



**International  
House**  
Torquay



**TORQUAY  
INTERNATIONAL  
SCHOOL**

# Homestay Handbook

## 2025

OUT-OF-HOURS NUMBER

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**Pursuing excellence**

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## WELCOME TO INTERNATIONAL HOUSE TORQUAY

At IH Torquay, our primary concern is that the student's homestay is of the highest quality and that it provides a happy and positive experience.

Hosting a student can be a demanding but also a very rewarding experience. We pride ourselves on our high standards and we are very much looking forward to you becoming a part of our homestay team.

The homestay experience is essential to the success of a study trip to the UK as it allows students the opportunity to discover the British way of life and engage in informal conversation with their host. It can be the start of a lifelong friendship for you as a host!

The school operates year round with the majority of our students being over 30 years. We also take closed groups of juniors during the year and run a summer course for students aged 14 to 17 in July and August. Most junior students stay for short periods (2-3 weeks), however some of our students can stay for up to 11 months. We also offer Family programmes so you may be asked to host parent(s) with a child/children as well.

Our junior students tend to travel in groups coming from an agency or school abroad. They are generally accompanied by group leaders (often teachers) but we do also accept some individual teenage students.

"Our mission is to help every student and colleague realise their potential. We do this by creating opportunities to develop on a **linguistic, cultural** and **professional** level in a supportive, safe and environmentally friendly setting. We endeavour to inspire lasting relationships with our students and provide them with the tools to achieve their goals."



# WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR FROM OUR HOMESTAYS

Essentially we are looking for welcoming, friendly hosts who genuinely wish to provide a clean, comfortable and safe environment for our students and who will expose them to typical British culture and values. Students should be treated as a member of the household and encouraged to take part in everyday life.

In order to become a homestay host for IH Torquay and to ensure our students enjoy a comfortable living environment throughout their stay, we expect our homestays to meet the following criteria:

- Homes must be within reasonable walking distance of the School or a maximum 30 minutes by bus
- We require all our homestays to collect students on arrival in Torquay and to bring the students and their luggage to the school or coach meeting point for departure (normally Lymington coach station). In case the homestay is not available, they must ensure a responsible adult (DBS checked in case of under 18s) will be available to welcome the student/s on arrival. The responsible adult must be well known to the host, or a family member and familiar with the needs of a newly arrived student.

## FACILITIES

- A sufficiently spacious bedroom with natural light, equipped with a standard sized bed (3 ft wide minimum) and adequate hanging and drawer space for clothes
- Bunk beds are not acceptable for adults
- A table for private study – within the bedroom or a quiet area in the home
- Access to a bathroom with bath and/or shower available daily
- Sufficient heating to keep students warm at all times of year
- Access to the living room and other common areas used by other members of the household
- Wifi access

## ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- Meals will be provided on a daily basis according to the agreement with the school for each student (usually half board, Monday to Friday, full board at weekends)
- Towels and bed linen will be provided and changed regularly (no less than once per week)
- A light weekly laundry service (no ironing)
- An additional supply of duvets/blankets should students feel particularly cold in the evenings

## IH TORQUAY AND BRITISH COUNCIL REGULATIONS

IH Torquay is inspected by the British Council, Accreditation UK every 4 years. We abide by their recommendations and legal requirements to ensure the safety and comfort of our students when accommodated with homestays.

No more than 4 students or guests will be accommodated at any time in each homestay. This includes guests from other organisations, such as 'AirBnB'. If you host Under 18s you must NOT host anyone over the age of 18 from any outside source.

Students will not share bedrooms unless specifically requested by the School (on behalf of their parents/guardians). No more than 2 students will share a room at any given time. No students will be placed with a student of the same first language (unless specifically requested by the School).

Homestays accepting any students under the age of 18 must guarantee that there will be an adult to receive a student on their arrival and at all other times in case of emergencies.

English will be the language of communication at all times. We welcome homestays from diverse cultural backgrounds but we expect that English will be spoken in the presence of students. Homestays will expose students to British culture and the values of democracy, the rule of law, tolerance and respect, and individual liberty.

When hosting students under the age of 16 years, there will be no other guests over 18 or of a different gender. If a homestay is hosting students from another organisation, they must disclose this to IH Torquay.

## ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS

- Annual valid gas safety certificate – all homestay providers are classified as landlords under Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.
- DBS check – all family members over the age of 18 must, without exception, be DBS checked. This includes all visitors including grown-up children visiting from university, for example.
- Home risk assessment and fire risk assessment – and ensure students understand procedures in case of emergencies.
- Basic Awareness Safeguarding course and on-line Prevent training.
- Contact details for 2 references who will be prepared to provide testimonials on suitability to host students, especially those under the age of 18 years.
- Children's Act Declaration.

# HOMESTAY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

## Standard and Premium Homestay

We offer two types of homestay to students: Standard Homestay and Premium Homestay. Our homestay accommodation is half board during the week (breakfast + dinner) and full board at the weekends.

Premium Homestay offers everything mentioned in this guide as Standard Homestay, but it is accommodation that has been assessed by the Accommodation Officer to provide a higher level of comfort for our students and furnished to a higher standard. Premium homestays also provide the sole use of a bathroom or an en-suite for our students.

## Access to the House

The students must be allowed reasonable access to all communal areas of the house in the same way as any household member. Please ensure that these areas are always clean and tidy while hosting a student.

## The Student's Room

We visit all our homestays regularly and will approve the rooms to be used as suitable accommodation for our students. Rooms that have not been specifically approved by IH Torquay cannot be used and failure to comply with this could result in the student being moved from the homestay with immediate effect.

The room must be in a good state of cleanliness and repair and have adequate heating and ventilation. The room should be sufficiently spacious with natural light (windowless rooms are not acceptable), equipped with a standard sized bed and mattress (camp beds, bunk beds, futons and sofa beds are not acceptable) and adequate hanging and drawer space for clothes. The room must allow for the student to keep their possessions within easy access and, while some storage of the homestay's possessions is acceptable, students should feel like the room belongs to them. There must also be sufficient room to store their suitcase and the suitcase cannot count as an option for storage.

Students are expected to keep their room tidy but they are not expected to clean it as the room should be cleaned once a week by the host. Bed linen and towels must be provided and changed at least once every week and there must be a suitable supply of duvets or blankets available.

## Meals

Your students should eat with you, as this is an important time for them to get to know you and to share their experiences with you.

Please make sure you inform students of the times of evening meals and curfew times. Meals will be provided as agreed and will offer a varied and well-balanced diet, taking into account any reasonable dietary requirements expressed by the student. Homestays are not expected to provide special dietary requirements (e.g. vegetarian, halal or gluten free meals) unless agreed and confirmed at the time of the booking. All students are expected to eat the same meals as their hosts and at the same times, unless timing issues occasionally prevent this. If the student is due to arrive later than the scheduled meal time, then the food should be saved so that the student can eat this when they arrive.

Please refrain from providing microwave or frozen meals for students. Breakfast should contain toast, cereal, fruit juice, tea/coffee. Cooked dinner should include meat, fish, chicken or cheese with pasta, rice, potatoes or vegetables plus a dessert or fresh fruit. The packed lunch should include sandwiches, crisps, water, fruit and a snack bar.

Full board accommodation (breakfast, evening meal and a light lunch) is required at weekends and during the Christmas period (if the student stays in the accommodation) when the school is closed.

## Showers/Baths

The student must be allowed at least one bath or shower each day at a reasonable time. The duration of the bath or shower should not be limited.

Some students may not be accustomed to western baths and toilets so it is a good idea to explain how to use the shower, remind them to put toilet paper in the loo etc.

Please also try to make sure younger students are washing regularly.

Medicines and/or chemicals must not be stored unlocked in bathrooms students use.

## Heating

The temperature in the house should be maintained at a warm, comfortable level. It should be taken into consideration that many students come from warmer climates and may feel cold in temperatures acceptable to people who live here. A higher level of heating than is normally needed for a bedroom may be required for the student in the room which will be used for study purposes.

Under no circumstances should a student be asked to pay additional heating charges.

## Internet

Please ensure that your internet is available for students to use when they need it. If you have a monthly data allowance limit, please communicate this to the student at the start of their stay in your home. Under no circumstances must an additional charge be made to the student for the use of the internet connection.

If the homestay has any concerns about the student's internet usage for any safeguarding reasons or under the PREVENT strategy (explained in the Safeguarding Guidelines section), then it is their duty to inform the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead and ask for further advice.

## Laundry

Please provide towels and bed linen for students and wash them regularly, at least every week.

Laundry services are included in the homestay accommodation fees. Standard and Premium homestays must provide a laundry service for one light load of washing per week. A small weekly charge may then be agreed directly with the student, if additional laundry is required.

## Keys

All students aged 18 years and over must be provided with their own keys to allow them free access to the homestay at any given time. It is at the discretion of the homestay to provide keys to under 18s, but if a key is not given, hosts should make suitable arrangements to ensure someone is home when the student arrives.

IH Torquay cannot accept liability for any charges incurred by the homestay for replacing keys or changing door locks, if the student should lose, or fail to return keys on their departure. It is the responsibility of the homestay to make arrangements with the student for the safe return of the house key before their departure.

## Pocket money and Personal Documents

We advise students not to carry large sums of money or personal documents such as their passport or ID with them so we recommend that homestays offer a secure place where students can leave their valuables such as a lockable drawer.

If your student tells you they have run out of money at any time, do not lend them any - please contact the Accommodation Officer, who will advise you.

## Curfew times for students under 18

Students aged under 14 are not allowed out in the evening.

Students aged 14 and 15 have a curfew time of 21:30.

Students aged 16 and 17 have a curfew time of 22:00.

All hosts must stay awake and ensure that under 18 students are home by curfew time before going to bed.

# HOMESTAY RESPONSIBILITIES

## Privacy and Communication with the Student

The student is entitled to exclusive use of their bedroom at the homestay accommodation and access for the host is not normally permitted, unless previously agreed by the student or for the purposes of cleaning the room or changing the bed linen.

As part of our confirmation process students will receive your email and phone number. We encourage students to get in touch with you before their arrival and introduce themselves.

If you receive an email from the student or the student's parents/guardians prior to arrival, every effort should be made by you to reply.

## Insurance

The homestay should accept that there will be a certain amount of wear and tear and accidental damage to their home when hosting students. The homestay should ensure that their household insurance provides adequate cover. Homestays are advised that IH Torquay cannot accept liability for any claim in respect of damage caused by students, whether by accident, negligence or design.

Our recommended insurers are One Broker Insurance - they provide buildings and contents insurance that includes up to 6 paying guests. Most standard insurance policies do not provide adequate protection for homestays taking paying guests so it is important that your insurance provides the right protection.

## Right to rent

The Right to Rent legislation puts the onus on landlords, agents and people sub-letting property to ensure that only people with permission to live in the UK are able to rent property. In the case of homestay accommodation the educational institution is responsible for checking this.

Students in homestay for under three months do not fall within the Right to rent scheme and no checks are necessary.

For students studying for longer than three months, IH Torquay will carry out the required checks on the student's visa status and eligibility to study/live in the UK.

## Student Safety

If hosts are advising the best route for students to travel to school, please consider the safety of the route and the time of day the student will be travelling. Avoid using poorly lit lanes and parks at night.

If you are allowing a student to borrow a bicycle, please ensure you provide them with a helmet and ensure the bike is fitted with a suitable light. Advise them of the rules of the road and inform the school they will be travelling by bicycle.

Please ensure students are aware of evening curfew times and if a teenage student is going out in the evening you must find out where they are going and with whom.

## Diversity and Inclusivity

Homestays should value everyone as an individual and should strive to provide a home which will ensure any student will be treated fairly and equally, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, marital status or disability.

The school values everyone as an individual and also strives to provide an environment which will ensure any student entering the premises will be treated fairly and equally, regardless of the above. Students at the school can be certain they will be studying in an atmosphere where everyone receives respect and can voice their diverse needs, knowing that they will be heard. These values are promoted to everyone involved with the school and students are advised during the induction process and posters are on display around the school.

## Private Fostering

Students who are under the age of 16 (or 18 if disabled) and stay in a homestay for longer than 4 weeks must be cared for by a homestay under a private fostering arrangement. Whilst this is not a difficult process, it does involve a visit to the property and discussion with the host by Social Services.

The school will organise this and try to be as helpful as possible especially if it is the homestay's first time undergoing this process.

## Driving students

If homestay hosts will be transporting students in their vehicles (on arrival or departure), it is their responsibility to possess a valid, clean driving license and maintain adequate car insurance coverage.

## Fire Escape Plan and Risk Assessment

In the event of a fire, homestays should ensure that they have a fire escape plan in place for their home and as best practice, explain the plan to everyone in their household including the students that are staying with them. The homestay will also need to ensure that smoke alarms are provided and maintained. We also expect homestays to carry out a standard risk assessment of their premises and take all the necessary steps to prevent students from being at risk of accident or hazard.

Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service offer free Home Safety Checks. The check takes no longer than five minutes after which you may be offered a home safety visit. The visit takes less than 30 minutes and they will provide advice and fit a free smoke detector if required. If you would like a free home safety check please go on their website: <https://www.dsfire.gov.uk/safety/home/home-safety-visits>

## Gas Safety Certificates

All homestay providers are classified as landlords under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. Consequently, in providing a room for an international student you are agreeing to abide by our terms and conditions and this booking is subject to you accepting full responsibility for arranging maintenance by a Gas Safe Registered engineer for all work carried out on boilers, gas appliances and flues; including arranging a documented annual gas safety check. Without a valid gas safety certificate you are breaking the law and are therefore liable to prosecution. IH Torquay requires homestays to provide a valid gas safety certificate to ensure that the property has been inspected and passed by a Gas Safe Registered engineer.

## Illness or Accident

Students from the European Union and the EEA are covered by the National Health Service for medical care, as long as they have their EHIC card. Please note that students may have to pay for some services, although this will be clearly outlined at the point of delivery, for example, prescriptions.

For non-EU students, they can receive emergency medical treatment at "Accident and Emergency" or walk in centres. More information can be found on the NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/visiting-or-moving-to-england/visitors-from-outside-the-european-economic-area-eea/>

A student staying for 6 months or more may qualify for some free NHS treatment as a temporary resident. The student may require help to register with the homestay's GP. Students should register with a doctor as soon as they begin their studies in the UK and not wait until they are unwell to do so, as it may prove difficult to receive immediate treatment if registration has not taken place. If a student is ill or has an accident, the homestay is asked to help arrange the necessary treatment (take to Accident and Emergency, or call an ambulance) and to notify the school immediately.

## Safeguarding Homestay's Children

We do not carry out a DBS or any background check on our students. Although most of our students come through certified agents, homestay providers accept students in their homes at their own risk.

We would advise the following;

- Always have an adult present in the home.
- Never leave children alone with students.
- Tell children they are not to enter students' bedrooms and inform them that it is not acceptable for students to go in their room either.
- Use supervised communal areas for the children to be with students.

## BOOKING PROCEDURES AND PAYMENT

An accommodation week consists of 7 nights, students typically arriving and departing on either Saturday or Sunday. If a student books the accommodation for a period which includes additional nights (for example arriving on a Saturday and departing on a Sunday) then the payment is made on a pro-rata basis for the additional nights.

All homestay bookings will be confirmed by a confirmation letter stating the dates of the accommodation required. If a student wishes to curtail or prolong their stay, the school will notify the homestay and a revised confirmation letter will be sent in accordance with the revised dates.

The accommodation fees are paid via bank transfer straight into the homestay's bank account - a remittance slip advising of the payment will be sent via email. The accommodation is paid monthly in arrears up to the last Sunday of the month, paid on the last Monday of the month. We recommend maintaining a record, for tax purposes, of all payments received. All payments for hosting students will be made by IH Torquay. Under no circumstances should hosts discuss payment with students and must never ask for additional payments for anything provided (with the exception of extra laundry services).

If, at any time, the homestay receives payment in excess of its entitlement, it is a strict condition of these arrangements that they inform the school without delay, so that arrangements to repay the excess amount can be made.

## CANCELLATIONS AND CHANGE OF ACCOMMODATION

If a student cancels or delays their course start date, homestays are not entitled to any compensation - where this occurs, the homestay will be placed on a priority list to ensure that they are offered the next suitable student.

If a student requests to move from their accommodation, in normal circumstances, 48 hours' notice will be given to the homestay. However, if the school deems it necessary to remove the student due to concerns for their well being or due to a serious complaint, then the student may be moved without notice. Payment will cease with the departure of the student.

In such circumstances, if appropriate, the homestay may be placed on a priority list for the next suitable student.

## DUAL SCHOOL BOOKINGS - SAFEGUARDING

It has been brought to our attention recently by the Education Safeguarding Assurance Advisor at Torbay Council that situations have arisen locally where dual bookings have caused concern.

Seemingly some homestay providers who work with more than one school have accepted bookings for students without informing both schools of the arrangements. This has meant Safeguarding rules are not being followed when ages, gender and nationalities of students are not being taken into account.

Whilst IH Torquay has not actually been involved in this we would ask you to please be aware that if you do accept bookings from another school, at the same time as you have students from us, it is imperative that you inform Laura our Accommodation and Welfare Officer of the situation.

## CODE OF CONDUCT – HOMESTAY PROVIDERS

Homestay Providers (hosts) for IH Torquay are in a position of trust. Hosts have a duty to take all reasonable steps to promote the safeguarding of all children under the age of 18 years in the care of IH Torquay in accordance with the IH Torquay Safeguarding Policy, the British Council Accreditation UK scheme and the Children's Act 1989.

1. All hosts are asked to read and sign the Homestay Providers' application forms and read the Homestay Handbook and accompanying policies which they agree to abide by.
2. Homestays should respect students' privacy, knock on doors and ensure bathrooms are lockable from the inside.
3. Hosts should promote cultural awareness, understanding and respect. Hosts should be particularly aware of different attitudes to personal space and conversation topics that may be culturally inappropriate or cause offence.
4. Hosts should dress with sensitivity and with awareness of the age and cultural background of their students.
5. Hosts should be conscious of boundaries, especially when dealing with children under the age of 18 years. Hosts should be aware of their body language and avoid physical contact except in situations where it is intended to prevent harm. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 states that any person in a position of trust who engages in sexual activity of any sort with a student under the age of 18 is breaking the law (even though the legal age of consent is 16).
6. Hosts should not swear in front of students and should not allow the use of inappropriate language by students to go unchallenged.
7. Hosts should not allow Under 18s to "Friend", "Follow" or contact them on social networking sites. All communication with children should be through public and/ or official school channels. Homestay hosts may only contact students with parental permission.
8. Homestay hosts must be aware that students have to give written permission for photos or videos to be taken of them whilst with the school. Hosts must always ask for permission before taking photos of students under the age of 18.
9. Hosts must not engage in excessive drinking of alcohol or smoking in the presence of students. Any drinking of alcohol which impacts on students and may be detrimental to the performance of hosting students could result in the school removing your details from the school's register.
10. Homestay hosts are asked to be vigilant and report any concerns or anything deemed suspicious to the Accommodation and Welfare Officer at the school.

## HOMESTAY GUIDELINES (FOR STUDENTS)

### Our students are asked to remember:

1. They are responsible for keeping their room, the bathroom and other parts of your home that they use clean and tidy.
2. They must inform you if they will not be in time for dinner - you are advised to still prepare their food and leave them to heat up unless they tell you that they are eating out. If they want to use the kitchen or help themselves to food or drink they have to ask for your permission first.
3. You will have some general 'house rules' and they are expected to respect these rules. These rules are in place to ensure their safety and wellbeing (see below).
4. To give their mobile number to you and make sure you save their number in your phone as well.
5. Their host will do their light laundry but they are expected to iron their own clothes.
6. To try and speak English at all times. Their hosts will speak in English but they are not their English teacher.
7. To always let you know where they are and what their plans are.
8. That most of our homestays will not allow smoking inside the house - to ask you where/if they can smoke.

## Example Homestay Rules:

1. Please get up no later than 08:00 am in the morning.
2. Keep your room tidy, make your bed in the morning and put rubbish in the bin.
3. Be home on time for your evening meal.
4. Be polite and friendly to your hosts and other students.
5. Remember other people use the bathroom, don't use it for too long and keep it clean.
6. Give any clothes for washing to your hosts at the agreed time each week.
7. If you are going to be late home, always inform your hosts.
8. Lights should be turned off no later than 23:00 pm.

## COMMON QUESTIONS HOMESTAY PROVIDERS ASK US:

1. What should I do if my students are badly behaved?

You should give all your students some ground rules at the beginning of their stay with you. IH Torquay will have already told them how to behave while staying with a homestay but if you are worried about their behaviour, speak to them directly first of all. If their behaviour does not improve, call us and we will help you.

2. One of my students tells me something that concerns or worries me.

You have a duty to tell the school and you should do this immediately. Do not take any further action unless it is an immediate police matter or an emergency. The school will fact check, investigate and then take appropriate action. Remember that you have a duty to treat all information confidentially and we have a duty to safeguard our students and to protect all staff, homestay providers and students from gossip or defamation of character.

3. My 17 year old student says she does not have to follow the curfew time the school has given me.

In this situation contact the school immediately. We will always tell you at the time of booking if a student has a different curfew time to those listed in the Homestay Handbook.

4. My student says he does not like the food I have prepared.

It is always a good idea to ask students in advance about their likes and dislikes with food. However, do also be aware of cultural issues: it is probably NOT a good idea to cook pasta for an Italian as they will invariably compare it to home and you can never match 'mama's perfect pasta'. Explain to students that British food is different but part of the experience of living in another culture is to sample traditional food.

## TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL HOSTING:

1. Your student will receive some details about you before they arrive. However, some students like to get to know their host before their arrival and will try to get in touch with you (by phone/email). Please make every effort to respond in a timely manner to start the relationship on the best footing.
2. Make sure you and your student have each other's mobile numbers.
3. Treat your student as you would like your own family to be treated if they were travelling abroad.
4. When your student arrives, let them know what time you usually have dinner. Ensure that they understand that they must tell you in advance if they are planning to have food with friends/group leaders, or if they are going to be late home.
5. If you have any pets, make sure they do not go into the student's bedroom.
6. Provide a clean and comfortable student room meeting the specified standards of the British Council.
7. Some students will find the British weather completely different to their home country. Please make sure they are always comfortable with extra blankets/fans depending on the time of year.
8. Ensure your students know how to enter and exit your property safely.
9. Please encourage your student to speak English as much as possible in the home.
10. Students enjoy the time that you spend with them, even if it is just having a cup of tea and a chat together. We expect our homestay providers to eat and spend time with their students in the evenings and weekends as much as possible. Some students require more attention than others, so please be aware of this.
11. Do not host another student of the same native language at the same time unless by special arrangement with us.
12. Respect students' different cultural background and be sensitive to their needs.
13. Inform us of any changes concerning people living in your home or any structural changes that you are planning.
14. Be prepared as there will unavoidably be changes and cancellations to your bookings due to circumstances outside our control.
15. Communication is so important! Please do not be afraid to discuss anything that may cause friction or resentment, we always endeavour to resolve matters quickly.

Finally we hope that you and your family will find hosting a foreign student an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

# WELFARE AND SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES

The homestay has a duty of care to all students who are staying in their home to ensure that they are safe and are not exposed to abuse while in their care, either from family members in the home or visitors to the home.

The purpose of these guidelines is to raise awareness of safeguarding issues that may arise within a homestay setting and to ensure that you know what you must do if a disclosure of abuse is made, or if you suspect abuse or neglect.

These guidelines refer to any student under the age of 18 or a Vulnerable Adult.

Safeguarding issues usually cover four main forms of abuse. They are:

- Physical – physical abuse can sometimes be difficult to spot as the victim is often embarrassed of any bruising/marks/scars on their body, or frequent accidents, and may seek to hide these signs. Giving children alcohol or inappropriate drugs is also termed as physical abuse.
- Sexual – this is the most recognised category and it also covers any pornography-related offences along with grooming. Homestay hosts should also be aware of the dangers of social-networking sites on the internet.
- Neglect – This involves a failure to provide warmth, food, clothing, appropriate medical care and protection from physical harm.
- Emotional/Psychological – this includes the inappropriate use of criticism, isolation, threats as well as verbal or cyberbullying.

A person can be abused by anyone in their life, at any time of their life who could be a close family member, partner, family friend, teacher or an adult related to their after school activities and hobbies.

If a student discloses to you that they are or have been abused, you must contact our Designated Safeguarding Lead, immediately. Please note that you now have a legal duty to pass this information on and that in these circumstances, you cannot be bound by confidentiality. Listen carefully to what the student is saying and stay calm. Only ask questions to clarify what is being said. Tell the student that they are doing the right thing and reassure them that this information will only be passed on to people who need to know and that you now need to contact the school.

In the event of an accident or crime – for example, a mugging, then the police or an ambulance should be called, and then IH Torquay to assist where they can.

Safeguarding children and young people means protecting them from abuse or neglect, getting the right support in place as early as possible and creating an environment in which children and young people feel safe and healthy.

Our policy applies to all staff and volunteers working in the school including sub-contractors, homestay hosts and group leaders.

A full copy of the CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY can be found on our website at the following link: <https://ihtorquay.uk/brochures-handbooks-and-policies/>

Please liaise closely with the school if you have any concerns or worries, no matter how small, about your student(s).

## Informal Settings

Appropriate Behaviour in an informal setting such as the homestay and on an activity or excursion is vitally important to safeguard the Under 18 and also to safeguard the adult from complaints or allegations.

Homestays must:

- Respect the students' privacy at all times; this is especially important regarding bedroom, showers or bathrooms.
- Have a secure lock fitted on bathrooms/toilets .
- Be aware of your Facebook or social media content; set your privacy button and best practice is not to accept the Under 18 student as a 'friend' prior to their arrival but to gain parents' approval during the student's stay.
- Set the Parental Controls on your internet.
- Not allow or encourage the Under 18 to watch films or media with an 18+ certificate content.
- Not offer or supply alcohol to an Under 18 student or any illegal drug or Legal High.
- Dress appropriately at all times when in contact with students.

# CHILD PROTECTION

## Saying nothing is not an option!

Action	What not to do
Stay calm	Do not panic or over-react. It is unlikely the student is in immediate danger.
Listen to the student	Do not probe for more information or ask searching questions. The student may not want to disclose more information and it can affect how the disclosure is received.
Give the student/child the chance to say what they need to say. Use TED to help: Tell me Explain to me Describe to me	Do not assume Do not paraphrase Do not offer alternative explanations
Record in writing what the student said as soon as possible. Record the incident factually.	Do not make any comments about the alleged abuser Do not gossip with colleagues about the disclosure When recording the incident, do not photograph or examine the student
Explain to the child/student that they have done the correct thing by telling you and that the relevant member of staff will be informed to provide the best possible help. Listen and refer to the appropriate person: the School's Safeguarding Lead	Do not promise to keep secrets or say that everything will be OK. This cannot be guaranteed.
IH Torquay staff will act immediately in accordance with the policy and procedure	IH Torquay staff will not try to deal with the situation alone and will ask for professional help

## IH TORQUAY SAFEGUARDING TEAM



**Laura Chirio**  
Designated Dafeguarding Lead



**Georgian Marin**  
Deputy Dafeguarding Lead



Lisa



Beth



Alex



Susan



Kevin

If you have any welfare concerns you can speak to any of our members of the Safeguarding Team or you can call our Emergency Number +44(0)7798 560 458

# BEHAVIOUR AND GUIDANCE

## Drug Use and Child Protection

The discovery that a young person is using illegal drugs or reported evidence of their drug use is not necessarily sufficient in itself to initiate child protection proceedings but the school will consider such actions in the following situations:

When there is evidence or reasonable cause:

- to believe the young person's drug misuse may cause him or her to be vulnerable to other abuse, such as sexual abuse;
- to believe the student's drug related behaviour is a result of abusing or endangering pressure or incentives from others, particularly adults;
- where the misuse is suspected of being prompted by serious carer/peer misuse.

Further information can be found at: Under 18s Drug and Alcohol Worker at Checkpoint: 01803 200 100

## Curfew times for under 18s

- Students under the age of 14 are not allowed out in the evenings.
- 14 and 15 year olds (if allowed out) have a curfew of 21.30.
- 16 and 17 year olds on adult courses must return home by 22.00 hrs.
- Students are not permitted to stay overnight in another home during their stay.
- If parents/guardians wish to have different curfew times, we need to have written permission from them which will always be forwarded to the hosts.

Emergency numbers. If something goes wrong, tell the school immediately. If it is an emergency you can get help from the police by telephoning '999'. Non-emergency number for lost or stolen property or when it is not life threatening situation is 101.

Please show your students the safest route to the school in the morning, and home when it is dark in the evening.

## First Aid

Within the homestay:

- If the homestay host suspects or is told of a medical condition by their student they must contact their GP surgery for advice and then phone the school. They may use the IH Torquay Out-of-Hours number for further non-medical advice if out of office hours.
- If it is a medical emergency dial 999.
- Out of hours GP and advice dial 111 (Devon Doctors).
- Inform International House Torquay of sickness or injury.
- Hosts must not medicate the student and only refer to qualified practitioners.

If you have received first aid training, you can provide basic care to your student until professional help arrives. For example, you can apply pressure to stop bleeding, elevate an injured limb, or use an AED (automated external defibrillator) if available. Always follow the instructions of the emergency operator and do not perform any procedures that you are not comfortable or qualified to do. If you have not received first aid training, you can still offer comfort and reassurance to the student and keep them calm and warm.

Notify the school immediately as to what action you are taking.

Communication is key to managing a student's medical emergency. You need to communicate clearly and respectfully with the student, their companions and emergency responders. Explain what you are doing and why, and ask for the student's consent if possible. Keep the student informed of what is happening and how long it will take for help to arrive.

A guest's medical emergency can be a stressful and embarrassing experience for them and their companions.

You need to protect their privacy and dignity by respecting their personal information, preferences, and belongings.

Do not share any details of the incident with other students. Do not take photos or videos of the student or the scene.

Do not touch or move the student's belongings without their permission or unless necessary.

Cover the guest with a blanket or sheet if they are exposed or cold.

After the emergency is over, you may need to follow up and document the incident to assist the school dealing with any future reporting.

## Bullying Policy

IH Torquay has a strict policy on dealing with bullying and homestay providers are expected to report any incidents or concerns about bullying to our Designated Safeguarding Lead. Bullying can be:

- Verbal - name calling, mimicry, aggressive language relating to someone's nationality, race, religion, physical appearance or sexuality.
- Physical - threatening behaviour or assault.
- Sexual - making unwanted sexual advances or innuendos .
- By anyone to anyone - e.g. student - student, staff - staff, student - homestay, homestay - student.

## SUPPORTING THE STUDENT AT RISK

We recognise that children and vulnerable adults who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world as benevolent and meaningful. They feel helplessness, humiliated and a sense of self-blame.

The school and homestay hosts will recognise the signs and symptoms of a child or vulnerable adult who may have suffered or witnessed abuse and act in a timely manner. If there is a disclosure, the child or vulnerable adult will be referred on for appropriate support and intervention.

The school will endeavour to support the student through:

- The school's ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives students a sense of being valued.
- All staff and homestays will agree on a consistent approach which focuses on the child and does not damage the student's sense of self-worth. That he/she is valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies which support the student, such as Torbay Safeguarding Board, Children's Services, Police, NHS and any International equivalent agencies.
- A commitment to develop productive and supportive relationships with the child's parents or adult's close relative whenever it is in the student's best interest to do so.
- Recognise that if an offence has occurred and a disclosure made against a person or persons, for example physical or sexual violence, drug and alcohol abuse, emotional or financial abuse, they will be vulnerable and in need of support and protection.
- We will follow the procedures for 'Missing Student'.

## UK LAW AND SCHOOL RULES

Laws and attitudes to things like cigarettes and alcohol vary from country to country. However, students are expected to abide by the laws of the United Kingdom and respect British values while staying here.

Cigarettes and Alcohol: It is illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to buy cigarettes or alcohol in the UK. Buying these items for someone below this age is illegal. You or any student over the age of 18 could be prosecuted for doing so. The school takes a zero-tolerance attitude to the use of alcohol by anyone under the age of 18 and this could result in them being sent home at their own expense. No student (even adults) should come home drunk.

Smoking: Those over 16 will not be reprimanded for smoking as long as it is away from the school. Cigarettes and items like lighters should be confiscated from anyone below the age of 16. Please inform the school and we will do this.

Inappropriate Relationships: It is important to maintain a friendly and welcoming atmosphere in your home, and encourage students to communicate and socialise with each other. However, there are no circumstances in which intimate relationships should be allowed to develop. Please inform us immediately if you require any guidance or assistance in this regard.

\*Any relationship of a sexual nature between a student (under 18) and a homestay provider is illegal. The school views as inappropriate any kind of relationship that could be deemed sexual or romantic between homestay providers and our clients.

# MISSING STUDENT PROCEDURE

If a student goes missing or you are worried about their whereabouts:

- Contact anyone you think may know their whereabouts
- Contact IH Torquay Out-of-Hours 07798 560 458
- If you are still concerned, contact your local police station
- You don't have to wait 24 hours before contacting the police

When to report a person missing:

You should report a missing person to the police immediately if:

- The person is a child – under 18 years old
- The person is a vulnerable adult – does your student speak or comprehend English well?
- You are concerned for the person's safety

How to report a person missing:

You can report a person missing in the following ways:

- Call 999 if the person is a vulnerable adult or child, or you believe them to be in danger, or
- Call 101
- Go to your local police station

What will happen when a report is made:

The Police will ask you to provide as many details as possible to enable them to find the missing person i.e.

- Personal details: Name, date of birth
- A photo
- Appearance including any distinguishing marks
- Contact details such as mobile number/ homestay information
- Medical conditions and whether or not medication is required
- Circumstances under which they went missing
- Details of friends and the places they have visited
- Description of clothing worn at time of disappearance When all checks have been made and the student's whereabouts still not discovered the Welfare Officer or Director would inform the parents or guardian within the hour that a search was being undertaken and Police involved.

## HOW WE CAN HELP STUDENTS STAY SAFE

The school will:

- Have a Safety and Welfare talk on their first day at school with a guided tour of Torquay explaining safe areas and areas to avoid at night
- Explain who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Advise students to travel together in 3s or small groups
- Provide public transport advice and a local taxi number
- Advise students to keep mobile phones fully charged with the homestays' mobile number and address plus the IH Torquay Out-of-hours number saved in their mobile phone
- Advise students to always tell their homestay and friends where they are going.

# DEVON AND CORNWALL POLICE

## ADVICE FOR HOMESTAYS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Devon and Cornwall is a popular destination for international students. This document will provide you with information as a host on how you can help keep students be safe and what to do if something does go wrong.

Devon and Cornwall Police has a website dedicated to keeping international students safe which is available in various different languages, please visit: [www.dcdhub.org/columbus](http://www.dcdhub.org/columbus).

Please show this website to the students staying with you to inform them:

- how to stay safe during their stay
- how the laws here may be different to their own country

What to do if something does go wrong?

Devon and Cornwall is one of the safest areas in the country but sometimes things can go wrong.

If an incident does occur it is important you report it to the police as soon as you can, as well as to the school. If an incident happens outside of school hours we would strongly recommend you to contact the police straight away rather than waiting for the school to re-open.

Contact the Police for:

- Emergency - Where life is threatened, people are injured, offenders are nearby or if immediate action is required with an urgent response.
- Non - Emergency - If a crime has already happened, to give information about a crime or to speak to your local officer.

Contact the Local Authority for other issues such as anti-social behaviour, graffiti, loud noise.

## For non-urgent reports you can contact Devon & Cornwall Police via any of the methods below:

Email: [101@dc.police.uk](mailto:101@dc.police.uk)

Report a crime or incident online: [www.devon-cornwall.police.uk/contact](http://www.devon-cornwall.police.uk/contact)

Call 101

Deaf/hard of hearing or speech impaired: Textphone: 18001 101 or SMS Text: 67101

## If it is an emergency always call 999

Deaf/hard of hearing or speech impaired: Textphone: 18000 EMERGENCY or SMS Text: 999 EMERGENCY (register your phone now for Emergency Text 999 service at [www.emergencysms.org.uk](http://www.emergencysms.org.uk))

There is also lots of information available on their website [www.devon-cornwall.police.uk](http://www.devon-cornwall.police.uk) which you may find helpful.

## Lost items can be registered via the website below:

<https://www.devon-cornwall.police.uk/contact/lost-and-found-property/>

## Online crime reporting form:

<https://services.devon-cornwall.police.uk/crimereporting/>

## MAJOR INCIDENT PLAN - SUMMARY FOR HOMESTAYS

International House Torquay has comprehensive emergency procedures in place to address a variety of potential crises, ensuring the safety and protection of students and staff members. These emergencies encompass medical incidents, missing individuals, transportation accidents, severe weather conditions, fires, power outages, explosions, chemical spills, suicides or deaths, sexual assaults, bomb threats, intruders, and other unforeseen crises.

### Medical Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency, hosts are advised to follow these compact rules:

1. Ensure personal safety first before approaching the victim.
2. Assess the situation and call emergency services (112 or 999) if necessary.
3. Provide clear details about the emergency, including the location.
4. Obtain consent before providing assistance.
5. Administer first aid if trained to do so.
6. Attempt to control any bleeding if possible.
7. Utilize first aid kits if to hand.
8. Do not move the victim unless absolutely necessary.

### Missing People

International House Torquay has specific protocols for handling missing persons and need hosts to:

1. Report any missing student promptly; waiting 24 hours is not mandatory.
2. Notify the school if an adult student is absent.
3. Initiate contact attempts with the student.  
If unsuccessful the school will escalate the situation by involving the safeguarding lead and, if needed, law enforcement.  
The school will continue to conduct thorough searches and inquiries to determine the student's whereabouts and maintain communication with relevant parties and provide updates as necessary.

### Transport Accidents

In the event of a transportation accident, staff members and homestays should be guided by the following compact rules:

1. Immediately report details of the accident to the emergency number.
2. Provide essential information, including vehicle identification and location.
3. Notify law enforcement if not already done so.
4. Ensure the safety and well-being of those involved.
5. Coordinate with transportation companies for necessary arrangements.
6. Refrain from speaking to the media; direct inquiries to the school office.

By adhering to these concise guidelines, International House Torquay aims to ensure a swift and coordinated response to emergencies, minimizing risks and safeguarding the school community.

If you are aware of an incident which may affect students at the school please call the office on 01803 295 576 or the out of office number of 07798 560 458.

## PREVENT TRAINING - RADICALISATION

This is a government strategy to stop people becoming involved in violent extremism and/or in supporting terrorism.

It is a legal obligation: The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a statutory duty on specified authorities (including colleges, schools, universities and others) to 'have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism'.

Free online training from the Education and Training foundation: <http://www.preventforandtraining.org.uk>

Please take the time to undergo this very important training

### Feeling Supported

Exposure to extremist materials and influences can lead to poor outcomes for students, even if they do not appear to be easily influenced. IH Torquay feels it is important to maintain a supportive and tolerant society within the school and our hosts. This includes recognising vulnerable students and reassuring and supporting them in a timely manner.

IH Torquay will promote the Core British Values of democracy, the rule of law, promoting individual liberty and having respectful tolerance of different faiths or beliefs. We will not allow students or staff to access extremist websites or allow verbal incitement of radical views.

For help or guidance on any aspect of Prevent, please contact Georgian Marin - the Prevent Lead at IH Torquay.

## STUDENTS IN OUR CARE

IH Torquay is mindful of the need to take all necessary precautions to protect children and vulnerable adults in our care and we adhere to the guidelines and recommendations of the British Council regarding this very important area.

Both the Children Act 1989 and the Disclosure and Barring Service give organisations recourse to run checks on the suitability of all family members of a homestay that hosts students under 18, in their homes. Certain people are excluded by law from having children in their care and as a responsible organisation we would not wish to jeopardise the safety of our young overseas students.

### Preventing unsuitable people from working with under 18s

The school will operate safe recruitment practices including ensuring appropriate DBS and reference checks are undertaken according to Circular DfES/0278/2002 Child Protection: Preventing Unsuitable People from Working with Children and Young People in the Education Service.

See South West Child Protection Procedures – Safer Recruitment:  
<https://www.dcfp.org.uk/training-and-resources/safer-recruitment-and-dbs-checks/>

The school will ensure that all staff, homestays and volunteers are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationships with students as advised by IH Torquay's Code of Conduct (see point 5 in the Homestay Code of Conduct).

- Everyone over the age of 18 in the household must have an up-to-date DBS check (less than 3 years old).
- If there is no current DBS check then IH Torquay can help process this. Please phone the school for a current price.
- The price of the DBS check will be taken from the next two consecutive payment runs.

### Pastoral care

The school and homestays have a responsibility to ensure that students feel safe and welcome at school and in your home. If you are given any indication or suggestion that all is not well on a health or mental level please contact our Designated Safeguarding Lead. This will be treated in confidence and the correct safeguarding and prevent procedures will be put in place through the right channels.

# PRIVACY POLICY - GDPR

At International House Torquay, we understand our responsibilities with regards to the types of personal information we collect and use throughout our business in order to deliver our English Language Learning services. We'd like to tell you as clearly and simply as possible how we look after this information.

When we talk about data and personal data in this Privacy Policy, we mean personal data which identifies you or which could be used to identify you such as your name and contact details.

## Personal data we collect about you

- Full Name
- Address
- Contact telephone numbers
- Contact email address
- Bank details
- Contract
- Risk Assessments on your property
- Ages of all residents
- DBS

## Who has access to your personal data?

We are dedicated to ensuring that personal data is accessible only to those individuals who require it to fulfil their responsibilities or the school's obligations. Access is strictly limited to the specific data necessary for each individual's role. This means the following people may have access to some or all of your data:

- The School Director and the Director / Owner
- Members of the Administration Team (including Admissions Officer, Finance Administrator, Accommodation Officer, Director of Studies, Assistant Director of Studies, Quality Assurance Manager, Finance Administrator Office Administrator, Activity Leaders and Social Programme Organiser)

## Who do we share your personal data with outside of the school?

In order to fulfil our regulatory and contractual obligations we will need to share your personal data with third parties outside of the school. We share some of your data with the following categories of third parties, but only where strictly necessary, and we ensure that we only share the minimum amount. We communicate clearly with the following parties the need for them to take as much care with your information as we do:

- ETOs – Educational Tour Operators (commonly known as agents)
- Students and their parents/guardians
- Quality Standard Inspectorates including The British Council, Quality English, IALC, International House World, EAQUALS
- Government Enforcement Agencies including The Home Office, Immigration, The Police
- Civil & Corporate – DBS Checking Service
- Taxi & airport transfer companies
- Data analytics companies

## How long do we retain your personal data?

We will retain all your personal data for the duration of your contract and then for a further 2 years to enable us to meet our regulatory and legal obligations. After 2 years all records will be deleted.

Our full Privacy policy can be accessed here: <https://ihtorquay.uk/privacy-policy/>

# CHANGES TO THIS HANDBOOK

If we make changes to this handbook and our terms and conditions we will show you what they are here. If these changes are significant, we may also choose to email homestays with the new details.

## Changes to this handbook by date

- January 2023 – Added Diversity and Inclusivity guidelines
- March 2023 – Safeguarding Team update
- November 2023 – Prevent Training review
- February 2024 - Dual School Bookings Safeguarding notice
- March 2024 - Safeguarding Team update
- April 2024 - Major Incident Plan Summary update
- May 2024 - Safeguarding Team update

## ACCREDITATIONS

Accredited by the  
  
for the teaching  
of English in the UK

