



Host Family Handbook

Updated: 20/04/21

UK2Learn Guardianship Ltd “UK2Learn” provides a personal, yet professional guardianship service for international students studying in the UK. We are a small, family company that knows all our students personally and our high level of experience means we can cope with all demands.

We aim to make sure that each student can fulfil their academic potential in a safe, caring environment as a member of the UK2Learn family.

Key information

Address:	UK2Learn, Crossways, Heath Lane, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1UN
Office number:	+44 (0) 1483 425500 (Monday - Friday, 09.00 - 17.30)
Office mobile number:	+44 (0) 7786 934555 (Monday - Friday, 09.00 - 17.30)
Emergency number:	+44 (0) 7917 820033 (available at all times)
Email:	guardianship@uk2learn.com
Office opening hours:	Monday – Friday, 09.00 - 17.30
Office closed:	UK Bank Holidays and Christmas Week

Welcome from Alex Mackie



Welcome, my name is Alex Mackie and I am the Director of UK2Learn. At UK2Learn we do everything we can to make our students feel welcome and to safeguard and promote the student's welfare outside of school. We take great care to select host families that will take a genuine interest in the students they host and also respect their privacy, cultural background, religious beliefs and dietary needs.

Thank you so much for offering to host; the warmth and generosity shown by our host families helps enormously to contribute to the enduring success of UK2Learn’s guardianship services and I wish you an enjoyable hosting experience. If you have any questions or need help, please contact me. You can also speak to any of my amazing guardianship team, they are always on hand to help you if things go wrong, if you have a problem with your student or you just need someone to talk to.

If you could please read this handbook and make sure that you are happy with it all and if you have any questions, you can of course just ask. This handbook is designed to help our hosts provide the best possible experience to their students and it should answer any questions that you might have but if you do want to ask us anything, by getting in touch by email, WhatsApp or WeChat.

Meet the UK2Learn team



Sheila Hastings-Rose – Student Care Coordinator

Sheila provides full-time support for UK2Learn students, liaising with parents, students and schools, travel arrangements, the booking of host families and other administrative duties. As a qualified EFL teacher, Sheila has worked in schools both in the UK and abroad and enjoys getting to know the young people in her care to make sure they are happy and well cared for. Sheila has a son and daughter in their early twenties and a little dog called Misty.



Lucy Barton – Student Care Coordinator

Lucy provides full-time support for UK2Learn students, assisting with all day-to-day matters whilst also updating UK2Learn's social media channels. Lucy also ensures that the UK2Learn office runs smoothly and all students have a range of exciting activities to get involved with at the weekends. Lucy loves baking, yoga, theatre, travelling and all animals.



Emma Rowe – Accounts Manager

Emma is our accounts manager and deals with invoicing and other financial matters. Emma is married and has two children a daughter currently studying music at Oxford University and a son studying at a local private school. Emma was also a boarding school student herself, so knows all there is to know about boarding in the UK.



Philip Canton – Transport Manager

Philip is our transport manager and will be a very familiar face to lots of our students as he will likely have driven them to or from school at some point. Philip is actually a distant relative of Alex's, being a third cousin. When Philip is not driving, he enjoys surfing, kite surfing, diving and just generally being near the ocean. Philip is married with 3 children and has 2 small pugs.

Role of the Guardianship

In the UK it is a school requirement that overseas students have a guardian based in the UK over the age of 25. The guardian must be contactable 24 hours a day, seven days a week to offer parental, logistical and emergency support. The students' school will be responsible for them during term time but during exeat weekends, half term, during the holidays or if the student is sick, a formally appointed educational guardian will take responsibility.

As Guardian, UK2Learn will deliver a service that enhances every aspect of an overseas student's stay in the UK. UK2Learn works closely with the school, houseparents and all staff, associates and host families to support a caring and personal ethos that UK2Learn values so greatly, thus ensuring that all of our guardianship students receive the highest standard of care possible.

All staff, associates and homestay families are asked to support this caring and personal ethos that UK2Learn values so greatly, thus ensuring that all of our guardianship students receive the highest standard of care possible. With representatives and homestay families throughout the United Kingdom, help and assistance is never far away.

Role of a Host Family

UK2Learn has lovely network of varied host families and always places their students with the most suitable host family depending on the students' particular needs. The role of a host family is to provide the following:

- Provide a warm, safe and caring home environment
- Provide a comfortable bedroom with bed, desk, chair and space for your student's clothes
- Provide 3 nutritious meals each day and additional snacks and fruit between meals if required
- Include your student as one of your family
- Provide safe WiFi internet access
- Be contactable to UK2Learn 24/7 in case of an emergency
- Respecting cultural differences
- Ensuring your students health & safety is of paramount importance
- Ensuring that your student is safeguarded and their welfare is continually promoted
- Attending or completing any relevant training sessions or courses that UK2Learn provides
- Alerting UK2Learn immediately if you have any concerns

Whether a married couple, a family, a retired couple or a single parent it can be an incredibly rewarding experience and many of UK2Learn's students and host families stay in touch for years to come. It is an opportunity for host families to open up their home and share their day-to-day family life with a UK2Learn Guardianship student. For the student, staying with a host family enriches the entire learning experience as it allows them to immerse themselves into British culture, the English language and experience a local way of life.

Welcoming your student

When your student first arrives at your home it is important to be welcoming, show them your home, their room, and explain any routines that you might have, this could be simple things such as removing your shoes before going upstairs, meal times and when is a good idea to use the shower. When you are showing them around the house you can also demonstrate how to use various appliances and equipment, they are likely to use during their stay; this could include the toaster, kettle, TV, shower, bath, etc.

If you have any pets, we ask that you introduce the student to them and show how you want them to be treated, for example if your dog likes to be stroke. We also suggest making it very clear at the start which rooms in the house are out of bounds to them, for example your bedroom. Whilst we always recommend telling your student the out of bounds areas and house rules as quickly as possible, we ask that you try to do it in a sensitive manner so that they still feel like they are at home, staying in an unfamiliar environment can be a very anxious time for students.

Accommodation

Bedroom

Your student's room should include a bed, desk or table and a chair, drawers, hanging space and rubbish bin. All UK2Learn students require their own bedroom unless otherwise agreed.

Bathroom

Your student should have access to a bathroom – whether it be shared or en-suite. Please let your student know the best time to use the bathroom, especially if you have a busy house in the mornings or evenings. Most students are used to taking at least daily showers in preference to a bath. Make sure your student knows how to use the shower, the toilet facilities, where to put any rubbish and if appropriate, make sure you explain the arrangements for disposing of sanitary items.

We also recommend that you suggest a maximum time to use the bathroom or shower, lots of students will be used to unlimited hot water and are not aware the hot water in the UK can run out if a house uses a hot water storage system. You should also ask your students to leave the bathroom clean and tidy. It is occasionally necessary to discreetly monitor the student's personal hygiene in order to maintain good health; so daily showers, regular teeth cleaning, hair washing and regular changing of clothes should be encouraged.

Meals and food

You should provide your student 3 nutritious meals each day and also show them where they can get a quick snack, fruit or drink for themselves.

We suggest that you offer your student a selection of the following meal ideas. Please note this is not an exhaustive list and you are free to add any ideas of your own.

Breakfast: cereal, toast, fruit, eggs, bacon. Students do not need a full English breakfast but many enjoy scrambled eggs, omelette or eggy bread. Older students are often happy to cook their own breakfast.

Lunch: pizza, pasta, sandwiches and wraps, yoghurt, ice cream, fruit. Please note that many students from the Asian continent do not enjoy bread the same way the Europeans do.

Evening meal: casseroles with chicken, pork and beef, pasta bakes, Bolognese, lasagne, stir fries, rice, salads, plenty of vegetables, yoghurt, ice cream and fruit.

Some students find English food particularly bland, no matter how long you have spent cooking - please do not be offended if they ask for extra condiments or cover their meal with hot sauces and spices. Most students will welcome the opportunity to accompany you to the supermarket and if possible, you could let them choose one or two of their favourite meals or snacks. Before your students first meal, please check what meat your student is happy to eat, for example, Thai students tend not to eat beef and Muslim students are unlikely to eat pork of any kind. Before UK2Learn places a student with you, they will let you know about any dietary requirements and allergies and we ask that you check with your student before you cook their first meal.

It is very important that you treat your student as one of the family during their time with you. This means eating and socialising with them and can include small tasks such as setting and clearing the table just as a family member would. Occasionally, your student may need to prepare their own meal independently; with particular reference to breakfast, if the student oversleeps so you can show them how they can do this.

Laundry and cleaning

You will need to provide your student with clean bedding, two towels and you should make sure their room is cleaned on a weekly basis. However, you are not expected to tidy up after your student or to make their beds in the morning and you can encourage them to keep their room tidy.

Please provide your student with a laundry basket, or tell them where they should they leave their clothes and explain to them that you will wash their clothes during their stay or you may prefer to show your student how to use the washing machine.

Occasionally, your students will need their school uniform laundered but please call the UK2Learn office for more guidance on this matter.

Bedtimes and Curfews

We ask that you agree a suitable bed time appropriate for your student's age. Here are some guidelines regarding curfews, these are discretionary and may need to be varied according to the individual child:

Aged 12 and under

Visiting the local shops: Are allowed to go with an adult
 Bedtime: 21:00 (must be in their bedroom, showered and ready for bed)

Aged 13 and 14

Visiting local shops: Are allowed to go with their friends but must be back at 17:30
 Bedtime: 22:00 (must be in their bedroom, showered and ready for bed)

Aged 15

Visiting local shops: Are allowed to go alone but must be back at 18:00
 Bedtime: 22:00 (must be in their bedroom, showered and ready for bed)

Aged 16 and over

Visiting local shops: Are allowed to go alone but must be back at 18:00
Bedtime: 22:30 (must be in their bedroom, showered and ready for bed)

On all occasions, your student must tell you where they are going and who they will be with and you should agree in advance at what time they will be home. Please do not allow the student to walk home in the dark. Your student must not be allowed to stay out overnight unless expressly agreed by the UK2Learn team.

Communication and internet safety

You should exchange numbers students and host families should exchange mobile, landline and any other useful contact telephone numbers. The student should keep their mobile phone switched on, charged, and notify you if there is a change of plan.

Please also ensure that your students know to dial 999 for Police, Fire or Ambulance should any such emergency arise whilst they are staying with you and explain the use of 101, the non-emergency line.

Students expect wireless access to the internet but it is important that you limit and monitor their use carefully. Please provide your student with the wireless password when they first arrive.

Students use the internet for academic work and also to stay in touch with their family and friends during the holiday period. We are unable to place students in host families who have no internet access. We explain to students that they are not allowed to download large files, such as films, games and music, as this can lead to problems with your normal access but it is very difficult to monitor this; please notify us if you are experiencing any difficulties.

Please ensure that you have adequate parental controls in place on your internet as the student will need access to various social media sites and video calling sites such as Zoom or Skype. In terms of time controls, please do as you would with your own children and use common sense; the student should not be allowed to stay up past their agreed bedtime using the internet.

Students will usually phone home using their mobile phone on your WIFI and due to time differences, it's possible that your student will phone late at night, we recommend that you agree a time with your guardianship student when it is acceptable for them to receive or make telephone calls. There is no need for your student to use your landline for international calls.

You should feel free to switch off the internet if it is being used excessively or at unsociable hours. If you are concerned about your student's use of the internet, in particular, the type of websites they are accessing either through your internet provider or through their mobile data, or the length of time that your student is spending on social media, please contact the UK2Learn office. For more advice, please refer to the NSPCC website, www.nspcc.org.uk and www.net-aware.org.uk

Discipline

If there is a disciplinary issue with your student or if you have any concerns about their behaviour, please contact Alex Macke immediately, on either 01483 425500 or 07917 820033.

Health and safety

When your student first arrives, you must explain your basic fire escape routes, access to the outside doors, and the location of any necessary keys.

We request that attention is paid to the suitability of any activities the you might organise for your student or that they might ask to take part in and that you discuss this first with UK2Learn beforehand, for example, if your student wanted to go, go-karting or climbing.

Medicines and other potentially harmful chemicals must not be stored, unlocked in any bathroom that your student is using or might use.

It is your responsibility to make sure that all electrical appliances in your house are safe, particularly in your students' room and we recommend that you PAT testing each electrical appliance annually.

You must ensure that you complete a risk assessment of your property prior to your student's arrival. It must detail any potential hazards, for example such as a busy road or a deep pond in the garden. When you first show your student around your property you can point these potential hazards out to them. In order to complete a risk assessment, you will need to complete a specific risk assessment form that will be given to you before you first host a student.

All gas appliances are to be inspected annually by a Gas Safe registered plumber, and a Gas Safety Certificate provided to UK2Learn. Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms must be fitted inside your home.

A basic first aid kit must be available to your student and as a minimum, it must contain plasters, sterile eye pad, triangular bandages, safety pins, non-medicated wound dressing, disposable gloves and a leaflet giving guidance on first aid.

Cultural and Religious Differences

Most students have excellent levels of English but we ask you to double-check they understand and take extra time to make sure; just because a student nods in agreement, it does not guarantee they have understood. Please be patient and sympathetic to cultural differences and encourage your student to talk about their own customs and to be open. We will inform you in advance of your student's arrival if there are any special religious considerations that you will need to make.

Whilst many of our students love pets, some students have had very little contact with any dogs or cats and consider them unhygienic and frightening. Please be sensitive to this, particularly when the student first arrives.

School and Education

It is likely that your student will have been given homework to complete during their time spent with you. We ask that you check with them to see if they have any homework to complete and give them some encouragement to complete it all before they return to school. If you are responsible for collecting and returning your student to school, UK2Learn will agree pickup and drop off times with you in advance. If you or your student agree any changes to the original plan, please inform UK2Learn as we will need to inform the student's school and/or parents.

UK2Learn remains the primary educational guardian, maintaining contact with the school as necessary and you will not be expected to have any direct contact with the school. However, if your student speaks to you about their school and mentions any problems that they might be having you must immediately alert UK2Learn to any concerns that you or your student have. In very limited situations, you may be contacted directly by your students parents or their school and we ask that you please copy in or update UK2Learn to any conversations that you have had.

Insurance

It is your responsibility to notify your insurance company about hosting a student in your home and to check if any further coverage is needed; you should have insurance in place that offers cover for paying guests. We suggest doing this for your car insurance as well. It is advisable to ask for written acknowledgement from the companies concerned.

UK2Learn remains legally responsible for all the undertakings of the student's guardianship; every host family is therefore protected by UK2Learn's public liability insurance; however, if the host family is found to be responsible or negligent, UK2Learn's insurance will not apply and the host family will need to rely on its own insurance.

The student's parents are advised that they are responsible for making certain that the student is adequately insured within the United Kingdom in the event that they cause personal injury, loss or damage to members of the host family or other third parties. They are also responsible for insuring the student's belongings such as mobile telephone, computer, musical instrument, watch, sports or other equipment.

Tax Liability

You are currently entitled to earn £7,500 per year from hosting students without incurring any tax liability. This amount is separate to any other form of income you may earn.

For further information please refer to the HM Revenue and Customs Website: <https://www.gov.uk/rent-room-in-your-home/the-rent-a-room-scheme>

Other occupants in the house

You must inform UK2Learn if there are any other students, lodgers, or additional family members that do not normally stay in your house during the time a student is due to stay with you. You will need to complete an 'Additional occupants form' form that will be given to you before you first host a student.

Changes to your circumstances

Please advise UK2Learn of any changes to your circumstances as soon as possible. In particular, this includes changes to those in residence at your property.

Training

UK2Learn will provide the primary care giver of the host family online safeguarding training, 'Introduction to Safeguarding Children (Level 1)', this safeguarding must be refreshed every 2 years.

UK2Learn is committed to the following

The welfare of our students is paramount. All students, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, disability, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in a fun and safe environment.

We will take all reasonable steps to protect our students from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings. All suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse as outlined in UK2learn Child Protection Policy will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

We recognise that all matters relating to safeguarding are confidential. However, all staff – including host families - must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. The student's rights of confidentiality should be respected and will only be overridden if it is necessary to do so in order to protect the student's safety and welfare. All host families must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing.

It is the clear responsibility of any member of staff or host family to immediately report any suspicion or allegation of abuse of any kind to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), at UK2Learn the DSL is Alex Mackie and he can be contacted on 07917 820033 or amackie@uk2learn.com.

The 24-hour Childline Service continues to be available on 0800 1111. All calls are free and confidential, and trained counsellors will help any young person with any problem.

Alternatively, you can report your child protection concerns about any adult to UK2Learn's local child protection team: Surrey County Council LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer):

Vikkiy Scott-Mitchell
Senior Team Admin- Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership
Surrey County Council
Email: Victoria.ScottMitchell@surreycc.gov.uk
Tel: 07929 857 817

Guidance on Responding to Disclosures from Students

- Stay Calm
- Listen carefully to what is said
- Do not promise to keep secrets – find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the

information will need to be shared with others

- Allow the child to continue at his/her own pace
- Ask questions for clarification only and avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared
- Record in writing what was said, as soon as possible, using the child's own word – note the date, time and names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that all records are signed and dated
- Inform the DSL as soon as possible

Please remember that it is not your duty to investigate any safeguarding concerns that you might have.

Safeguarding Pathway

Child Protection is part of safeguarding and promoting welfare and refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer significant harm.

Under s.47 of Children Act 1989, significant harm is defined as ill treatment (including sexual abuse and physical abuse) and/or impairment of health (physical or mental) or development (physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural). The Local Authority has a duty to make enquiries where it has reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering harm.

Under s.17 of Children Act 1989, a child shall be in need if they are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health and development without the provision for them of services by a local authority under this part and/or their health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, without the provision of such services and/or the child/young person is disabled.

What is abuse?

Abuse can be; physical, emotional, neglect, sexual. Signs and Indicators of each type of abuse could be:

Neglect

Tired/listless
 Unkempt
 Untreated medical conditions
 Medical appointments missed
 Constantly hungry or stealing food
 Overeats when food is available
 Poor growth
 Poor/late attendance
 Being regularly left alone or unsupervised
 Dressed inappropriately for the weather condition
 Having few friends and/or being withdrawn
 Ill equipped for school

Emotional

Failure to thrive
 Attention seeking
 Over-ready to relate to others
 Low self-esteem
 Apathy
 Depression/self-harm
 Drink/drug/solvent abuse
 Persistently being over-protective
 Constantly shouting at threatening or demeaning a child
 Withholding love and affection
 Regularly humiliating a child

Physical

Sexual

Unexplained injuries
Injuries on certain parts of the body
Wary of adults/running away from home
Injuries in various stages of healing
Injuries that reflect an article used
Flinching when approached
Reluctant to change
Crying/instability
Afraid of home
Behavioural extremes
Apathy/depression
Wanting arm and legs covered even in very hot weather

Age inappropriate sexual
behaviour/knowledge/promiscuity
Eating disorders/depression/self-harm
Unexplained gifts/money
Stomach pains when walking or sitting
Bedwetting
Recurrent genital discharge
Sexually transmitted disease

UK2Learn policies & handbooks

We have a wide range of policies, procedures, handbooks and a list of safeguarding documents available to support you, they can be found on our website: www.uk2learn.com/policies/

This Agreement Review

Handbook published date: 20/04/2021
Handbook review by date: 20/04/2022
Responsibility for handbook review: Lucy Barton/Alex Mackie