

2024/25

HOST FAMILY  
**GUIDELINES**

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# WELCOME MESSAGE

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**Kathy Donovan**

SLS Director

Thank you for taking the time to read our guidelines and conditions. In accepting a student from SLS, families will be deemed to have agreed to these conditions. It is very important to us that we deliver a high quality service to our students, agents, schools and host families. All our team at SLS work hard to provide a high standard of professionalism and continually strive to improve our delivery of student programmes. We would be delighted to hear any suggestions you may have that could help us.

## SLS Programmes

### **High School / Academic Programmes**

- Short Stay (4-12 Weeks)
- Term Programmes (1st Term, 2nd & 3rd Term)
- Full Academic Year Programme

### **Summer Programmes**

- Host Family Immersion - June to August, 2 - 6 Weeks

### **Work Experience Programmes**

- Year Round Programme; 2+ Weeks

### **Short Stay Programmes**

- School Groups 1+ Weeks







# BECOMING AN SLS HOST FAMILY

Home stay accommodation is not the same as staying in a guest house or in a hotel. It is a stay with a friendly, welcoming family where students are treated as members of the family and have the opportunity to speak English and interact.

Each host family will have their own house rules which should include information on the use of the kitchen, bathroom, laundry, etc. Please ensure that your students are clear on these at the beginning of their stay. Students should join in family life as much as possible and behave with respect and courtesy to the host family at all times.

It is strict policy that all families are visited by an Accommodations Officer (Dublin) or a Student Coordinator. Visits will be pre-arranged and our Accommodations Officer / Student Coordinator will need to see the common rooms of the house and student bedrooms. They will also talk to you for a period of time about hosting. This is an opportunity for you to ask any questions or address concerns you may have about hosting students.

We promise our students clean, comfortable homes in a family atmosphere, where they will be provided with a good standard of hospitality. This is what SLS will want assurance of when we come to visit you. A good general guideline for all families is to imagine how you would like your child to be treated if they went to live with a family abroad.

## STEPS TO BECOMING AN SLS HOST FAMILY

1. Complete SLS Ireland's application form online: <https://www.slsireland.ie/become-a-host-family/>
2. Once your application has been received you will be contact by one of our accommodations team in your area to arrange a home visit.
3. You will be sent Garda Vetting forms that will need to be completed and sent back to SLS with the relevant identification documents. SLS will then submit your vetting to the National Vetting Bureau. All persons in a house over the age of 16 are required to be vetting.
4. Once your vetting disclosure has been received back to SLS, your home visit has been completed and all parties are happy to continue, you will be registered on our SLS Host Family Database.
5. Once registered, you will be contacted by our accommodations team once we have received a suitable student application for you and your family.



# GENERAL INFORMATION & HOST FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

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SLS would like to welcome you as a host family and we hope you enjoy the experience of hosting our students in your home. SLS have welcomed students from all over the world for many years and great relationships and friendships have been developed. It is important to SLS that we find suitable and compatible relationships between students and families to ensure the experience of hosting is beneficial to all involved.

Every student is assigned a Student Coordinator to assist the student and the host family. Student Coordinators will visit host families to introduce themselves and develop a relationship to assist and support the family.

SLS students are required to give feedback on their experiences in Ireland, in schools and their host families. We would also love to hear your experiences also.

Unless requested by the student, there can be no more than one student from the one mother tongue in the host family. SLS will do its best to provide our host families with students. Any family accommodating students outside of SLS must give reasonable notice to avoid doubling up on any nationality.

## KEY EXPECTATIONS

- A warm, welcoming and safe environment
- To provide three meals a day for the student
- To provide a packed lunch on days out and school days
- To do their laundry once a week
- Included as part of family activities & mealtimes
- To allow moderated internet access where possible
- Encourage students not to stay in their bedroom
- Be sensitive to the needs of the student
- To encourage the student to speak English at all times
- Your student should not be encouraged to go out all the time

# RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HOST FAMILY

## General

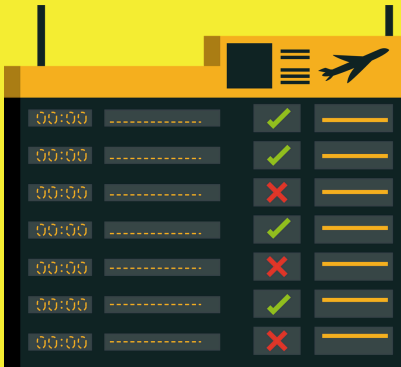
- SLS must be informed if the family will not be at home any evening or be away for the night. Under no circumstances should a student be left to look after themselves, regardless of the freedoms they have in their own country. This is in order to protect the student, the family and the family home.
- Students must return home every night unless SLS has informed you otherwise.
- The host family should treat the student as they would their own children regarding house / family rules and discipline and ensure that the student is aware of, and understands this.
- If a student asks for a sleepover, either in your family or another family, this must be firstly agreed with by the Student Coordinator and then by both families.
- If a student asks to go to a party / club etc. please discuss with your student coordinator.
- Access to a house key and alarm codes should be the same as host family children's rules.
- It is up to the host family whether they give students under 18 a key. Students over 18 years of age should receive a key and house alarm codes if necessary.



## Academic Year Students

- The host family should bring the student to school on the first morning and give clear directions for getting to and from school, including details for public transport.
- Ensure the student attends school, punctually and in full uniform (if applicable), on a daily basis. If the student is unwell please contact the school and notify the Student Coordinator.
- Ensure homework is done and encourage the student to study.
- Please ensure you exchange contact phone numbers between yourself, your student and their Student Coordinator.
- Check the student's school journal regularly for teacher's comments and notify co-ordinator of any concerns you may have regarding how the student is settling into school academically and socially.
- On school nights, students should remain in the host family home, or close vicinity unless partaking in extra-curricular activities.

## Arrival / Departure Information



- Depending on the programme, students may be dropped directly to your house on arrival or collected directly from your house on departure. If your student is arriving or departing as part of a group, your student may need to be collected or dropped off at a designated meeting point.
- Should a family not be able to do this they should make alternative arrangements for collection/drop off.
- Meeting points and times will be given in advance of the student's arrival / departure.
- Students are not allowed to travel unaccompanied in a taxi.
- It is the responsibility of the host family to monitor arrival flights. Families will not be phoned if a flight arrives early or late.
- Arrival / Departure and collection / drop off details may change from time to time. In the event of this happening SLS will contact you.
- Host families are not obliged to bring their student to/from Dublin Airport at any point.
- SLS advise that families do not make any direct arrangements with students or their families in respect of airport transfers as you may be responsible for expenses incurred because of check-in issues, delays or missed flights.

## Accommodation Requirements



- All students require the availability of a daily shower with adequate hot water and towels.
- A change of bed linen and laundry should be provided weekly.
- Encourage the student to keep their bedroom as neat / tidy as possible.
- Students are part of the household and therefore should keep their bedroom clean and help the family clear up after meals.
- Should a student damage or break any item, their parents will be asked to compensate the family where appropriate. SLS should be informed of any damages immediately but takes no responsibility for it.

*Accommodation requirements may vary with different programmes / groups. Specific arrangements will be discussed with you during the booking process.*

### Academic Year:

- Students must have their own bedroom, unless otherwise requested by SLS.
- A clean, tidy bedroom with a desk or table for study.
- Adequate storage space for clothes and books should be provided.



# MEALS

Meals are provided by the host family in accordance with normal family life. Mealtimes are a very important aspect of the student's experience of host family living and should be an occasion for conversation and enjoyment. Meals should be varied and nutritious, catering for any allergies or dietary requirements (i.e. vegetarian, coeliac, lactose intolerance) the student may have. Host families will be made aware of these in advance.

## KEY POINTS

- A student should never eat dinner alone.
- Please ensure that your student knows to inform you if they will be late for dinner, or do not require dinner, and offer an explanation.
- Encourage and involve the student in the preparation and clearing up of meals.
- At weekends lunch is with host families.
- Extra food / snacks such as a light supper, or hot bedtime drink should be agreed between the student and host family.
- Students shouldn't take food from the kitchen without permission.

## IDEAS

### **Breakfast**

Cereal, Bread / Toast, Jams / Spreads.

Tea / Coffee / Juice.

### **Lunch**

Sandwiches (4 slices) / Bagel / 2 small rolls / wraps etc. with different daily filling.

Bottle of water / juice.

Piece of fruit (varied daily).

Snack / Cereal bar.

Popcorn / Yoghurt / cheese strings or similar.

### **Dinner**

Meat / fish and vegetables with pasta / rice / noodles / potatoes or similar.

Dessert.





**TIME TO**

**GO HOME**

# FREE TIME & CURFEWS

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Student's free time varies depending on their age and programme.

In regard to students under the age of 18 years, we advise host families to set their own limitations and not allow them to leave the local area unless with an adult.

Students under the age of 18 years are not permitted to go to the local town at night or attend discos or other such events without prior permission from SLS.

Curfews are at the host family's discretion and should vary depending on the students' age.

Host families should ensure their student arrives home by the designated time. If they do not, you should contact them directly. If this is not possible you should contact SLS or Student Coordinator.

If a student continually disobeys their curfew you should inform SLS or Student Coordinator.

Students over the age of 18 years (who are not participating on the Academic Year Programme) may have an extended curfew once agreed upon in advance.

SLS have guidelines in place for those students who want to travel outside of their county. If a student asks to travel outside their county, please contact the local coordinator for advice on this.

SLS also have guidelines in place for students in the city/town centres, the curfew time depends on the time of year and area. Please contact your local coordinator for advice on this.

Curfews may vary for some programmes, SLS will notify you of this in advance.

## **SLS's General Curfew Guideline (Friday - Saturday)**

**Under 14**

**Under 16**

**16+**

**20:00**

**21:00**

**22:00**

# USE OF HOUSE TELEPHONE / INTERNET

The use of the house phone, computer or Wi-Fi should be limited and with the permission / agreement of the host parents.

Any outgoing calls or related expenses must be paid directly to the family by the student before they leave as SLS will not be responsible for collecting / reimbursing outstanding charges.

All secondary school students will come to Ireland with a mobile phone and access to data.

Students must obey any rules a host family has with regards to internet usage within the house.

# TRAVELING TO / FROM

Students walk, use public transport or take a private bus to school and / or activities.

Families are expected to help students find their way on the first day.

Please note, SLS does not expect you to drive students to / from school / activities etc.

# SMOKING / VAPING / ALCOHOL / DRUGS

Smoking, vaping, alcohol and drugs are strictly prohibited. This has been agreed with students' parents.

If the host family has any concerns regarding any substance use they must inform SLS.

If a student requires prescribed medication, the host family will be notified in advance.

# PROBLEMS WITH FAMILY / STUDENT

Should any problems arise we suggest firstly talking to the student to try to find a solution.

If the problem continues, or you feel you cannot deal with the situation, please call your SLS coordinator.

In the event that either the host family or student is unhappy, SLS will arrange alternative accommodation. If this occurs, the family will only be paid for the time the student spent in the home.



# MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

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SLS should be informed of any medical or other incidents immediately. If outside of office hours please call your Student Coordinator or our Accommodations Officer.

Host families should deal with any emergencies in the same way they would with a member of their own family. This may require phoning the police, ambulance or doctor etc.

Should your student be ill and appear to need the attention of a doctor, please do not hesitate to contact your family doctor and at the same time inform SLS.

All medical costs and associated costs are covered by the students'. If a host family pays for any medication / visits to doctors they should keep all receipts and will be reimbursed by SLS or the student.

Please ensure you obtain a receipt and a doctor / hospital medical report to ensure we can refund you. The report is to say the doctor has seen the patient and what they diagnosed. This is very important and please do not leave the surgery / clinic / hospital without it or the money will not be refunded. If a student has private Medical insurance, the company may not refund the costs on receipts alone and may require reports.

EU students should have their European Health Insurance Card (E111) with them.

# PAYMENT DETAILS

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For academic students host families are paid every four weeks (28 days) in arrears. For every other programme host families are paid at the end of the student stay, if less than four weeks.

The rate of pay is agreed on student placement. The rate is calculated per night and families will only be paid for each night a student stays in their house.

If a student leaves or is moved from your house for any reason, you will only be paid for the number of nights the student has stayed with you. If a student wishes to extend their length of stay, this must be arranged through SLS.

Please do not discuss any payment details with your student or their families.

During the academic programme host families are not paid for Easter or Christmas Holidays unless the student stays with the family during this time. Host families are paid for mid-term breaks in October / February whether their student stays with the host family or not.

Payments are made by cheque or bank transfer. Please send details to: [info@slsireland.ie](mailto:info@slsireland.ie)

SLS cannot be considered responsible for any damage, theft, injury, expense or inconvenience which may occur as a result of a student's stay in a host family.

If a student fails to arrive, every effort will be made to find another student. There is no payment if the student does not arrive.

# GDPR - DATA PROTECTION

SLS have policies in place to ensure that host families meet required minimum standards. Family inspection reports, together with student feedback on their stay are used to assist with placing students with host families appropriate to their individual needs.

Personal information is held in accordance with data protection legislation. Such information will not be forwarded by SLS to any unauthorised third parties and will only be used for the purpose of carrying out its regular day to day functions. All personal data is treated with the strictest confidentiality and in compliance with data protection legislation. For more information please visit <https://www.slsireland.ie/privacy/>

Agents, students and their families receive information prior to their arrival giving details about your family host family. For Academic Year & Summer students, this is in the form of a host family profile, which includes the information about your family including photos.

It is important that host families inform us of any change of address, telephone number, personal circumstances and family or pets living at home.

All data provided to SLS will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. Any details provided by you may be shared with related parties as part of the booking process, e.g. Sending Agent and Work Placement Provider.



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