



# *Quest Guardians*

## **STUDENT HANDBOOK 2010/11**

**for Overseas Students staying with Host Families in the UK**

At *Quest Guardians* your health and welfare are our primary concern, **so please be sure:**

- ✓ that we have your latest mobile telephone number and email address
- ✓ that you know the *Quest* daytime number **01202 882299** and your co-ordinator's mobile number
- ✓ that you know the *Quest* 24-hour emergency number – **07545 50 22 55**
- ✓ that you call us if you have any concerns or problems

At *Quest Guardians* we aim to place you in the best host families, **so please be sure:**

- to respect your host family and their home
- to be polite at all times – “please may I have a banana” and “thank you”!
- to help with some of the household tasks, like clearing the meal table and washing-up the dishes
- to ask before you use any of your host's belongings or equipment
- to fit into your host's daily routines, especially bedtimes and use of the shower

At *Quest Guardians* we have three simple rules to make life happier, **so please be sure:**

1. not to smoke or take drugs at any time
2. not to drink alcohol without adult supervision
3. not to behave in a way that will upset people or break school rules

## You and your Guardian



### Welcome to Quest Guardians!

You are now one of a number of international students living and studying in the UK who are part of the Quest family.

Your school is a long way from home, so we are here to make your stay as happy and as trouble free as possible.

Upon your first arrival here in the UK or within a few days, you will meet either Chris Michelmores, director of Quest, or a Quest Guardians representative. You must not hesitate to ask questions at any time.....if in doubt do RING US!

### Who is my GUARIDAN?

Your **Legal Guardian** in the UK is the director of Quest Guardians, Mr Chris Michelmores. You can reach the office of Quest Guardians on 01202 882299 or in emergencies on mobile number 07545 502255. You will also have a Quest **Regional Coordinator** who will visit you at your school and will know your **Host Family**.

### What is a guardian for?

Boarding schools in the UK require all their students whose families live overseas to have a Guardian resident in the UK. Whilst your school, and in particular your housemaster or housemistress, take responsibility for your academic progress and your welfare during the school term, there are times during the term and more especially outside term time, when you will have need of your Guardian:

1. To act, when necessary, on behalf of your parents in situations where they are unable to do so due to distance.
2. To look after your welfare in the UK when the school is closed for holidays.
3. To provide a host family for you to stay with at Half Term and "Exeat" weekends.
4. To help you arrange your travel both in the UK (taxi, train or bus) and back home (flight bookings, taxi transfers).
5. To assist you with things you need - for example sports equipment, UK SIM card
6. To help you if things go wrong:
  - if you get into trouble at school
  - if you have problems with immigration or with your passport
  - if you get very ill and need to go to hospital
7. To be available for you anytime, particularly if you or your parents are worried about
  - Work
  - School
  - Your friends
  - The family you stay with

## **YOU and YOUR HOST FAMILY**

Quest Guardians make arrangements for you to stay in a Host Family for your Exeat Weekends and Half Terms. All of our host families are carefully selected by us and fully support our aim of making your stay as enjoyable as possible. It is probable that you will stay with the same host family each holiday, but changes can and do occur. There may well be one or two other international students staying with your family at the same time as you.

**Host arrangements are made one week after the start of term. It will be assumed that you require a Host Family unless you contact us in the first week of term with alternative arrangements (like returning home or staying with a relative) and we require your parents' consent (see below). If you cancel a Host Family stay at short notice, your parents will still have to pay the Host Family.**

### **What to do if you DO NOT wish to stay in a Host Family:-**

Quest Guardians staff are often informed by students (or parents) that they wish to make their "OWN ARRANGMENTS" for one or more nights' accommodation during Half Terms and Exeat Weekends. We have a duty of care to the parents and their children to protect the students and to provide safe host family accommodation. The following policy is used by all Quest Guardians staff when considering a request from a student (or parent) regarding alternative Half Term / Exeat care arrangements:

#### **Students Aged 18 or over on start date of Exeat or Half Term**

Parents Permission is required in writing by verified email or fax

#### **Students Aged 17 on start date of Exeat or Half Term**

As Above, plus we require full address and plans

#### **Students Aged 16 on start date of Exeat or Half Term**

As above PLUS we require a named adult, residing in the UK and over 25 years old, who will take responsibility for the student during the stay.

#### **Students Aged 15 or under on start date of Exeat or Half Term**

As above PLUS we require full contact with the adult and arrangement confirmed in writing. The adult will need to confirm that they will be taking responsibility for the student during the break.

The above is subject to amendment, if required, to comply with any particular school's policy.



## Staying with a Host Family

The Host Family will welcome you into their home and treat you as a member of the family. It is very important that you respond to this by treating the family with respect and that you do not treat their home as a hostel or hotel.

The following guidelines have been drawn up to make sure you have an enjoyable stay with your Host Family and to avoid any possible misunderstandings. Your Host Family will have similar guidelines on what they will expect from you during your stay. The whole arrangement is very much two-way - a positive approach by both student and family will ensure a happy outcome.

### What to take with you

The weather in England is varied, can be cold at any time of year, and is often wet. You will need warm clothes in winter! Don't forget your *COAT* and tough shoes!

*MANY STUDENTS DO NOT TAKE ENOUGH!!*

### Greeting

It is the custom in the UK to shake hands when meeting someone for the first time and to say 'hello' or 'good morning/afternoon'. When leaving we also shake hands and say 'goodbye' and 'thank you'.

You will be staying with a host family fairly close to your school. We try to arrange a transfer of less than one hour. The Host Family will be interested to hear about your family, country and culture, but your education in the UK is partly to learn about Britain and the British way of life, so - **LOOK AND LEARN** - watch the rest of the family and see how they behave, how they speak, what they do and how they do it.

### Mealtimes

You will be provided with three meals per day. For breakfast you should get toast and cereal, and perhaps an egg. **If you are late getting out of bed, you may miss breakfast!** Lunch is normally light, perhaps salad, sandwiches, cheese on toast and fruit or yoghurt. Most Host Families take their main meal in the evening, and Dinner should include meat (fish, chicken, red meat) and vegetables and a desert. If you have things you like or don't like please tell your host and they will try and provide accordingly, but remember the food will be very different to home, so do try everything - you never know you may like it! **If you are HUNGRY, please don't help yourself - ask the Host Family.**

Your family may be very interested in your own country's food - offer to cook!

Evening meal is often between 6pm and 7pm, but please **check the times of meals with your host. Be sure to watch your table manners:**

- Wait until everyone is seated at the table and has their food before you begin.

- If you want something, ask for it to be passed to you. English people use 'please' and 'thank you' frequently, so don't forget to do the same.



- It is the English custom to eat quietly, with your mouth closed!
- Hands are usually placed under the table when you are not eating.
- Stay at the table until everyone has finished and then ask to leave.
- When you leave the table, ask if you can help by taking your dishes to the kitchen, and leave them by the sink or place them in the dishwasher.

## Times to be home in the evening and bedtimes

If you go out, it is essential that you tell your host family where you are going in the evening. **Be sure you have the telephone number of the host family and that they have your mobile number and if you are delayed - phone the host family immediately**, otherwise the family will become extremely anxious as to where you are and may well go out to look for you. Phone our emergency number - 07545 502255 - and possibly call the police if you are in serious difficulty.

Quest provides guidelines to the Host Family about times to be home at night, as follows:

Aged under 14	<i>Must be accompanied by an adult member of host family</i>
Aged 14	Home by 8pm or before dark, whichever is the earlier
Aged 15-16	Home by 10pm
Ages 17-18	Home by 11pm

These times are provided as a guideline and any alternative times must be agreed with your Host Family. Your host should always know the whereabouts, how you are getting home, and how you can contact them and they you.

**Bedtimes** are at the discretion of the host. Please remember UK families often go to bed earlier than you would at home and many families **NEED TO BE UP EARLY** to go to work, therefore **please be considerate (do not take a shower late and night!) and QUIET!!**

Make sure that you spend time with your hosts each evening - do not spend the whole evening in your bedroom.



Make your bed and keep your room tidy, especially on your departure.

## Use of the bathroom

Your host family may need to use the bathroom as well as you and will tell you the most convenient time for you to use the bathroom and shower in the mornings and evenings. Please make sure you shower regularly (every one or two days) but remember that **hot water may be limited**, so you should only spend about 5-7 minutes in the shower. Make sure the shower curtain is on the inside of the shower cubicle to avoid flooding the bathroom. Host families will often need to be up early, so please don't make them late for work!

## Pocket money and valuables

Take sufficient pocket money with you, but do not carry large amounts of money around with you, and do not leave money lying around ANYWHERE, as we **cannot accept any responsibility for missing money** at school OR the host family. You should leave it in the school bank or open your own bank account. Your passport and air tickets should be left with your housemaster or housemistress.



## Telephones



Your parents or family at home will be given your host family's telephone number, which they can use to contact you. You should not make calls from your host's telephone without their permission. Any use will be charged back to your account.

Please use your mobile phone discreetly. Avoid the use of mobile phones in open places like the town centre, shops and cinemas, as this encourages thieves.

## Computers and the Internet

Most families have broadband connection, and many have wireless connections for your laptop. You must ask permission to use the Host Family's own computer, and please do not **download software or programmes (eg. MSN) on their PC**. Many host families have a limit on their broadband connection, making it expensive to download programmes even to your laptop and be logged onto the internet for long periods.

There are many internet sites that are illegal or offensive - you must not enter these sites and please be sure that your use of any computer in your host's home does not cause them any upset or offence.

## Laundry

Hosts are happy to help you with any washing you may have, especially during a longer break like Half Term. Ask your host if they would mind doing the washing for you (or offer to do it yourself) and where to put your dirty clothes. They will wash them and return them to you.

## Not allowed!!

Staying away overnight – is forbidden unless Quest Guardians have received specific permission, in writing, from your parents (see Page 3)

Friends overnight - you must not have other friends to stay overnight unless they have contacted Quest Guardians for consent.

Smoking - is not allowed at school or with host families. It is illegal under the age of 16 in the UK.

Drugs - it is not difficult to obtain drugs in the UK but it is **illegal**. Any student found with drugs or encouraging other students to purchase drugs, will be excluded from the school and most likely sent home. This also applies to students staying with Host Families for exeat and half term.

Alcohol - all schools, and Quest Guardians, have a policy banning the consumption of alcohol under the age of 18 years and it is illegal to purchase alcohol in the UK under the age of 18.

Hair colour and body piercing - Schools do not allow the students to colour their hair and you may not use hair dye in hosts' homes. It is the same for body piercing.



Good Luck and remember you are not in a hotel. You stay in the Host Family as their guest, and effort from you can make the stay enjoyable, relaxing and informative.

**If you are unsure, please contact us ..... anytime:**

Office Hours (Monday to Friday 9am-5pm)	01202 882299
Out of Hours	07545 50 22 55
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Address	Quest Guardians Ltd Sancroft House, Canford Magna Wimborne, Dorset BH21 3AE

Director and Child Protection Officer

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