

Policy on Under-18s in Homestay Accommodation

All English UK members, and therefore members of Young Learners English UK are inspected by The British Council Accreditation UK scheme every four years. They are required as part of the scheme to abide by the criteria detailed in the Accreditation UK handbook regarding placement of under-18s in homestay accommodation.

(See Accreditation UK Handbook 2010-11, Welfare and Student Services, Accommodation: homestay and private home; W16, W32 – W42 -www.britishcouncil.org/accreditation.htm)

- All accredited centres have an accommodation officer. It is their job to check new host families and inspect the accommodation provided on application and thereafter every two years. Accommodation officers also monitor and investigate any complaints from students and are required to keep records of complaints and feedback from students in homestay accommodation.
- Accreditation UK inspects accommodation provision of a centre on a sampling basis every four years as part of the standard inspection cycle. If there are any concerns regarding homestay provision for under-18s, Accreditation UK will request a further 'spot-check' or follow-up inspection of homestay provision.
- There are special accreditation criteria which centres have to meet for the safeguarding of under-18s:
W16 Before students under 18 are placed in homestay accommodation, the prospective host (main carer will:
 - *be required to sign a declaration that they and other adults in the home are not unfit to be in contact with such students*
 - *be informed in writing that DBS checks may be required*
- Under-18s are only placed in homestay accommodation with other under-18s. They are never placed with adult students (18 and over).
- If under-16s remain with a host family for more than 28 nights, the family has to be registered with the local authority social services department as a foster carer, and is subject to inspection by them (ultimately overseen by Ofsted, who inspect children's services).
- There is at least one named member of staff at all centres to deal with student welfare. This person is identified to the student on arrival.
- There is an emergency 24 hour contact number given to all students on arrival.

In addition to these accreditation criteria, schools will have a student complaints procedure as a clear channel of communication for students to report any concerns they may have with the host family, or indeed **any** other aspect of their stay. A written questionnaire is given to the student in the early stages of the course for them to comment on all aspects of their host family accommodation and to ensure that any necessary remedial action is taken.