



LIVING WITH A HOST FAMILY – AUG/2025

Getting used to living with a new family in a different country to your own will take a little time, but there are some key things to remember:

- You are expected to ‘fit in’ with your host family’s way of doing things, not the other way around.
- You should be prepared to try all kinds of new food, unless you have a stated reason (medical, religious, moral, etc.) not to.
- Respect the family’s rules and their home: be on time for meals, and let your host know in advance (i.e. in the morning) if you are going to miss dinner. Keep your room clean and tidy and don’t leave rubbish around, particularly food waste, such as uneaten sandwiches. Don’t spend too long in the shower, and be careful not to cause any water damage through showering. Respect the family’s rules regarding heating.
- Communication is key, including small things like saying ‘good morning’ at breakfast, ‘bye’ when you leave the house, ‘hi’ when you come back, and ‘goodnight’ when you go to bed. Adopt the Irish cultural habit of saying ‘please’ and ‘thank you’ more than you would at home. Body language is also important so smile, even if you’re having a bad day.
- Please talk with the host family members if you are worried about anything. If for whatever reason you don’t feel comfortable to do so, please reach out to your Local Coordinator or the Independent Listener. Offer to help with chores around the house. Helping to wash the dishes after dinner is also a chance to chat.
- Try and begin conversations, rather than just speaking when you are asked a question. Tell your family about your life back at home.
- Make sure you always let your host family know what your plans are when you are away from home, and when to expect you back. Stick to the curfew times and make sure you are always contactable so the family is not worried about you.
- Remember that some host family members might go to bed early because they have to leave for work early. Don’t have loud telephone conversations in your room late at night, or do other noisy things at unsociable times that may disturb the household.
- Observe good personal hygiene: shower and change your underwear once a day, and use a deodorant. Do your laundry once a week, on a day agreed with your host mum, and don’t expect her to iron your clothes – you should do that!
- Don’t invite friends to the house without checking that it’s OK with your host family first.