



# HOMESTAY GUIDELINES

## HOSTING CHILDREN IN YOUR HOME





The **Homestay Guidelines – Hosting children in your home** booklet is provided to all families who host LILA\*'s young people in their homes.

It provides important information on the extra care that children require and should be read in addition to the standard **Homestay Guidelines – Host Information**.

**We ask our hosts to keep a copy and read through any updates that are issued.**

Although this document answers the most frequently asked questions and highlights key issues, it is no substitute for the close relationships that we develop with our hosts.

We encourage all our hosts to keep in touch with us and ask questions.

### Host Checklist

- ✓ A DBS for every adult (18+) in the home
- ✓ Read LILA\*'s Safeguarding Policy
- ✓ Read the Homestay Guidelines

We cannot place younger students with you until you have done the above.

# Meet your Key Contacts



## ACCOMMODATION MANAGER

Alex Forster

✉ [Alex.forster@lilalovetolearn.com](mailto:Alex.forster@lilalovetolearn.com)

✉ [Accommodation@lilalovetolearn.com](mailto:Accommodation@lilalovetolearn.com)

☎ 0151 707 0909

☎ Emergency Contact if you require assistance outside of normal working hours - +447721 050262

### Supporting Students & Hosts

Match students with suitable host families or residences

Ensure a safe and positive accommodation experience

Resolve accommodation questions or issues quickly

### Working With Host Families

Recruit and welcome new host families

Ensure host homes meet required quality and safety standards

Support hosts with any hosting questions

### Student Accommodation Management

Coordinate student placements from arrival to departure

Work with residence providers to arrange housing when needed

### Quality & Compliance

Ensure accommodation meets British Council and accreditation standards

Maintain accurate accommodation records

### Collaboration & Support

Work with admissions, welfare, and academic teams

**Office hours: Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm**

## Key points to remember

We have provided lots of information in these guidelines to help ensure that your hosting experience is safe and enjoyable. Below are the main points for you to remember:



### **Provide LILA\* with a contact number we can use 24/7**

We may need to contact you from time to time and that can include anti-social hours if there is an emergency. Don't forget to tell us if this number changes.



### **Where there is any suspicion of abuse first make sure the child is safe and then contact the emergency number**

Be alert. If your student mentions anything about being hurt or sexually affronted by someone – adult or otherwise – or if there are worrying signs that suggest something is wrong, you must tell us urgently.



### **Make sure the other adult members of your household are familiar with the content of these guidelines.**

Sharing best practice and promoting the well-being of young people is a key part of the LILA\* ethos.



### **Make sure you know where your student is**

It is critical that you know when a young person ought to be home. Report any missing child to us as a matter of urgency.



### **Keep in touch with us and ask lots of questions**

Sharing a roof with young people is not always straight forward. Remember that we have trained professionals available to help you with any problems and answer your questions.



### **Have a question not covered in our guidelines?**

Please contact us if you have any questions about hosting a young person which is not answered in our guidelines.

# What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is an umbrella term which means to 'look after' a child. It includes "ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care", and, "taking action to enable all children and young people have the best outcomes".

## There are 3 main elements to LILA\*'s safeguarding strategy

<b>Prevention</b>	Staff are carefully recruited and trained. Clear expectations and boundaries for the responsible behaviour of children and adults are set and enforced, reducing the risk of harm.
<b>Protection</b>	LILA* cultivates an open, positive and considerate culture. With its caring ethos alongside robust company procedures, LILA* proactively promotes the welfare of children.
<b>Support</b>	LILA* responds to welfare concerns in a timely and diligent matter and provides support for any students or STAFF who may have been abused or accused.

# What do I need to know about safeguarding?

You are not expected to be an expert in safeguarding; however, you are expected to:

- Be aware of the role that LILA\* plays in the safeguarding of children
- Understand the responsibilities which are part of your role and the consequences if those responsibilities are not fulfilled
- Communicate any concerns about a child's welfare to us in a timely manner

# What is a 'Duty of Care'?

All adults working with children are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure the well-being and safety of the young people in their care. Failure to do so may be regarded as neglect.

All adults have a legal 'duty of care' to act as **a responsible and caring parent**; how can they help?

- Help students understand
- Assist them in making sensible decisions
- Set safe and clear boundaries
- Respond and react; don't ignore
- Be interested
- Be responsible and a good role model
- Show that you care; which can mean 'tough love'
- Be alert for situations which might not be straightforward"

*Heritage, N (2017) 'ELT students – how to help', Advanced Safeguarding for Designated Lead*

# Safeguarding basics

## What is child abuse and neglect?

There are four main types of child abuse and all adults are expected to be familiar with both the types and common symptoms.

### Physical Abuse

This includes; hitting, shaking, squeezing, scalding, suffocating etc.

**Common symptoms** - unexplained bruises, burns etc., wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather and refusal to undress for sports or join swimming sessions.

### Sexual Abuse

This can be physical or non-physical. **physical:** penetrative, or non-penetrative e.g kissing, touching. **non-physical:** Watching sexual activities/images, encouraging sexual behaviour, taking sexual images, talking in a sexually explicit or suggestive manner, sending messages (e.g. text, instant messaging, GIFs, memes) with sexual or sexually suggestive content.

**Common symptoms** - Acting in inappropriate sexual ways with objects or peers, nightmares/ sleeping problems, becoming withdrawn or clingy, seeming insecure, unaccountable fear/dread of particular places or people.

### Emotional Abuse

Persistent lack of affection, unrealistic adult demands, bullying & cyber-bullying; taunting, humiliation, shouting, racism.

**Common symptoms** - Delayed physical or emotional development, shows extremes of passivity or aggression, sudden speech disorders, overreaction to mistakes or continual self-depreciation, neurotic behaviour e.g. rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation, difficulty making friends/socialising with their peers, serious distrust of adults.

### Neglect

Failing to provide basic needs of food, proper clothing and/or safe supervision.

**Common symptoms** - Often hungry; may beg or steal food, badly dressed in clothes that need washing, poor appearance and personal hygiene; unwashed, hair not brushed, lacks needed medical or dental care, unused to supervision and/or boundaries.



## REMEMBER

It is not your duty to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place or if a child is at significant risk; however, **YOU HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO ACT IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN.**

**CONTACT US IMMEDIATELY IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT A CHILD.**

# Welcoming your student

It's normal for both students and hosts to be nervous when they first meet. Remember, the more relaxed and happy you are when welcoming them, the more relaxed the student will be.

Here are some tips on how to make a great first impression.

## Before arrival

When hosting children it's very important to ensure your home is safe and welcoming.

- ✓ Is the house warm enough for someone not used to the cold of the UK?
- ✓ Is your home clean and tidy?
- ✓ Have you checked that medicines, cigarettes, alcohol and any other potentially hazardous materials are secured and out of reach?

## Be at home when they arrive

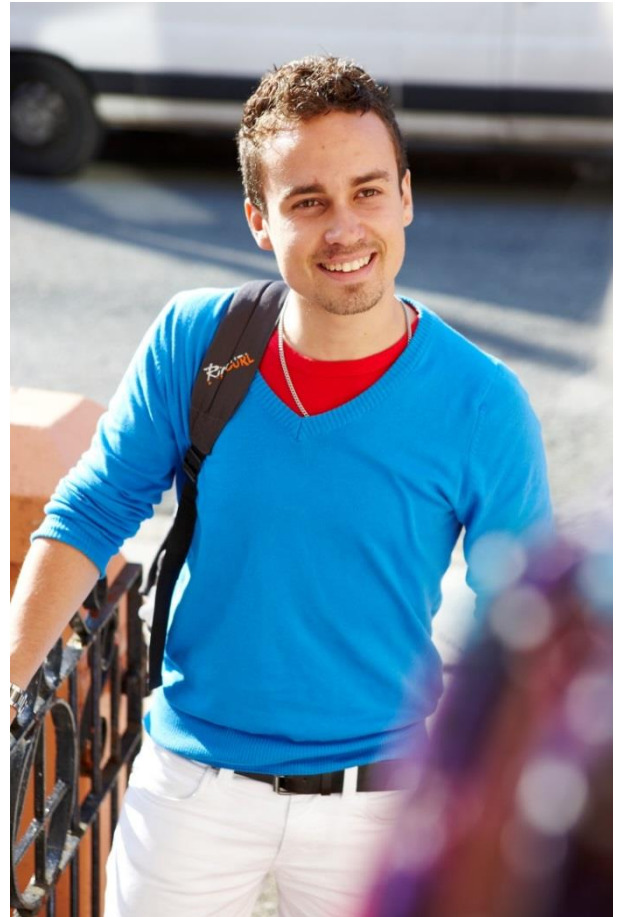
All children must have a LILA\* transfer to make sure they get to and from the airport safely.

LILA\* will provide the arrival details for your student the week before arrival and **you must be at home to welcome your student.**

LILA has a member of staff on duty every weekend in case of emergencies. You can contact LILA\*'s weekend contact for help if needed.

## Things to do on their first evening

- ✓ Have a small meal/snack ready for when your student arrives. If you're unsure, fruit is a popular snack.
- ✓ Give a tour of your home; remember to point out any possible hazards.
- ✓ Swap and save contact numbers
- ✓ Help them connect to the Wi-Fi so they can contact their friends and family
- ✓ Make sure they're familiar with the bathroom facilities; how to lock the door, what they should/cannot flush down the toilet



### TOP TIP

Once you have shown your student to their room give them some time to themselves to settle in and adjust. Invite them to join you when they're ready to join you for food and a tour.

## Get to know your student

Get tongue-tied with small talk? Here are some ice-breaker questions to help you get to know your student.

Remember that it can be tough to speak in a second language so speak clearly, avoid complicated language and give them plenty of time to answer. Don't be afraid of quiet time if your student is too tired or overwhelmed to chat.



- ✓ How are they? How are they feeling?
- ✓ How was the trip?
- ✓ What are their first impressions of the UK? Is it similar or different to their home town/country? How? Could they show you some photos?
- ✓ Have they been abroad before?
- ✓ Is there anything in particular they're looking forward to while in the UK? Look at their timetable and/or the LILA\* Instagram page.
- ✓ What do they normally do in the evenings? Encourage them to do the same in the UK to help them settle in.
- ✓ Do they have any hobbies or interests? Would they like to do them in the UK or try something new?
- ✓ Do they have any brothers or sisters? Would they like to show you photos?
- ✓ Do they have any pets? Introduce them to yours if you have any.
- ✓ What do they like to eat? What are their favourite meals? Do they know what meals/food Britain is famous for? Is there any British food they would like to try?

## Get ready for their first day at school

Help your student get ready for a flying start by helping them get ready for school the night before.

Let them know what time they need to get up and from what time breakfast is ready. Remind them to get their clothes/equipment together the night before and make sure they have both your and LILA\*'s numbers in case they have any trouble.

**All students must bring their passport and a copy of their boarding pass and visa details to school on their first day.** – don't let them forget!

## Daily travel

Using public transport in a foreign country can be very stressful no matter a person's age. When a child is travelling alone extra care must be taken to make sure they are safe. Ideally you would take the student to and from school on their first day or do a practice run the night before; however, if this is not possible please follow the guidelines below.

### Giving Instructions

- ✓ When you are giving instructions speak slowly, concisely and clearly.
- ✓ Write down any phrases they might need to know.
- ✓ Use tools like Google Maps, especially Google's street view, to show your student their route if you cannot go with them in person.
- ✓ Encourage them to contact you or the school if they get lost or are late.
- ✓ If you feel the student will not be able to make their own way please let us know the evening before so that we can make arrangements for their safe arrival.

### Getting to School

When to go	Tell them at what time should they leave your home and what time they need to get their bus/train. Show them how to read a travel timetable and/or use the Merseytravel/rail website.
Where to go	Show them where the bus stop/train station is from your home and how to get to the school. Point out any distinguishing features and give them a map/written instructions if they don't have Google Navigation on their phone. Make sure the route is safe e.g. well-lit streets.
What to do	Show them from which direction the bus/train will be coming and how they know which bus/train is the one they need. Tell them how to flag a bus and how they tell the driver when they want to get off. If they are taking a train, explain about platforms and the doors opening and closing at every stop. Explain how they use their tickets at each end of the journey (e.g. station barriers)
What to say	Tell them the phrases they might need to buy their tickets or ask for help.

### Coming Home

When to go	Show them how to read a travel timetable and/or use the Merseytravel/rail website. Be clear when you expect them to be back at the house.
Where to go	Show them where the nearest bus stop/train station is from the school and how to get home from the bus stop/train station. Point out any distinguishing features and give them a map/written instructions if they don't have Google Navigation on their phone.
Getting help at school	Encourage them to speak to the LILA staff if they are unsure or need any help.

### Buying Tickets

Juniors on a summer programme are given travel passes whereas Young Adults usually need to buy their own tickets/passes. If you're not sure which applies to your student ask the school.



## Where is your student?

When you are hosting a young person it is essential that you know where they are.

**You must make sure you're familiar with their timetable and know when they ought to be at home.**

Juniors and young adults have very different study/activity plans; make sure you know the difference.

### Junior Students

Junior students have a full activity programme with very little free time at home. Once their scheduled activities have finished for the day they must remain at home (unless they are with you).

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>AM</b>	Lesson	Lesson	Lesson	Lesson	Lesson	Full day activity*	Full day activity*
<b>PM</b>	Activity	Activity	Activity	Activity	Activity		
<b>Evening</b>	Home	Home	Activity	Home	Activity	Home	Home

*\* This is a typical Junior schedule however it can vary. If a Junior is not booked onto a weekend activity they must be with the family and not left alone for more than a short period (e.g. one hour). You will receive junior activity schedules specific to your student in the welcome email sent before their arrival.*

### Young Adults

Young Adults are given lots of free time and you are expected to know their whereabouts at all times, just as you would with your own teenage child. Note that sometimes Young Adults have afternoon lessons instead of morning classes as shown below.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>AM</b>	Lesson	Lesson	Lesson	Lesson	Lesson	Free time	Free time
<b>PM</b>	Free time	Free time	Free time	Free time	Free time		
<b>Evening</b>	Home	Home	Home	Home	Home	Home	Home

### Curfew for Young Adults

Young adults **must** be home by 11pm.



#### My student is missing! What do I do?

If your student is not home on time then call them immediately to find out where they are.

**If the student is more than 30 minutes late and is not responding by phone call the emergency phone on +44 7721 050262 or +44 7725 614 933.**

If the student is contactable and is safely returning then please email the school or contact us the following morning to report their lateness.

# Taking care of your student

## Healthy Eating

LILA\* will tell you about any food allergies/intolerances before your student arrives.

We encourage hosts to talk with their students about their likes/dislikes and you could perhaps help the homesick-blues by asking your student to help you prepare a meal from their country.

Not all students enjoy trying new foods and some find it difficult adjusting to the British custom of eating a lot of bread. Try providing a range of staple foods (potatoes, rice, pasta etc.) **and avoid using any ready-meals.**

Keep lots of healthy snacks on hand such as fruit and nuts as young people often need more food, especially when they have a full activity programme. If you're worried that your student is not eating enough, or is eating too much junk food contact us for advice.



## Sleeping Well

Young people need lots of rest to function well and make the most of their visit. We recommend lights out by 10pm for those under 16 and 11pm for 16/17 year olds. If you're worried a child is not getting enough sleep please let us know.

## Keeping Active

Ask your young person how they keep active at home and how often they exercise. Encourage them to join in with LILA\*'s social activities and help them access local facilities.

## Top Tip

We contact our hosts regularly to check how the young people in their care are doing. A strong relationship between LILA\* and our hosts means that we can promote the well-being of our students and provide the support hosts sometimes need.



## Homesickness & culture shock

Young people may be more dependent on structure in their daily lives than they appreciate. The change to their routine and their surroundings can cause some children to become withdrawn and they sometimes struggle to settle.

Encourage your student to keep busy and involve them with your family activities. If possible, help them pursue their hobbies by asking what they like to do at home and help them find where they can go in the UK.

**Contact LILA\* if you are concerned about your student. This is especially important the child is not eating, is not sleeping well and/or is displaying worrying behaviour.**

# My student is sick, what do I do?

## Common Illnesses

For common illness like colds, coughs and flu we advise rest and recuperation. If your student asks for medication from you, please contact LILA\* to gain consent from their parents before administering. This applies to all medications including over the counter medications such as paracetamol & ibuprofen.

## Too ill to attend school?

If the child is too ill to attend school please contact the school between 8am and 9am. We will then give advice about the best course of action for caring for the child.

## Serious illness or injury

If the child is seriously ill or injured then call 999 and request an ambulance. Alternatively, take the child to your nearest walk-in centre or directly to A&E. Contact the school at the earliest opportunity on the emergency safeguarding number.

If the symptoms are less serious and/or you're not sure how to respond then call 111 to get non-emergency advice from NHS staff – they will advise or refer you to local services. Contact the school at the earliest opportunity if the health issue is serious; otherwise, call us during office hours.



### REMEMBER

All hosts should know where their nearest walk-in centre, A&E ward and pharmacy are. Call the NHS non-emergency number 111 to find out.

## Long-term medication

Some students need to take medication for health conditions on a daily basis and we will let you know about any medical conditions pre-arrival.

Students under-16 need to give their medication to their host for safe-keeping and hosts need to ensure that the medication is taken per the prescription.

Students aged 16 or 17 might have their parents' permission to take care of their own medication or the parents might request that the host supervise, as with under 16s. We will let you know pre-arrival if the child is to self-medicate or if you are to supervise their medication.

# Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct sets out safe and professional boundaries for interactions between hosts and children. These boundaries are intended to protect both children and hosts from inappropriate situations and the risk of abuse or an accusation of abuse.

All hosts are required to:-

- Be a good role model by acting with integrity, maturity and good judgement
- Be positive
- Be even-handed with praise and discipline
- Ensure language is always professional and appropriate (no profanities)
- Work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way
- Always act in the best interests of a child; the well-being of a child is of paramount importance
- Follow the **CODE OF CONDUCT** at all times
- Treat all safeguarding concerns as confidential; this means not discussing any such sensitive information about a child with anyone but the appointed designated staff
- Treat any safeguarding concerns (however minor or significant) with the highest priority and report those concerns in a timely manner to designated staff

## LILA\*'s Code of Conduct for Hosts

Ordinarily hosts should not enter their young person's room without permission – knock or call asking to enter. If the child is in distress or unresponsive let them know you're about to enter the room before walking in.

### Room Access

If waking a student in the morning, knock on the door and call out.

Keep the bedroom door open when you are in the room.

### Privacy & personal space

All guests, especially young people, are entitled to their privacy. You can set an example by keeping your own bedroom doors closed as private spaces and ask them to knock if they need you during the night.

Hosts should not employ a level of body contact they would with a friend or their own children.

### Physical contact

Be sensitive that some children are uncomfortable with any physical contact when they are at their most vulnerable and in need of support. Aim to show compassion without actually touching the child wherever possible.

Some general safeguards include:-

- The child should be the one to initiate any contact
- The adult should keep contact to the shoulder area or high up on the back. Contact should be light and brief.
- Having other adults present can minimise the risk of an accusation as they are a witness

There are times when a host must initiate the contact, such as if a child need medical help, if the child must be removed from danger or to prevent harm from/to another person.

Guidelines about photos and videos of students are quite different for child students than those for adult students.

## Photography & video

We recommend that hosts do not take any photos of their under-18 students nor permit the child to take a photo of them unless:-

- More than one adult member of the host family, or other adults responsible for the child are present in the photos
- The photo is taken, kept and used only in the child's best interest and not on social media.
- If you have any questions or concerns about this measure please speak to us.

If an under-18 student displays any noticeable signs of infatuation towards an adult in a "position of trust" this should be reported to LILA\* in writing as soon as possible. This measure protects the adult should an incident or accusation later develop.

## Gifts & infatuation

Hosts should not accept gifts from under-18 students which have anything more than a nominal value, nor should they make any gifts of their own. Responsible adults should also be aware of any gifts which could have symbolic or endearment value, regardless of value, which might indicate inappropriate or excessive attachment. Any concerns should be reported to LILA\*.

Nevertheless, it is a nice practice that students sometime give a gift at the end of their stay as a thank you. In these cases, keep in mind the guidelines above use your best judgements. Let us know if you have concerns.

Note that LILA\* insist that hosts avoid giving any parting gifts that might be misconstrued – please check with us if you would like to give a gift to check that it is appropriate.

## Phones

Homestay hosts are encouraged to share their phone number with their under-18 students while the child is in their care. This is to enable communication about planning and timings, emergencies and other welfare matters.

Keep communication friendly but professional; remember that this is not a peer-to-peer relationship and you are talking to a child.

If a child sends you content which is inappropriate for a child-carer relationship e.g. messages of an intimate or peer-to-peer nature please notify us urgently.

## **Online communication**

Hosts should not add under-18 students to their social media accounts, social networks, email contacts nor any other form of online communication.

## **Internet & TV**

Use blocks & filters on your internet service to protect young people from inappropriate content. We recommend that you visit [www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com) and [www.getsafeonline.com](http://www.getsafeonline.com) to learn more about this and other online safety issues.

Make sure that your TV has a PIN to restrict access to inappropriate programmes for children. Any age-restricted videos/games should be securely stored.

## **Laundry**

Your students may be too shy to ask for their clothes to be washed. Take the initiative and let them know when you will be doing the laundry and where you would like them to put their dirty clothes.

## **Alcohol**

Alcohol consumption by those under the age of 18 is illegal.

Please keep any alcohol you have in the home away out of sight and restrict access.

**Never** offer any alcohol to an under 18 student.

Please drink any alcohol responsibly and in moderation when caring for a child.

Please be sensitive to cultural differences which might make a child uncomfortable seeing you drinking alcohol or under the influence.

## **Drugs**

Recreational drug use is illegal in the UK. Report any use by your students to LILA\* as it is a disciplinary matter.

Any use of recreational drugs by a host may result in the immediate termination of their Host Agreement and removal of the child from their care.

## **Smoking**

Students under 16 strictly cannot smoke. Report any use by your students to LILA\* as it is a disciplinary matter.

It is illegal for people under 18 to buy cigarettes. It is entirely inappropriate for a host to provide an under 18 student with cigarettes; if the child asks, politely decline.

If your student smokes then show them the designated area for smoking and where they can dispose of the cigarette butt. Hosts may want to discuss the health implications of smoking with their student but avoid any conflict as they are legally entitled (unless under 16) to do so.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Can my student have friends over?

Yes, it is ok for a friend to visit your student at your home as long as you supervise, and they stay in common spaces i.e. they should not be left in a bedroom together. Make sure the friend has enough time to get home safely and overnight stays are not permitted. If the friend is over 18 then please check with the school before agreeing to the visit.

## Can my student stay overnight at a friend's home?

No. Young people must stay in their assigned room for every night of their stay unless there is a LILA\* approved overnight trip.



## Can my student have a weekend away?

If your student is 16 or 17 then a weekend away might be possible but is subject to strict conditions such as:

- ✓ They must get permission from LILA\* at least 48 hours in advance by filling in a request form
- ✓ LILA\* must be satisfied that the trip is safe
- ✓ The child's parents must consent to the trip

If your student tells you they are planning to take a trip then let LILA\* know. They **must not** travel without LILA\*'s permission, even if their parents say it is ok.

## Can I take my student out on trips / visits?

Spending time with a British family is a key reason why young people chose to stay with a host and we encourage you to include your students in any family activities. Remember that you must supervise them 100% of the time and the activity should be age-appropriate. Make sure that the activity will not clash with your student's scheduled activities/classes. If you are not sure whether the proposed trip is safe/appropriate, contact the school for advice

## Can I keep in touch with my student after they leave?

Hosts often like to stay in touch with their guests after their visit; however, hosts must **not** keep in touch with their under-18 students once they depart unless it is via LILA\* or the child's parents.

## Can I drive my student?

It is not expected or required for hosts to transport their guests.

Hosts who would like to drive their students must contact LILA\* to gain consent from the student's parents beforehand. Hosts must also provide proof of an in-date UK driving license. In addition, the driver:

- ✓ Must check all passengers are wearing a seatbelt
- ✓ Must not eat or drink while driving
- ✓ Must not use their phone while driving
- ✓ Must keep the car clean and free of harmful clutter or items inappropriate for children e.g. alcohol
- ✓ Must check the child is comfortable with the driving arrangement before being driven

## Do I have to stay at home all the time?

Hosts are expected to ordinarily be at home in order to supervise. This means that your young person should not be left at home alone except for short periods e.g. 1 hour. 'Young Adults' (16 & 17 years old on an Adult English course) may be left for longer periods, i.e. an afternoon after their classes but hosts are advised to contact the school for additional advice if that is necessary.

## Can I go on holiday or have a night away while I am hosting a young person?

No, it is a requirement that hosts are home for every night of a child's stay. If there are exceptional circumstances which mean that you cannot be at home overnight, then contact us as the child will need to be given alternative accommodation.

## Can I have adult visitors in my home?

Adult visitors must be supervised and must not be left alone with an under-18 student at any time.

## Can I have other overnight / paying guests in my home?

You **MUST NOT** have any adult guests when you are hosting a young person in your home. This might be a guest from a language school, AirBnB or other lodging arrangements. It also includes friends/relatives who have not been DBS checked.

If you are hosting a young person from another school please let the school know as we must place students based on their age differences, gender and language.

## DBS FAQs

### What is a DBS check?

A DBS check looks at an individual's previous convictions and charges.

### Who needs a DBS check?

All residents of the home aged 18+ need a DBS check. It is the host's responsibility to inform LILA\* of any household members turning 18 during their time being a host with us.

### Who pays for the DBS check?

LILA\* will pay for the initial DBS checks for all household members aged 18+. It is then the host's responsibility to make sure they are signed up to the update service. If the host/s are not signed up to the update service, any renewals will be charged to the host/s after the 3 year period. Also, any DBS checks required for temporary or new household members will be charged to the host.

### I already have a hosting DBS check; can I use it to host for LILA\*?

If you are on the Update Service we can use your current hosting DBS; otherwise, you must have a new check done.

