



HOMESTAY HANDBOOK for Students

March 2025

Welcome to Celtic English Academy!

Since 2004, Celtic English Academy has been welcoming international students to the UK. Located in the heart of Cardiff, we take pride in our small class sizes, dedicated teachers, and friendly support staff.

We believe that staying with a homestay family is the best way to fully experience life in Wales. Our goal is to ensure that you feel comfortable, happy, and at home during your stay.

This handbook will help you understand what to expect from your homestay experience. Please take the time to read it and keep it handy so you can refer to it whenever needed. If you have any questions, feel free to email or call us—we're always happy to help.

We're delighted that you've chosen Celtic and homestay accommodation, and we know your host family is excited to welcome you!

Meet Alice and Claire, the accommodation team here at Celtic:



Alice Harper

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Word/Phrase	Meaning
Out of hours number (00) +44 7845 635 213	Phone number you call when you are in danger or terrible difficulty. You can call at any time. Save it on your phone.
Accommodation officer	The person at Celtic who can help you with any questions you have about your homestay.
Homestay accommodation	The place where you will live in Cardiff.
Homestay provider	The person you will live with. This person is also your host.
Curfew	The time that you must return to your accommodation at night.
Homesickness	Feeling unhappy or sad because you miss your home country.

Part 1: Homestay accommodation

Homestay accommodation is a great way to learn English, make friends and have fun during your stay in Cardiff. Coming to a new country can be scary. Your homestay provider will help you to feel at home and learn about Cardiff and British culture.

You will be a part of your host's home and you will be able to join their daily life and have many happy moments with them. You will spend time with them and share your stories and experiences. We hope that they will quickly feel like your second family.

All our homestay providers are very welcoming and friendly people, interested in foreign cultures and meeting new people. British people come from different cultures and backgrounds, but all our hosts are British citizens who speak fluent English. In modern Britain, couples are not always married, many people live alone, and single parents are normal to see. During your stay you will learn more about them and, hopefully, you will become good friends.

Living in a homestay home can be different from your own home. Do not be shy. Speak to your homestay provider and ask them questions. They are all experienced and they will be happy to answer any questions or give you advice. We are sure you will enjoy your time with them.

Your accommodation

What you will have in your room:

- a bed with fresh bed sheets which will be washed once a week
- a wardrobe where you can put all your clothes

You will also have a desk to study either in your room or another quiet room in the house.

Your host will wash your clothes for you once a week. If you want to wash your clothes yourself, please speak to your host first. They will show you how to use the washing machine.

What you will be provided:

- Towels
- Internet and Wi-Fi access

What you need to bring:

- Your own toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, shower gel, etc.)

Food

You will be given breakfast and dinner every school day and also lunch at the weekend. If you are under 18 years old, you will also get a packed lunch on school days.

- Breakfast: cereal or toast with some fruit and sometimes a cooked breakfast

- Packed lunch: a sandwich, packet of crisps and/or fruit and a drink (full-board booking only)
- Dinner: various meals such as curry, pasta, chicken with rice and salad and occasionally pizza or fish and chips

When you book your course, you have to let us know if you are a vegetarian, vegan, halal or if you have any allergies. We will find you a host that can prepare the correct food for you.

Homestay locations

Cardiff is a beautiful city and our academy is located right in the city centre. Most of our hosts do not live in the city centre. We have a few hosts who live within a 25 – 30 minute walk from the academy, but most of them live within 30 - 45 minutes travel time (walking combined with one public transport).

Pets at homestay accommodation

Many of our hosts have pets at home, such as dogs, cats, hamsters, birds and even rabbits. Pets are treated as a part of the family and are very much loved. If you have any allergies, or do not want to live in a house with pets, please let us know at the time of your booking.

Part 2: Life in Wales

Living in a homestay home can be different from your own home and culture. Be confident. Speak to your homestay provider and ask them questions. They are all experienced and they will be happy to answer any questions or give you advice.

Wales has an open and tolerant society where different ways of life, sexual orientations and opinions are accepted. Relationships and the way people act or dress in public may also be different to your home country. Do some research about authentic Welsh culture and visit www.wales.com/lifestyle to learn about the people who live in Wales.

Welsh people are friendly so making new friends can be easy. Be yourself and enjoy yourself in this beautiful country.

Cardiff

Cardiff is a small and an easy city to navigate. Before you arrive, we recommend you look at the location of our academy on a map and the location of your homestay accommodation. You will find the directions to the academy in the homestay information email, but it is good to see it for yourself before you arrive. It is also very helpful to check information about Cardiff, its culture, places to see and visit. A great website for this is www.visitcardiff.com

Transport

Another useful thing to do is to look at the Cardiff Bus and Transport for Wales websites and download their apps. You can do this before your arrival in the UK and you can buy your bus

tickets (Cardiff Bus) or train tickets (Transport for Wales) in advance so you are ready when you arrive. You can see the different types of tickets and prices on their websites.

- Cardiff bus website www.cardiffbus.com
- Cardiff bus app download www.cardiffbus.com/app
- Transport for Wales website www.tfwrail.wales
- Transport for Wales app download www.tfwrail.wales/purchase-your-ticket/app

Part 3: Leaving your country and arriving in the UK

Before you leave your country

After we find you a home here in Cardiff, we will send you an email or letter with information about your host. If you do not receive this information at least two weeks before your arrival, please email us or your agent (if you are using an agency).

We will send you:

- the name of your host
- details about them, their home and family
- their address and phone number
- how to travel to the academy

Please contact your host by email or phone. You can also ask to contact them using FaceTime, Zoom, Skype or WhatsApp. This way you can get to know each other and have an opportunity to talk to them before your arrival.

Please tell them:

- your flight number and time of your arrival to the UK
- how you are travelling to their home (taxi, bus, train, etc.)
- What time you will likely to arrive in Cardiff

The day you leave your country

On the day you leave your country (your departure day) call, text or email your host to let them know that you are leaving. If there is any delay with your flight or transportation, please let your host know as soon as possible.

If you miss your flight, the flight is cancelled or you cannot fly anymore please call us first on our emergency number +44 7845 635 213 and then inform your host. Save this phone number in your phone before you leave your country.

After you arrive in the UK

After you arrive at the airport, please call, text or email your host to let them know you have arrived safely.

If there is any emergency, please call us first on our emergency number +44 7845 635 213 and then inform your host that you will be late.

After you arrive you will probably be tired, but please take at least 20 minutes to sit down and speak to your host. This will be a good opportunity to get to know each other.

Here is some advice for your first evening.

- Introduce yourself, talk about your family, explain why you have come to Cardiff to study and ask your host some questions
- Any allergies or any medicine that you take
- Any food you like and dislike

If there are any problems with your homestay or you have any questions, please ask to speak to the accommodation officer on the first day at the Academy. The Accommodation Officer will be happy to help you with any questions or issues.

If there is a serious emergency after you arrive at your homestay that cannot wait until the next day, please call our emergency number on (00) +44 7845 635 213

Part 4: Your time in homestay

Making the Most of Your Free Time

While studying, you'll have plenty of free time to enjoy—whether with your new friends, your host family, or even by yourself.

Cardiff is a beautiful city with so much to see and do. Ask your host about their favourite places and activities—they'll be happy to share recommendations. Your host may also invite you to join them for a walk or an event. Feel free to go along and enjoy the experience, but don't feel pressured if you need to study or have other plans.

Your free time is yours to spend as you like, but please be considerate of your host's schedule. Many hosts work from home and have their own routines. While your homestay is your home during your stay, it's important that you don't spend all your time there. If you have afternoon classes, for example, try not to use the mornings just to sleep in and lounge around the house. Make the most of your time in Cardiff!

As a general courtesy, please inform your host if:

- You will not be coming home straight from the academy.
- You will not be eating dinner at home.
- You plan to stay out late or go clubbing (over 18s only).
- You would like to invite friends over—always ask for permission first.

Finally, treat your host with the same respect you would give to your own family. A good homestay experience is built on mutual consideration and communication.

Part 5: Homestay rules

The rules below are very important and you must follow them.

Rules for students under the age of 18 years

- **Your curfew (the time you must return home before) in homestay is 9pm if you are aged 15 and under or 10pm if you are 16 -17 years old. You must be at home every day before this time.**
- If you do not go home straight after the academy, you must always let your host know where you are, where you are going and what time you will be back.
- You are expected to have 100% attendance at the academy. If you cannot come to the academy (you are sick, do not feel well, etc.), tell your host and/or your parent and they must call the academy in the morning. If they do not call us, we will call them to find out where you are.
- You are not allowed to leave the Academy during your school hours. You cannot drink alcohol, buy cigarettes, enter a bar or a club. Many pubs/bars also do not allow under 18s to enter after 7pm.

If you break any of the rules, you may go through our disciplinary process and you might be removed from your course. Your parents will be informed.

Overnight trips for students under the age of 18

If you want to go for an overnight trip that is not scheduled by our academy, your parents must send us their written consent (agreement). This consent must be sent from your parent's email address. You must show this email to us at the academy and to your host.

- You must also let us, and your host, know exactly where you are going, where you are staying, the time of your departure and the time of your arrival as well as your contact telephone number.
- We will review this information and will let you know if you are allowed to go.
- We have the right to say no if we do not think the trip is safe.
- If we allow you to go and there are any changes to your schedule, you must let your homestay provider know immediately.
- You must keep our emergency number with you (+44 7845 635 213) at all times.

If you break any of the rules, you may go through our disciplinary process and you might be removed from your course. Your parents will be informed.

Rules for over 18 years old

Cardiff provides many opportunities for a great night out. You are welcome to enjoy the nightlife here, but you must ensure that you keep yourself and others around you safe.

- When going out at night, you must always inform your host and tell them your approximate arrival time home. Host providers usually do not mind if you go out late at

the weekend, but they might find it unacceptable during the working week (Sunday – Thursday evenings). Please make sure you follow the house rules of your host.

- Drink alcohol carefully – know your limits. Coming back home very drunk and being sick is unacceptable. It can also be dangerous if you are coming back home alone.
- The legal drinking age in the UK is 18 years old - you may be asked to provide identification (ID) when you buy alcohol. Do not buy alcohol for under 18s – this is illegal.
- If your host complains to us about you going out late during the academy week, disturbing the peace, or coming home drunk, there may be a disciplinary action taken against you.
- If you smoke, always follow the house rules. Smoking is only allowed outside the accommodation. It is not permitted to smoke inside restaurants, pubs or coffee shops anywhere in the UK.

If you break any of the rules, you may go through our disciplinary process and you might be removed from your course.

Part 6: Support from the Accommodation Officer

We're Here to Help

You can come and talk to us anytime if you have questions, concerns, or anything you'd like to share about your homestay experience. Our Accommodation Team, Alice and Claire—is here to support you throughout your stay and ensure you have a positive experience.

You can find us in the Operations Office at the Academy, or you can call us on +44 (0) 2920 344805.

Emergency Contacts:

For serious emergencies, please call our 24/7 emergency number: +44 7845 635 213.

We're always happy to help—just let us know how we can support you!

Extending homestay

If you would like to extend your homestay, please let us know as soon as possible.

To ask for an extension, you can ask in person at reception or ask the Accommodation Officer in the Operations Office.

If your host does not agree with the extension for any reason, we will try to find you a new homestay.

Do not leave it to the last minute because we need to give notice to your host provider. We also need to collect payment for the extension before we can approve it.

Changing homestay to another homestay

In special circumstances you can request to change your homestay before the end of your original booking. There must be a serious reason for this change and it has to be approved by the Accommodation Officer. Shorter distance to the academy or wanting to live closer to your friend are not serious reasons to change your homestay.

If you have a serious reason, please give us notice at least 10 working days in advance and we will do our best to find you a new home.

Changing homestay to student residence accommodation

If you would like to change from homestay accommodation to our student residence accommodation, please let us know and we can arrange it for you.

You can book the residence in person at reception or with the Accommodation Officer.

Please give us at least 10 working days' notice in advance. The number of rooms in the residence is limited so please do not leave it until the last minute. After we process your payment, we will be able to confirm your booking.

Please note that the residence is only for students who are over the age of 18 and it is self-catering. That means that you have to:

- Cook all your meals
- Do your own washing
- Cleaning your own room.

Cancelling homestay

If you would like to cancel your homestay altogether and find your own accommodation let us know as soon as possible.

We can give you general advice about where to look for private accommodation, the approximate cost of bills, what areas in Cardiff are safe and things which are important when you are looking for private accommodation.

Please give us at least 10 working days' notice in advance. Please note that this option is only available for students over the age of 18 years old. Terms and conditions apply.

Payments

For any kind of accommodation, you can pay in person at reception by card or in cash. You can also pay online. If you would like to pay online, please send an email to info@celticenglish.co.uk and we will send you the payment instructions.

Feedback

You will be asked for feedback during your stay in Cardiff. An Accommodation Officer may also ask to come and see you and talk about your experience in your homestay. You are always welcome to visit us in the Operations Office at any time and give us any comments and feedback about your homestay, or you can email info@celticenglish.co.uk.

It does not matter if the feedback is bad or if it is good, we always want to hear your opinions.

Part 7: Enjoy your stay in our homestay

Once again, thank you for choosing to stay with one of our hosts and study at our academy. This is a great experience for you and your host alike. We always want to make sure that you are happy, safe and getting everything from your stay here that you need.

Please stay in touch with our Accommodation Officers and let us know how you are getting on.

Good luck!