpose. If a table and chair are not provided in the bedroom, there must be a suitable room made available where the student can study quietly. Please ensure furnishings are fire resistant and meet safety regulations.

4.2. Meals

The student should be provided with a balanced and appropriate/varied diet including healthy snacks and drinks. Breakfast and evening meals should be provided throughout the week and full board at the weekends and during half terms.

If the student has any food allergies or religious considerations with food types, we will inform you about this before their arrival.

Any costs incurred by the student in purchasing additional food is the responsibility of the student and not the host family.

4.3. Bathroom

Suitable bathing/shower facilities should be made available and the student should be shown how to use the shower, bath, toilet facilities and where to dispose of any rubbish. Ask them to leave the bathroom clean and tidy.

Ideally students should have access to a bathroom, which is not shared with any adult members of the host family and in any case the bathroom must have a door lock fitted.

It may be worth discussing with the student suitable times for bathing and discuss good environmental practices i.e. maximum shower times.



4.4. Internet Access

Students should be able to have access to the internet, ideally wireless connection, but it needs to be regulated and proper safeguarding procedures such as firewalls are in place as well as time limits.

4.5. Laundry and Bedding

Laundry and cleaning provided including changing of towels and bedding once a week. Please let students know where they can put their laundry and the days that you use your machine.

4.6 Heating

This should be provided for a reasonable period in the student's bedroom and place of study. Please bear in mind that many students do feel the cold and may require extra blankets or duvets.

5. Health and Safety

5.1 Electrical Safety

Please ensure all electrical appliances in your home are safe, particularly in the student's room.

All electrical products will have one or more safety certifications on their label if they have been made by a legitimate manufacturer. The United Kingdom Conformity Assessed (UKCA) mark replaces CE marking in Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland) for most electrical products.

5.2 Fire/Smoke Alarm, Carbon Monoxide Alarm and basic escape routes in case of an emergency.

A fire/smoke alarm and carbon monoxide (CO) alarm should be fitted in any home and tested regularly to ensure that it is working.

We ask that all host families explain to the student the basic escape routes, access to outside doors and location of any necessary keys, in case of an emergency.

5.3 Gas Safety Regulations

Homestays providing accommodation are classified as Landlords/Ladies under the Gas Safety Regulations (Installation and Use). These Regulations were introduced to ensure that all gas appliances in rented premises were modern and safe for tenant's use.

Consequently, providing a room for anyone, including an international student, means you need to conform to the Regulations by ensuring that all boilers and central heating systems are installed and serviced under contract by "competent persons" only. Such work can only be done by businesses that are a member of the Association of Registered Gas Installers (ARGI).

We will require to see a copy of your Gas Safety Certificate, a copy of which should be provided to you by a 'Gas Safe' engineer.



6. Insurance

To provide appropriate insurance to cover for students residing in your property. Students and/or their family are responsible for insuring their own personal possessions and must agree that they are liable for any damage to your property. Standard policies include cover for accidental damage by visitors and third-party liability insurance. Please inform your Insurer that you will have a student visitor in your home.

7. What Host Families can expect from their Student

Students should be well-mannered and polite whilst staying with a Host Family, they should be respectful of your property and keep their room and bathroom clean and tidy.

7.1 Students are not allowed to:

- Stay away overnight from their host families, for instance, with their friends or relatives unless the School has already received written permission from the students' parent(s)/legal guardian(s). The overnight stay form is attached as Appendix 1.
- Have friends stay overnight unless the School has received written permission from both respective students' parent(s)/legal guardian(s).
- Use the host family's phone or computer without their permission.
- Smoke; smoking or vaping is not allowed at school or whilst staying with host families.
- Take drugs, the use of all non-prescription drugs is illegal for anyone in the UK including possession and intention to sell.
- Drink alcohol, in the UK students have to be 18 years of age to be able to buy and drink alcohol. These restrictions are one of the important rules laid down by UK boarding schools and the same rules apply while staying with a host family.

7.2 Dealing with Homesickness

It's completely normal for students to feel a bit homesick, especially in the first few weeks. They're adjusting to a new country, culture, and routine—all at once! A little reassurance and a few thoughtful gestures can make a big difference.

Here are some gentle ways to help if your student seems homesick:

- **Keep communication open.** A warm chat over dinner or a simple "How was your day?" can really help them feel supported and heard.
 - **Invite them into family life.** Including them in small daily routines—like watching a film together, taking a walk, or helping with dinner—can help them feel part of the household.
 - **Celebrate their culture.** Ask them to teach you how to cook a dish from home or show you some music or traditions from their country. It can be a lovely way to build connection and boost their confidence.
- Be patient.** Some students just need time. A little space, a lot of kindness, and regular check-ins go a long way.

If you notice signs of ongoing distress, like withdrawal or anxiety, or if their homesickness feels overwhelming, please get in touch with the Boarding House Parent or the School. We're here to support both you and your student.



7.3 Curfew/Lights Out

Although we would expect you to use your discretion, we would ask that students abide by the same curfew/lights out schedule as our Boarding House students.

Curfew:

Sunday - Thursday	
Year 8-11, Pre-IB	IB
9.30pm	10.00pm
Friday - Saturday	
Year 8-11, Pre-IB	IB
10pm	11pm

Lights Out:

Sunday - Thursday	
Year 8-11, Pre-IB	IB
10.00pm	10.30pm
Friday - Saturday	
Year 8-11, Pre-IB	IB
10.30pm	11.30pm

8. Student Health and Illnesses

In the case of student illness or accident, take the same precautions as you would with your own child and if in doubt contact your local doctor's surgery or seek advice from NHS 111 (111.wales.nhs.uk).

All students are registered with the local GP on their arrival at Westbourne. The address for this is Penarth Healthcare Partnership, Stanwell Road, Penarth. CF64 3XE. Their contact number is 029 2070 3039.

Students who feel they are too unwell to attend school should inform their host to make the School aware before 8.30am.

Any medication requirements or allergies must be declared on the student medical form to be recorded by the School and the School will make you aware of any requirements/allergies before their arrival.

The Host Family is responsible for dispensing approved medication and should be given to the host upon arrival.



9. Safeguarding/Prevent

The School recognises the importance of Safeguarding and we take our responsibility for our students very seriously and we have implemented a Safeguarding Policy which sets guidelines that all our staff must follow to ensure our pupils are protected from all types of harm and abuse.

As a Homestay family, you are expected to protect the students that you host and we will carry out an Enhanced DBS check on anyone over 18 living at the property, on your behalf. We generally do not expect you to have visitors staying in the property who are over 18 and outside your immediate family.

We provide training courses for our staff and this extends to our Host Families so please contact our School Secretary enquiries@westbourneschool.com should you wish for us to arrange this for you.

There is an excellent free Prevent Awareness course offered by Gov.UK which we highly recommend and can be accessed using the below link:

<https://www.support-people-vulnerable-to-radicalisation.service.gov.uk/portal#awareness-course>

Appendix 1

Overnight/Weekend Stay Request Form

To be completed by any student requesting to stay overnight away from the Boarding House or Homestay House within or outside the UK.

Written permission from the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) must be attached to the form and filed together.

Student Name:
Student Mobile Number:
Student DOB:
Accommodation Type (Boarding or Homestay):
Departure Date:
Departure Time:
Departure Transportation (including any flight numbers):
Return Date:
Return Time:
Return Transportation (including any flight numbers):
Name and relationship of adult responsible for visit:
Contact details including telephone number:
Accommodation address:
Invitation received from host, if not a parent or guardian (please attach a copy):
Parental consent given and how (please attach a copy):
Boarding House Parent/Homestay Parent consent given and how (please attach a copy):
Student signature:
House/Homestay Parent signature: