

Household Agreement Guidance Notes for Hosts

The attached household agreement can be used to assist you and your guests to reach a mutual agreement about how to live together well. It will establish shared expectations which can help both parties avoid disagreement or resentment.

If there are any questions which do not feel relevant to your household, you can remove them. Similarly, if you simply don't mind how that thing is done, remove the question. The agreement can always be reviewed and/or added to at a later date as needed. Try to keep it clear and simple. It's the sort of thing many students draw up for sharing accommodation.

In order to avoid the agreement becoming a very long document, some potential areas of disagreement are not included. If any of the following feel especially important or relevant to you, you may wish to add them:

- Who pays for outings you do together?
- Who pays for fuel when you provide lifts?
- Can the family use over the counter medication/first aid items you have?
- If something in your home is broken by your guests, who will pay for it to be fixed or replaced?
- If there are teenage children, do parents need to wait up for them to come home?
- If there are teenagers, are they allowed to drink alcohol?
- Can children walk themselves to/from school?
- If you have someone working from home, do others in the home need to be quiet so as to not disturb them?
- If you and your guests both have children, how do you want disagreements between the children to be resolved?
- What noise level is acceptable indoors and outdoors?

How problems may arise

It's natural for people who live together to disagree about things – we all have our good and bad days, and we can all get irritated by other people's behaviour. Making an agreement right at the start can help with this.

Dealing with disagreement

- Tackle any disagreements or problems early – don't wait for things to build up.
- If you are upset or cross, calm down before you start the discussion.
- Listen to what your guests have to say – it could be that someone in your family is at fault or there may be things you don't know about.
- Be ready to negotiate – you will need to compromise on some things.

- Choose your battles – you can't sort everything out at once, so what is most important to you.

Language

- You are doing this in your first language – it's much harder for the guests.
- Try and remember to talk slowly and clearly and using simple language.
- Realise that a problem may arise from a genuine misunderstanding to do with language.
- Remember it's incredibly tiring to use another language the whole day – after a certain point in the day/evening, your brain can just give up!
- Do find out how to use Google translate.
- There are Ukrainian volunteers who can help with interpretation if you really need them, but try and talk things out first.

Emotional sensitivity

- Your guests are likely to have had a long, tiring and possibly frightening journey – they will need to catch up on sleep.
- Your guests may have had some traumatic experiences which they may or may not want to talk about – don't ask intrusive questions and wait for them to open up.
- Your guests will be worried about friends and relatives in Ukraine and other countries, and may be trying to contact them at all hours of day and night.
- If you like watching TV news or listening to radio news, check if your guests do or don't want to hear information and news about Ukraine and inform them if you want to get the news.
- It's very difficult being a guest in someone else's home, especially if they are a stranger. We British people often expect others to express gratitude (perhaps more often than is usual in other cultures).

The host/guest relationship

This will go through phases, ups and downs. There may be a honeymoon period – or difficulties right from the start! Keep a sense of humour and don't give up too soon. It really is usually possible to sort things out! Don't forget that your guests are not going to be exactly like those in other families. And not all hosts are the same – Ukrainians will have different experiences in different homes and are likely to compare notes. But it's going to be helpful if you can be clear about what is important in your home.

It's a generous and important thing that you're doing, and well worth the challenge. You will certainly learn a lot – both about your guests and Ukraine, but also about yourself and your family. You may even end up with friends for life!

Household Agreement

This agreement will help us live together well. It will help everyone know how we can share a home together. The agreement explains who does what in our home and how we all like things to be done. We can change it in the future if we need to.

Each question provides sample answers. You can circle the relevant answers or you can create your own.

What is shared?

Which spaces in our home are shared? Which spaces are private? (Circle in the lists below)

Shared

Sitting room
Kitchen
Dining room
Cupboards/storage space
Office
Toilets & bathrooms
Utility room
Bedrooms
Conservatory
Garden
Garage
Cellar

Private

Sitting room
Kitchen
Dining room
Cupboards/storage space
Office
Toilets & bathrooms
Utility room
Bedrooms
Conservatory
Garden
Garage
Cellar

Will we share food and drink?

Share all food/drink

Share only some food/drink

Not share any food/drink

Where should we keep food that isn't to be shared?

In a designated (specific) cupboard or shelf

In private rooms

Label it

Will we share cleaning supplies, laundry detergent and loo roll?

Yes

No

Are the things in the sitting room like the TV, game consoles, toys and books to be shared?

Yes

No

Only these items are shared:

Does anyone have special items that they don't want anyone else to touch?

Yes (show it)

No

Money

Who will pay for food?

Host

Split the cost

Each family buys their own

Who will pay for household items like laundry detergent, washing up liquid, soap, shampoo, loo roll, etc?

Host

Split the cost

Each family buys their own

Will the Ukrainian family need to pay for a share of the gas, electricity or water? If so, how much?

Yes, £ _____/month

No

Using the phone, internet and TV

Can the phone be used? Local calls only or also international? Is a contribution to the cost needed? If so how much?

Yes, all calls

Yes, local calls only

No

Contribution to cost? _____

Are there house rules on mobile phones, like not using them at the table?

No special rules

No phones at table

No phones after ____pm

Other:

Can the wifi be used? Are there times when someone working from home needs priority?

No it can't be used

Yes it can be used

Times when _____ needs priority are _____

Can the TV be used by everyone? Does it need to be off at certain times?

Yes it can be used

No it can't be used

It needs to be off after ____pm

Cleaning and housework

Who cleans the kitchen?

Host cleans kitchen

Both families clean up after themselves

Take turns cleaning

How often should dishes, pots and pans be washed?

Dishes, pots and pans washed after each use

Dishes, pots and pans washed once daily

Who cleans communal rooms and bathrooms?

Host

Take turns

Other:

How often should communal rooms and bathrooms be cleaned?

Daily

Every other day

Weekly

Other:

When can the washing machine and/or dryer be used?

Anytime

Only at night

Only at these times:

Going out and coming in

Who will have keys?

Can outdoor shoes be worn inside?

Yes

No

Where should bags and shoes be stored?

By the door

In the hallway

In a cupboard/wardrobe

On pegs/shoe rack

Other:

What time should everyone be home by?

Weekdays:

Weekends:

Can the Ukrainian family have visitors? How many and how often? How long can they stay for?

Yes

No

____ people at a time for ____ hours

Bed times

When do people need to be quiet?

After ____ pm and until ____ am

Use of car

Can the host help with lifts?

Yes

No

Only very occasionally

How far ahead should the Ukrainian family ask if they need a lift?

When it's needed

That morning

The day before

The week before

Smoking

Is smoking/vaping ok inside? Outside?

Not ok inside or outside

Ok inside

Ok outside (show where)

Alcohol

Is it ok to drink alcohol in the home?

No alcohol

Drinking is ok but not being drunk

Ok only on certain days

Ok any day

For homes with children

Disciplining

Are there kinds of discipline that are not allowed in the home?

No hitting

No shouting

Other:

What should the host/Ukrainian parent do if the other person's child misbehaves?

Discipline the child

Tell the other parent so they can handle it

Childcare and supervision

Can the host offer any childcare?

Yes

No

Only very occasionally

When should childcare be requested/arranged?

When it's needed

That morning

The day before

The week before

Can the parent leave the children at home while the parent is out? For how long?

Children can't be left at home while the parent is out.

Children can be left at home for ____ hours at a time.

Can the children have friends over?

Yes

No

Yes, but only on these days/times:

Routines

When do people in the home wake up? From what time is it ok to be in the communal areas?

Wake up at:

It's ok to be in communal areas from:

Can the children be in communal areas while the parent sleeps?

Yes

No

When do the children go to bed?