

WELCOME TO
IRELAND



SECONDARY SCHOOL IN IRELAND

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Dear Exchange Students,

Welcome to your Secondary School in Ireland Programme! There are very exciting and enjoyable times ahead for you over the coming months as you get used to a new family, a new school and a new country. By the time you reach the end of your programme, we hope that you will feel partly Irish and that you will look back on your time in this country with fondness.

Of course there will be some challenges and frustrations while you get used to the “Irish way,” but we will do our best to help and support you during this transition. This handbook outlines the programme regulations and will help answer many of your questions. We also have a local support network in place.

Your EIL local coordinator will be your most important source of help and advice. He or she lives nearby and you should call him or her if you have any difficulties or problems. All of them are very friendly and helpful. However, please realise that most of them are mothers or fathers with families and that getting in touch with them late in the evenings or at weekends may be more difficult. Of course you can contact your local coordinator or an EIL staff member at any time in case of an emergency.

Please take the time to read this handbook carefully. Keep it close by during your time in Ireland and refer to it if you have any questions.

Have a wonderful time in Ireland-take the opportunity to learn as much as possible about the country. Irish people can be a little shy or distant at first, but do take the time and make the effort to get to know us and you will find friends for life.

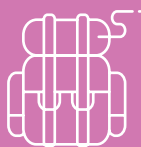
Cead Mile Fáilte!

(A hundred thousand welcomes)

EIL Study Abroad Team



Share your stories - we love to hear them!



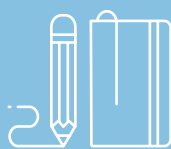
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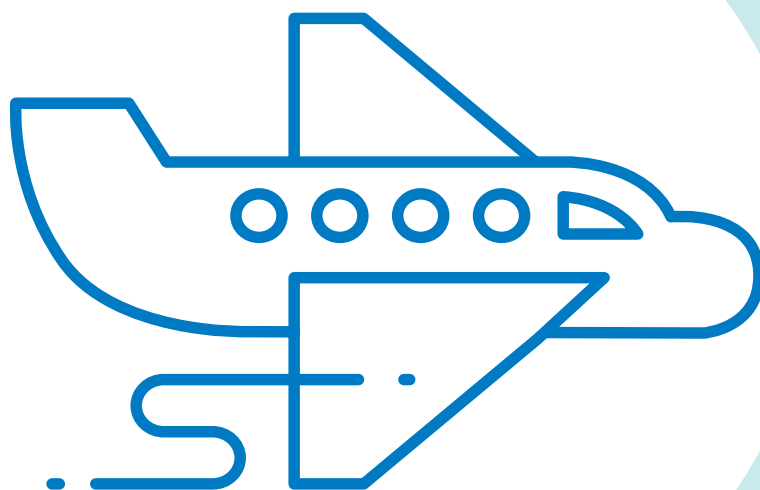
Share your journey:

- Share your life changing experience with family and friends and spread the word about EIL Ireland.



1.

INTRODUCTION





Who is EIL Ireland?



EIL Ireland is based in Cork City. The Experiment in International Living (EIL) was founded in 1932 to promote international peace and friendship through intercultural education programmes. It has evolved into a world-wide federation, and was first introduced to Ireland in 1964. Since then it has gone from strength to strength. This year (2019), there will be over 200 students placed in communities around Ireland. In 2018 EIL Ireland became the 61st national member of the AFS Intercultural Programs Global Network. AFS Ireland is operated by EIL Intercultural learning and now offers a range of AFS programs including High School Abroad.

Our mission is to involve people in intercultural learning in order to develop an understanding of and respect for people of the world and to advance world peace.

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EIL INTERCULTURAL
LEARNING
ENRICHING LIVES • INSPIRING GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP
STUDY ABROAD



The Programme - What it includes



Introduction

- An arrival orientation will be held for all students within the first month of arriving in Ireland. This orientation will cover programme issues, give a cultural introduction to life in Ireland, give tips for living with a host family, discuss how to deal with culture shock and cover problem solving techniques.
- Full board and accommodation with a host family for the duration of the programme. All families will be interviewed and selected on the basis of their interest in educational exchange and their ability to provide a positive home environment. Host families in Ireland receive a non-commercial hospitality allowance.
- Enrollment in a local secondary school, if there are children in the host family, students might not necessarily attend the same school as them.
- Supervision by the local EIL coordinator and/or EIL staff.
- Administrative and counseling services.
- Return transfers from the indicated airport of arrival/departure (within hospitable hours).





Ireland - Did you know?



Teenagers

- Many teenagers work after school or on weekends at part-time jobs.
- Most teenagers have chores that they are responsible for at home.
- Most teenagers have a curfew.
- Smoking is illegal for all under 18's.
- Clubs and discos are limited to people 18 and over; there are relatively few dance places for teenagers other than those organised through schools or parish committees.



Local communities

- Most towns in Ireland would have basic transport service, but not all host families live in towns. It may not always be suitable to get someone to take you to town by car.
- Local youth, drama and sports clubs are the best way to meet people.
- Local communities are generally very interested in learning about other cultures.
- Not all activities may be available through school, but many are organised through local communities and activity/sports clubs. You may need to ask for certain hobbies or try something totally new!



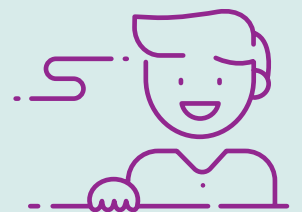
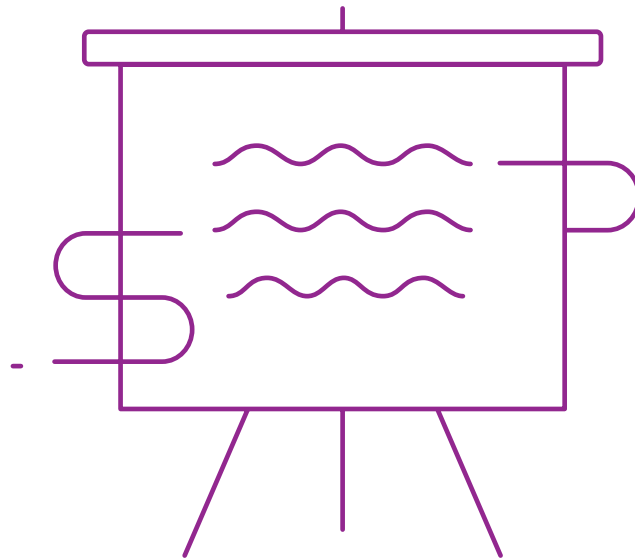
Families

- Both parents work either part-time or full-time outside of the home.
- Both parents participate in household chores and parents expect their family members to share in daily chores, too.
- Parents expect their children to ask for permission before going out.
- Parents expect to know where their children are going, with whom they are going, how they will get where they are going and what time they will return.
- Parents expect their children to call or leave a note if their plans change. This does not mean its OK all of the time- ask for permission first.
- Parents expect their children to call if they will not be at home at the agreed time.
- Families often spend time together in activities and conversation, but usually while doing a task together.
- In some families, meals are not eaten together because of busy schedules. Oftentimes meals are eaten in front of the TV.
- Breakfast is rarely eaten as a family.
- Most families are very busy with work, sports and lessons of various kinds.
- Families are often very protective of their exchange students.
- It is normal for families to sometimes have arguments and disagreements.
- Not all families have access to the internet, and may prefer students to use facilities in the local town.
- Not all families are two-parent families.
- Most host families are conservative in their lifestyles, especially concerning sex, drugs and alcohol. Persons under 18 are not allowed to consume alcohol or smoke cigarettes. It is illegal.



2.

Rules & Responsibilities





The Laws in Ireland:

DRUGS

The possession, sale, or use of illegal drugs is considered a serious crime in Ireland. Persons violating drug laws will be tried in court and in most cases jailed.

TRUANCY – MISSING SCHOOL

Students of school age must attend classes in the school which they are enrolled. Leaving school property during school time or skipping school is a punishable offence.

SHOPLIFTING

Stealing something from a shop is a serious violation of the law in Ireland. Shoplifters are arrested, fined and punished. Students in EIL's programme who are caught shoplifting are sent home immediately. Stealing from your school, host family or peers is also a punishable offence and subject to prosecution and immediate dismissal.

DRIVING

The purchase or driving of a car, motorbike or any motor vehicle while participating in the programme is strictly prohibited. It is illegal to drive without a valid drivers license and valid insurance. Students who drive a motor vehicle while on EIL's programme will be returned home.

SEATBELTS

Everyone in a car is required to wear seatbelts. Failure to wear seatbelts can cause serious injury or death in the event of an accident.

STATUTORY RAPE

People aged 18 or older who have sexual relations with minors (17 or under) may be guilty of statutory rape even if both parties were willing participants. If the legal authorities press charges, a person convicted of statutory rape can go to jail.

A student on the EIL programme who is arrested for violation of any law will be sent home immediately. This can also affect your status with immigration officials and have an effect on your ability to visit the country again in the future.

What the rules mean for you:

It is important for you to read and thoroughly understand the EIL rules. A copy of these rules is given to your host family, and they rely on the fact that they can expect that you understand and agree to abide by them. These rules were devised to give everyone the foundation for a successful, safe, and satisfying homestay experience.

A student who does not adhere to those rules may be released from the programme, be sent back to his/her home country and have his/her visa revoked.

Early termination of the Programme

EIL reserves the right to send home any student whose health requires this action, or whose conduct is considered improper or offensive to the host family, community coordinator or school. Such conduct includes drug use, unacceptable behaviour, drinking, violation of law, or failure in school work. In this event the student is returned home either alone or accompanied. Parents or guardians are responsible for all expenses above those covered by the fee. Refunds are not available for participants whose programme is terminated prematurely.





IRELAND SPECIFIC RULES – must be signed by student and parent

Students must abide by the laws of Ireland.

Students under 18 or turning 18 on the programme are not allowed to purchase or drink alcohol.

Students under 18 or turning 18 on the programme are not allowed to smoke.

Students are not permitted to drive any motor vehicle while participating in the E.I.L. programme

Students may not participate in any sexual contact or sexual activity that may be considered inappropriate.

Students are not permitted to participate in skydiving, hang-gliding, bungee-jumping, parachute jumping or any other dangerous activities.

Students may not participate in illegal downloading or file-sharing of music, videos, or any copyrighted material from the internet.

Students must abide by the EIL Travel rule (see attached)

Any infraction on the above 8 rules may result in immediate dismissal from the EIL programme.

Students must always be aware of their responsibility as exchange students and make a determined effort to represent their country in a positive manner.

Students must follow school rules, attend school daily, complete all school assignments and attempt to maintain at least a “C” average.

Students should limit making international phone-calls, Skype and time spent on the internet. Phone calls and internet usage must be paid for. Internet may not be available in some households or maybe be restricted with time limits.

Students must show respect for their host families and act as a member of the family by following family rules and voluntarily helping with family chores. Students must respect the judgement of their host parents as they would their natural parents.

Students should not discuss their host family’s private affairs with their peers. This includes being responsible for content that is posted on web-based social networking sites. Posting or viewing inappropriate material on the internet or mobile phones will be disciplined.

Students cannot change host families and schools at will.

Students must show respect for all EIL representatives and follow their instructions.

Parental or family visits disrupt the integration process and are not permitted during the first 6 months of the programme, and after that only with the prior approval of EIL Ireland. Natural family are not allowed to stay with host families. Return to home country by the student during the programme is only permitted in exceptional circumstances such as a family emergency.

Infraction of any of the above rules may result in dismissal from the programme and/or disciplinary action.

I have read the above rules and I agree to be bound by them.

Signature of student _____ Date _____

Signature of parent/guardian _____ Date _____





Travel Rule – Ireland

The safety of your son/daughter during their stay in Ireland is our top priority. We are also obligated to work within specific laws and guidelines set down by the Irish Government in relation to Child Protection. This becomes especially complicated when your son/daughter wants to travel and spend overnights away from their host family within Ireland. It is not possible for us to accept responsibility for the safety and welfare of exchange students when they spend overnights in accommodations or locations which have not been visited and vetted by our staff. This also includes overnights with friends from school or from home.

EIL does understand that from time to time more mature students will want to travel without adult supervision, especially those on long-term programmes. To make this possible we need your co-operation and support. To ensure your child's safety and welfare as well as the integrity of the programme values, it is required that you read and agree to the conditions below. The "flexibility" to travel independently is a privilege and not a right. EIL Ireland reserves the right to refuse any travel requests during the programme. Travel to see visiting friends and family members in Ireland will only be allowed once prior permission has been granted by EIL Ireland (not within the first 6 months at all).

As an exchange programme the hope is that your son/daughter will discover a Ireland and its culture in a more meaningful way than visiting as a tourist. The best way to do this is by integrating into and becoming part of your host community. To protect against becoming a tourist programme independent trips will be limited and authorised on a case-by-case basis once proper forms have been completed. To see Ireland as a tourist, students are free to travel after their programme has ended.

Travel during the programme will require that the natural parent sign a document which states that for the period of the trip, the student will be considered "off" the programme and during this time the host family, local coordinator, EIL Ireland and partner organisation, will have no responsibility or liability for the welfare of the student. Any student who spends a night away from their host family without first getting this authorisation from EIL Ireland will be considered to have broken one of the most serious programme rules and will be sent home. Independent Travel **will not** be permitted if it involves the following:

- Any trip that involves missing a school day or part of a school day.
- Return visits to home country* including holiday periods such as Christmas and Easter.
- Students who are under the age of 15, 16 if non EU.
- Any non-EU student who is not yet registered with the GNIB (Immigration Garda)
- Any student who is already not permitted unsupervised travel by their sending organisation. (i.e. Australia & Japan or other, please check)
- Travelling between December 24-26th and December 30th - January 1st.
- Travelling to Dublin or other major cities on March 17th
- Breaking of any other terms and conditions that may apply to certain organisations (please check)

Participants are limited to one independent trip per term





Requests to travel must be made by the student to the local coordinator at least 14 days before the intended travel date.

How the student can make this request will be explained during their arrival orientation. Any requests coming directly from the natural parents will not be accepted.

Student and natural parents must have permission from EIL before booking any flights. If a trip breaks any of the above rules it will be refused regardless of the amount of money a participant might potentially lose by not getting permission. Please also be aware of airline guidelines regarding U16s as they may not be allowed to travel.

A student may only proceed with a trip when the local coordinator confirms that the EIL Ireland head office has approved the request. Permission to allow / disallow a trip is not the responsibility of the host family or the local coordinator.

Unawareness of the above rules and regulations about Travel will not be accepted as a defence.

*Return visits to home country will be considered in the event of a family emergency. We may ask you to provide documentary proof to support any request such as a letter from a doctor etc.

I have read, understood and agree to abide by the above regulations in relation to unsupervised Travel on the EIL Ireland Secondary School exchange programme.

Parent Signature: _____ (Parent 1) _____ (Parent 2)

Student Signature: _____



PROGRAM CONCEPT

The exchange student lives with a host family as a family member, while attending a local secondary school for the duration of the visit.

PROGRAM PURPOSE

To learn about host country culture by actively participating in family, school and community life. To help students improve their written and oral knowledge of the host country language. This results in better understanding and tolerance among people throughout the world.

EXPECTATIONS

Adapting to a new family, school, friends, language and culture is very challenging, and often difficult, but always rewarding, with benefits for the student's lifetime.

IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF HOST COUNTRY, LIFE & CULTURE

The socio-economic standing of families varies greatly, and may be very different from that of the student. Hosts live in various areas and regions and are likely to live in suburbs, small towns, villages, rural or semi-rural locations. Placement in urban or suburban areas is not guaranteed in any way.

Most host parents supervise the activities of their children, some quite firmly. Teenagers usually ask permission to go places, go only where they have been permitted to go and must return by the agreed hour, or phone if they will be late for whatever reason.

The rules for all activities away from the family, especially evening activities, will be set by the host parents and must be honoured by the student. Host parents expect their children to share the burden of household tasks. All students are to accept their share of this work as a member of the family. Smoking is becoming more of an unacceptable behaviour in most countries. Purchase of cigarettes by students under 18 is illegal in Ireland. Students may not drink, buy or possess alcohol.

YOU SHOULD ALSO KNOW THAT:

Students normally have one family for the duration of the program. However, conditions and circumstances within the host family may change, requiring a host family change, as determined solely by EIL.

Students graduation from a secondary school in Ireland is not possible and transcripts are not organised or supplied by EIL. Allocation of subjects and grades varies from school to school and EIL has no power in such matters. This is determined solely by the school. Student's year level will be determined by the school also. Subject choices cannot be guaranteed as not all subjects are taught at different schools.

Exchange students provide all their own spending money. We advise around EUR 180 to EUR 250 each month to cover personal expenses such as phone calls, leisure, movies, personal hygiene items, letters, school books, photocopies etc...

Student placement is at the discretion of the EIL. No guarantees are made as to geographic area, socio-economic level of the host family, size, age, hobbies of family members or type of school.

THE KEY TO A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE

An exchange program makes available to the student an exciting maturing experience with advantages lasting a lifetime. The greatest benefits are available to those students who treat all others with respect and consideration; are willing to reach out to others for friendship; can adjust to a new family, friends, language and culture; and settle into new school routines among new friends without major disruption. The rewards of the program are great, indeed, for the student who shares with the new family, friends and school.

I, the student, have read these programme details. I understand my part in the student exchange process.

Signature of student + date & "read and approved"





Insurance/Medical Cover

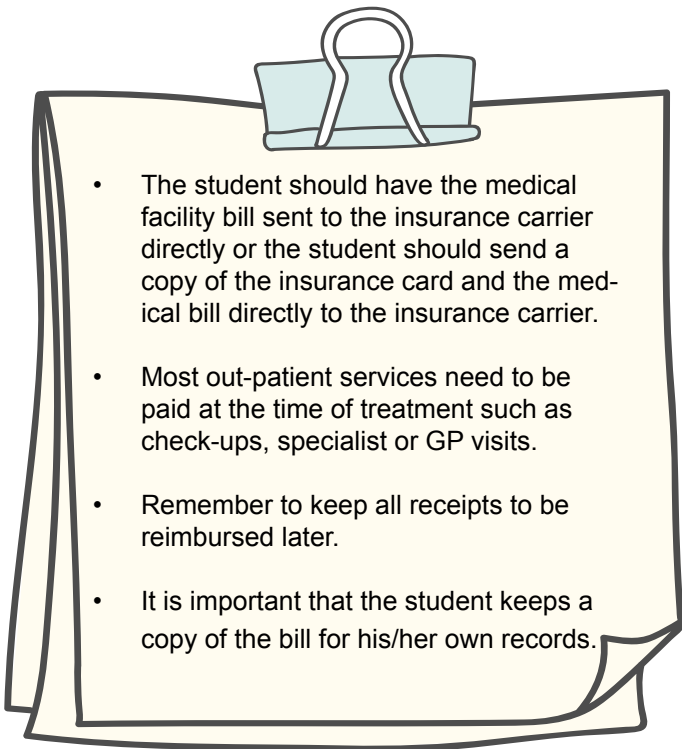
All students must be covered by illness and accident and third party liability insurance for the duration of the programme.

Third party liability insurance covers damage you might accidentally do to someone else, such as your host family's property, for example if you accidentally break an expensive vase, break a laptop... Every year we have students who accidentally break something/cause damage and this can be very costly for the host family and/or the student.

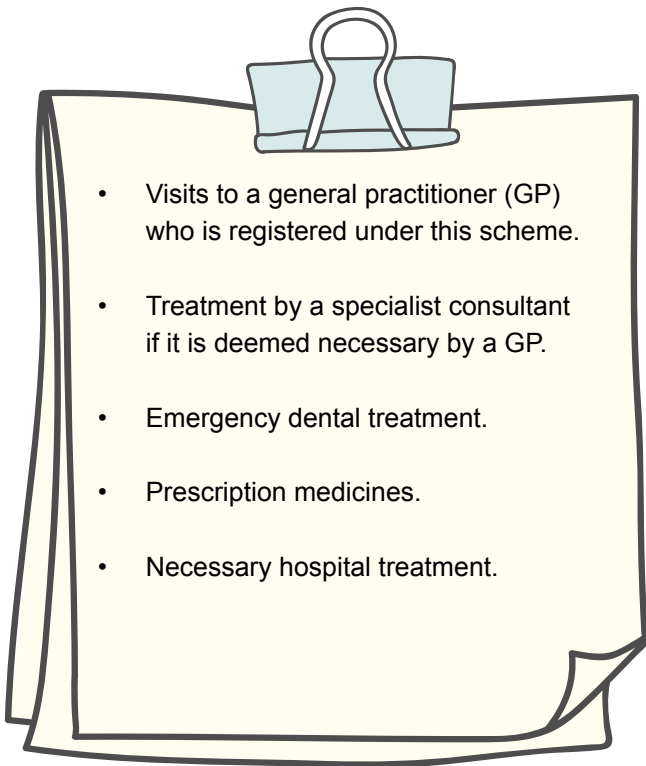
The host family should not pay for any medical care. The cost should be borne by the student. Students pay their own cost of preventative care, routine dental and vision care. Usually only illness and accident costs are covered by the insurance policy. Pre-existing conditions are not covered.

Students from European Union countries should bring their own European Health Card with them. This will entitle them to medical attention on a public basis in Ireland in certain situations.

If medical costs are covered by the insurance provider:

- 
- The student should have the medical facility bill sent to the insurance carrier directly or the student should send a copy of the insurance card and the medical bill directly to the insurance carrier.
 - Most out-patient services need to be paid at the time of treatment such as check-ups, specialist or GP visits.
 - Remember to keep all receipts to be reimbursed later.
 - It is important that the student keeps a copy of the bill for his/her own records.

As a public patient, EU citizens are entitled to the following services free of charge:

- 
- Visits to a general practitioner (GP) who is registered under this scheme.
 - Treatment by a specialist consultant if it is deemed necessary by a GP.
 - Emergency dental treatment.
 - Prescription medicines.
 - Necessary hospital treatment.

For further details contact your nearest Health Service Executive (HSE) office.





Responsibility to your Home Country

You are an ambassador of your home country. You may be the only person from your home country that your host family, their friends, the school staff, your classmates and the people of your community have ever been in contact with. It is important that you are an excellent representative of your country. Your actions and manners need to bring favourable reactions from those you meet in your host country.



Responsibility to your Host Family

Families also host for a learning experience. It is important for you to come prepared to share your country and culture with your family and friends. Please bring pictures, examples of arts and crafts from your home country, recipes that you can share with your family, music that is popular with teens in your country, etc. Plan on spending some time each day doing activities with your host family. If you are not willing to join in, your family will soon stop asking you to join them. It is your responsibility to make sure that this does not happen. Do your chores willingly, occasionally offer to do something extra without being asked.

It is your responsibility to fit into the lifestyle of your host family. Do not expect them to change their ways of doing things in order to do things that they do where you come from. If there are changes to be made, you are the one who needs to make them.

Your host family is taking a risk by inviting you to live with them for an extended period of time. Just as you are brave for coming into a totally new and different situation, they are brave for their willingness to host a teenager with a different background, culture and different customs. This may be the first time they have ever lived with a teenager.

Make it a point to learn how your family celebrates special occasions and holidays and join in the celebration. Make a calendar of your host family members' birthdays, anniversaries and other special days and recognise them with a small gift or card. It is expected to give a small gift to each family member at Christmas.

Show appreciation for all that your family does for you by saying "thank you" often and by occasionally doing something unexpected, such as renting a movie, buying a cake or treating your family to ice cream, etc. Offering to wash the car, weed the garden, etc. are ways to express your thanks without spending money. A home-made card that expresses your gratitude is a thoughtful gesture.

Keep host family matters private. You should **NEVER** discuss your host family with friends or acquaintances. In the age of the internet, it is very easy to get carried away posting comments or pictures on social networking sites. This can often lead to very hurt feelings and get you into serious unwanted trouble, so the best advice is not to do it! If you have concerns or comments to make, talk to your local coordinator.



Responsibility to your School and Community

Schools are not required to accept exchange students. They do so because they see international students bringing a new cultural dimension to the school. It is vital that you come prepared to “give back” to your school and community by being willing to share your country’s history or current events in classes, or by doing demonstrations in the school or speaking at community clubs. Offer to do this; do not wait to be asked.

It is also important that you spend your time during your programme joining in activities in your host school and community. There is a real temptation to find other students from your home country or other exchange students and do everything with them. When you do this, the normal inclination is to speak your native language; this excludes everyone else and soon other Irish students will give up trying to make friends with you. Not all exchange students stay the full year, once others have gone, you will want to have more friends at school so as not to feel isolated.

Students generally say that one reason for coming on a homestay is to improve their English. The way to improve is to practice. No one will fault you if you make a mistake in English; they will think that you are very brave to be able to speak it as well as you already do. You will only be here for a limited amount of time. Use this time to gain and share as much as you can.



Financial Responsibility

You are responsible for the following expenses:

- School uniform;
- School books and supplies;
- Transition Year costs if applicable;
- School bus/transport to and from school;
- Lunches bought at school (you can make a packed lunch at home if you do not want to buy lunch);
- All entertainment expenses including movies, snacks, sports events, restaurant meals (even if you are with your host family), school events, etc.;
- School excursions and day trips;

- Personal items such as toothpaste, shampoo, makeup, deodorant and personal hygiene items;
- Clothing;
- All school expenses, including dances and special events;
- Stamps, printing photos
- Telephone calls and internet use. Your host family are not responsible for your phone calls or bills you run up. If the host family have a landline be aware that local and international calls cost money. Ask if you can use the phone and always pay for any calls that you make.






Financial Responsibility

The internet in Ireland is not necessarily unlimited for a set price. If you are on the internet for long periods of time, you may run up a large bill for your host family without knowing it. Make sure you ask your host family before you use the internet if there is a time limit or how much downloading you are allowed to do. Online gaming, Skype, social networking and music may be one way you spend your time, but too much time on the internet can be costly and a waste of your valuable time here in Ireland.


Some insurance policies state that you must pay your bills up to a certain amount and then get reimbursed. Be familiar with your insurance and keep an emergency fund available in case you need money quickly. Make arrangements with your parents for money before you start spending your emergency money.



Under no circumstances should you lend or borrow money from your host family members. Be prepared to pay for your own expenses at all times.

Please budget your money wisely so that you have enough to cover your expenses. Remember that the first and last month will be the most expensive. December (Christmas holidays) can also be an expensive month, please budget for this. A reasonable estimate of monthly expenses might be €180–€220. You must keep track of your own money. Make a list of your expenses, and contact your natural family as needed to make sure that you have enough money all the time. Your host family is NOT be expected to lend you money and they will notify your local coordinator if you ask them.

If you need to buy something, your host family may take you to the shop. Please try to give them notice in advance, as it is not always convenient to go to the shop right away. If you want to sign up for activities after school, please do not assume that your host family can drive you and pick you up several times a week. Always ask, and make alternate arrangements if they are unable to take you.

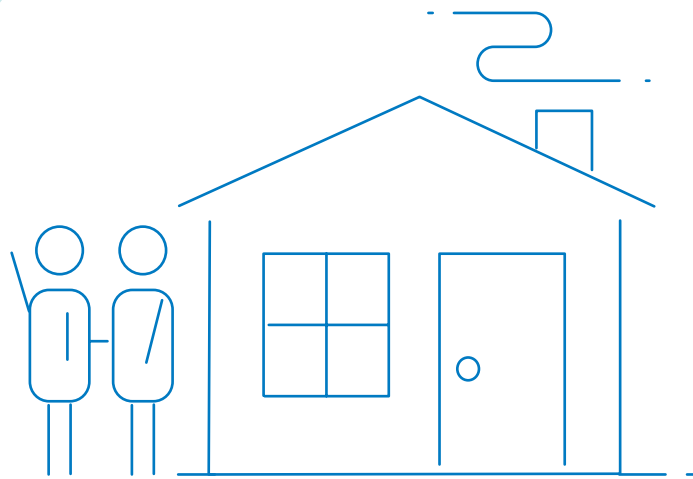


Please make your own arrangements regarding finances. As a student, you should be able to open a bank account. Your host family or an EIL staff member can help you, but no one should be on your bank account except you and your natural parents.



3.

**YOUR HOST FAMILY,
YOUR LOCAL COORDINATOR
AND YOU**





Information Sheet

Please complete the following form:

MY HOST FAMILY

Parents' names: _____

Other family members: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Work number: _____

Birthdays: _____

Other occasions: _____

MY SCHOOL

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Principal's Name: _____

MY LOCAL COORDINATOR:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

EIL NATIONAL OFFICE:

Contact name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Your host family



Your Host Family, Your Local
Coordinator and you

Living with a family will give you a unique opportunity to discover Ireland and its people in a way that no other travel programme can offer. It is a special privilege to be invited to live with an Irish family and we are sure that you will find it to be the most interesting and enjoyable part of your visit to our country.

Irish families differ as widely as those in your own country. Your new Irish 'parents' may be young or old, have young children, teenagers or grown children who live away from home, or even no children at all. Most likely they will have lots of contact with relatives, as the extended family is still very important in Irish society. A lot of Irish families live in rural locations and you must be prepared to adapt to the challenges this might present.

For a homestay to be a success, it takes work from both you and your host family. All of the families who host for this programme do so because of their interest in people and in their willingness to open their homes and way of life to you.

RELIGION

Religious activities play an important role in the family life of many Irish people. Host families like to share all aspects of their lives with you. While you are not obliged to attend church activities with your family, it is often a good way to make friends, practice the language and see a key part of Irish culture. If you choose not to participate, please respect and be tolerant of your family's beliefs just as they are of yours. The same applies to your school. While you do not have to believe or be an active participant, being respectful of what is going on is expected as most schools have a Catholic ethos which runs through the daily routine.



WHAT IS EXPECTED OF YOUR HOST FAMILY?

- To invite you into their home and to treat you as a member of their family and not as a paying guest.
- To involve you in their normal everyday family life.
- To be open, friendly and have a good sense of humour.
- Host families are not obliged to organise excursions for you, although some families may do so. In these cases we suggest they do it as much for their own enjoyment as for yours. You should always offer to pay for your own entrance fees during any family excursions





Typical host family rules



The following are typical examples of what your host family may expect from you. Many families have unwritten expectations of their own children, and these will apply to you as well. Sit down with your host family and ask them what they expect from you during your stay. Ask questions if something is not clear.

Host family expectations of you

- To learn the names, address and phone numbers of your family immediately. Write them down and put them in your wallet.



Household rules

- You are part of the family, and will be treated as part of the family.
- Your host parents are your “parents” during your stay, treat them the way you would like to be treated.
- Host family members are not your servants. Everyone does their share to keep the house clean and tidy. Take care of your possessions and help others as needed.
- Good manners are important. “Please,” “thank you,” “I’m sorry,” and “may I help you” are all very important phrases to be used regularly.

If you have a concern or question, or you feel lonely or sad please talk to your host family. They are your family for the months ahead and they want to be a part of your life and share both the happy and the sad times with you.





Rules for everyday

- Keep your room and bathroom clean.
- Make your bed and pick up your things daily.
- Empty the rubbish bin in your bedroom as needed.
- Change your sheets, vacuum and dust your bedroom in accordance with the family norms.
- Most families do not allow food in the bedrooms. If you are allowed, you must clean up straight away, do not leave it in the room.
- Make your own breakfast and lunch on school days. When you are finished, clean up your own mess. This means putting the food away, washing the dishes, cleaning the counters and cleaning up any other spills.
- Whenever you cook, do a project or take things out, clean up after yourself.
- Everyone takes turns doing chores. Please check to see what yours are and do them without having to be reminded. If you are asked to do something extra to help around the house, realise that everyone is helping out. You will be treated like a member of the family, not like a guest.
- To conserve electricity, please turn off lights that are not necessary. Doors are often closed to conserve heat in the wintertime. Irish houses might not be as warm inside as you are used to. It is not unusual that you might have to wear a jumper inside the house or ask for a blanket.
- You may be responsible for your own laundry, please discuss this with your host family;
- If you see food from last night's dinner in the refrigerator, ask your host parent before you eat it. There may be a plan to use it for another meal.
- Keep shower times quick. Hot water is not always available and should be conserved. Ask your hosts when would be the best time of day to shower.



Typical host family rules



Your Host Family, Your Local
Coordinator and you

Important: you must complete the following page with your host family

When I make plans to go out:

My curfew for school nights will be _____ pm.

My curfew for non-school nights will be _____ pm (work these out with your host family).

If I am going to be late, I am expected to call. This does not mean that I can be late all the time. It means that if there is an emergency, my family needs to know where I am and when to expect me home.

My family will expect to know where I am going, how I am getting there, with whom I am going and what time I expect to be home. They are responsible for me and want to know that I am safe. If I will be later than planned I will call so that they will not worry.

I respect the fact that some host family members may go to bed early. If I stay up late, I need to be quiet. I will not shower after _____ pm (work this out with your family). I also will not stay on the internet or computer, even if in my room, after _____ pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____





Culture Shock/Homesickness

In advance of the secondary school programme, participants often have many pre-conceived ideas about what their experience, new culture and host family will be like. In some cases people are on the right track, but in most cases people find that things can be “different from what I expected”. It is important to realise what is happening to you and that it isn’t uncommon for people in new surroundings to have some of these feelings. What is more important is to do something to help relieve these feelings.

It is not a case of the reality not living up to the expectation, more simply that the experience is different to what you anticipated.

All participants anxious to engage in new culture will experience some kind of culture shock, no matter how short their programme is. One of the main ways that culture shock expresses itself is through homesickness. This may start at the airport, or whilst on the flight, or during your first few days/weeks. Sometimes it can strike several months after leaving home. Whenever the feelings of homesickness strike you it is important to remember that you are not alone.



Culture Shock

You can adjust to any new culture through your sensitivity to what is and isn’t acceptable. It is generally agreed that there are 4–5 stages to integrating into a new culture:

1 Initial euphoria

2 Irritability and hostility

3 Gradual adjustment

4 Adaptation

5 Departure concern





Culture Shock

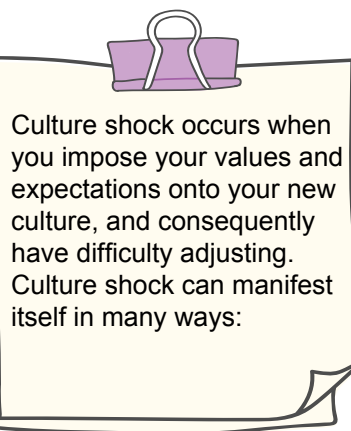
Illness

Concern for safety

Boredom

Social withdrawal

Negative statements & thoughts



Stereotyping

Irritability

Crying

Frustration

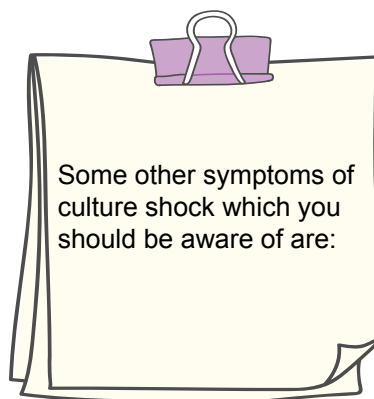
Changes in Eating / Sleeping habits

Homesickness

Re-emergence of emotional issues

If you are suffering from culture shock, it may not be something that you will be aware of yourself. You will not wake up some morning and say "I feel irritable today"; you will wake up and feel tired, unmotivated, perhaps thinking about home a lot and frustrated at your new surroundings. Some people have the classic symptoms of homesickness like crying or difficulty sleeping, while others may have more subtle changes in their behaviour, which over time can make them difficult to be around.

There will be times when events at home will trigger homesickness, such as missing birthdays, holidays, etc. Everyone suffers from homesickness to some degree, no matter their age or previous travel experiences.



Becoming more rowdy or doing things that you normally would not do.

Becoming more shy and quiet than you usually are

Clinging to a host family member or friend instead of reaching out to others.

Withdrawing and feeling sad.

Feeling frustrated often, even in situations which are not new to you.

Feeling tired or ill all of the time; stomach aches or headaches may be common.

Becoming very critical of your host country; thinking that everything is better at home.





Culture Shock

Do not judge your situation or people too quickly.

Taking things step by step.

Avoiding telephoning home you will feel worse afterwards.

There are some simple strategies for dealing with culture shock and these include:

Do not spend too much time by yourself.

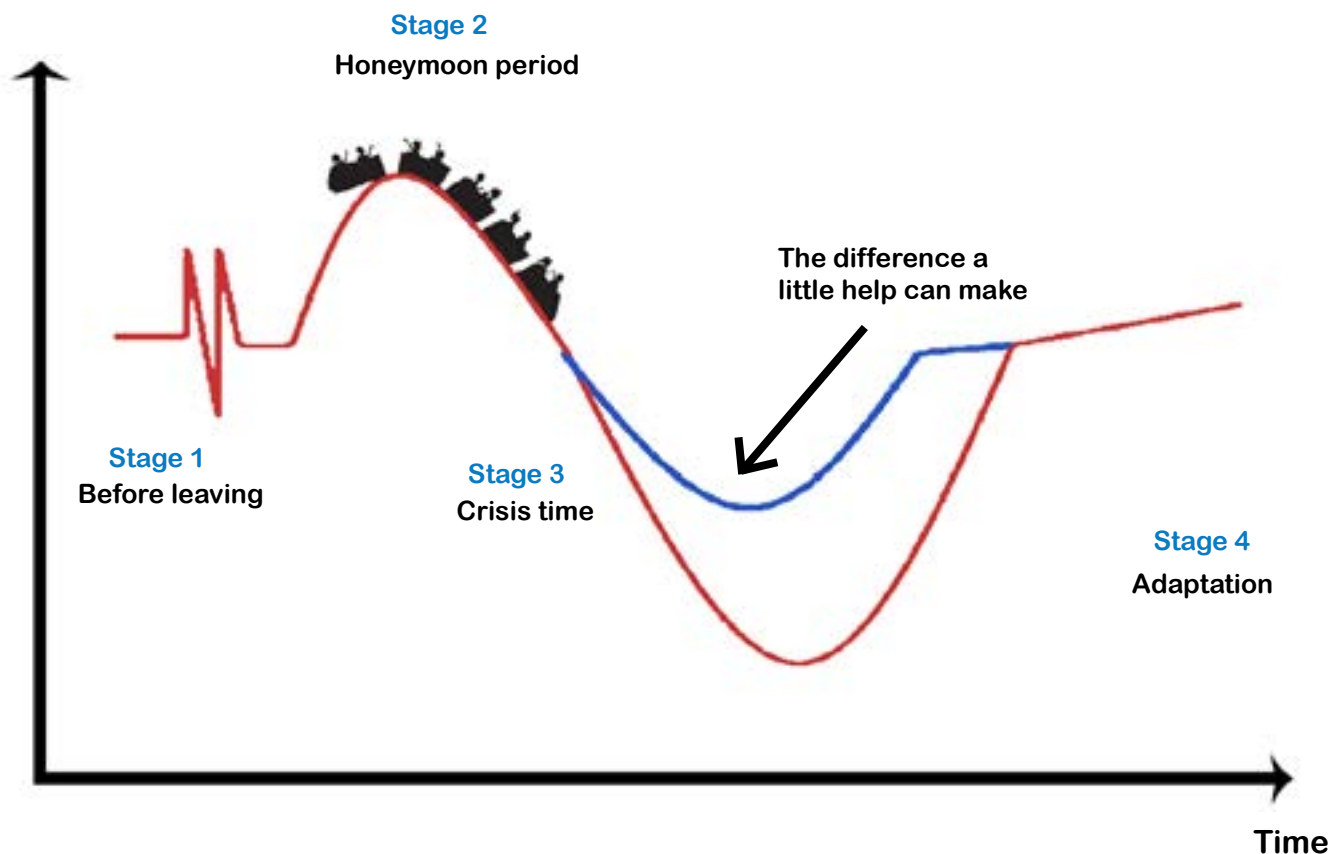
Being flexible and open to new ways of doing things.

Keeping busy and trying to get involved in your new community.

Being prepared that you are likely to encounter culture shock and most likely feel homesick as a result.

Allowing yourself time to settle in. Tell your host family, local coordinator and/or friends how you are feeling.

Happiness



The role of your local Coordinator



Your Host Family, Your Local Coordinator and you

During your homestay you will be assigned a local coordinator. This is the person who found your host family and who will be your advisor during your homestay. Local coordinators are there to help you when you have concerns or do not know how to handle something. They will be your link to home, your organisation and to EIL. Equally, they are there for your host family if they have trouble or issues they need help with.

You will have a lot of contact with your local coordinator in the first several weeks—at the orientation and when settling into the programme, etc. If you are getting on fine with your family and school, the local coordinator will step back to allow you to get on with your experience. You should not expect that the local coordinator will be meeting you every week or month. If you have a problem that you need help with it is your responsibility to contact the local coordinator and they will be available to help you with any problems that you might have.

If you are honest with your local coordinator when you have a problem, he or she can help you to get the problem resolved. Your local coordinator will contact you and your family from time to time; he or she will also be in touch with your school to check on your progress. Your local coordinator is there to help you. Discussing problems with your friends or your relatives, while it may make you feel better to talk to them, it generally cannot solve most problems. Most often when students talk to people who are not involved in the programme, everything and everyone becomes confused.

Please talk to your host family first if you have a problem. They want to try and work things out. Your local coordinator is there to help you with potential problems, but you need to take responsibility to help find a solution as well so everyone has to be flexible and willing to work to find a happy resolution.

Each local coordinator is there to help you, but only you can make your homestay successful and happy. The local coordinator will check in with you or your host parents from time to time, **BUT IF THERE IS A PROBLEM YOU MUST CONTACT HIM/HER.** They cannot help you if they are unaware what you are thinking.



The adjustment cycle



Your Host Family, Your Local Coordinator and you

Based on a 9 month programme:

Cycle 1

**I'm really here!
(1st month)**

You have been getting ready for your programme for months and now you have arrived. Everything is new and exciting. Everything is an adventure; you are the centre of attention in your new family.

Cycle 2

Settling in (2nd month)

Things have settled down to a normal routine. You are no longer going to new places. You are treated like one of the family; you may have responsibilities that you never had at home. School may be more difficult than you imagined it to be. Your family has rules, curfews, etc. and you wonder why you ever wanted to come to Ireland. Allow lots of time to adjust, and ask many questions, no matter how silly they seem. Misunderstandings can make mountains out of molehills—and it is good to talk!

Cycle 3

**What am I doing here?
(2nd and 3rd month)**

You may feel somewhat lonely, isolated, or homesick and depressed. You miss your friends and family and everything familiar from home. When these feelings are very strong, you can develop culture shock and feel tired, sad, eat too much or too little, cry and you can feel that there is no end. People feel these symptoms to different degrees. It is vital that you keep busy and not call home too often—this will make it extra hard. How you manage these feelings will determine the outcome of your experience. Contact your local coordinator for help or guidance. Most people settle after the second month.

Cycle 4

**I have to leave my
new country soon!
(7th month)**

Things are going much better. Your English has improved so much that now you are thinking in English. You are getting involved in activities and making friends. You have many things left to do before you go home, and time is getting short. You will begin to feel sad about leaving Ireland.

Cycle 5

**It is time to leave
"Home". (9th month)**

You are now very comfortable physically and emotionally in your "home" and leaving will be difficult. You have many great memories and the idea of going back to your homeland leaves you sad and happy at the same time. You wonder what it will be like to be back with your family and friends and if things will be the same as they were when you left. Returning home can often be more difficult than settling in. Please be patient with yourself—give yourself time to readjust.

Why not keep a chart of your experience? You will relive the good and the not so good times, and can see how different things and people helped you! A journal or diary is a good idea, too. Just as in normal life, you will have good days and bad days; your programme in Ireland will be no different



Openness and clarification

It is very important to be open and honest with your new family, your local coordinator and others that you come in contact with during your stay in your host country.

You will find that people are very willing to help you if you have a question, but **you must ask for help when it is needed**. If you do not ask, people will assume that you are ok and this can lead to problems.

If you are lost, afraid or do not understand something, or have a question about anything, ask your host family, your local coordinator, or ask someone at your school.

If you have a problem with something here, do not ask your friends or family in your home country for advice because they do not know the customs in your host family better than you do. The suggestions that they give you may make the matter worse rather than better.

It is your responsibility to adjust to the differences that you are exposed to, but first you have to understand them. Always ask a responsible person if you have a question. This is true especially in your classes. Teachers are very willing to help you if you need help. If you do not ask for help, they will expect that you understand what to do and for your assignments to be turned in on time and to be done correctly.

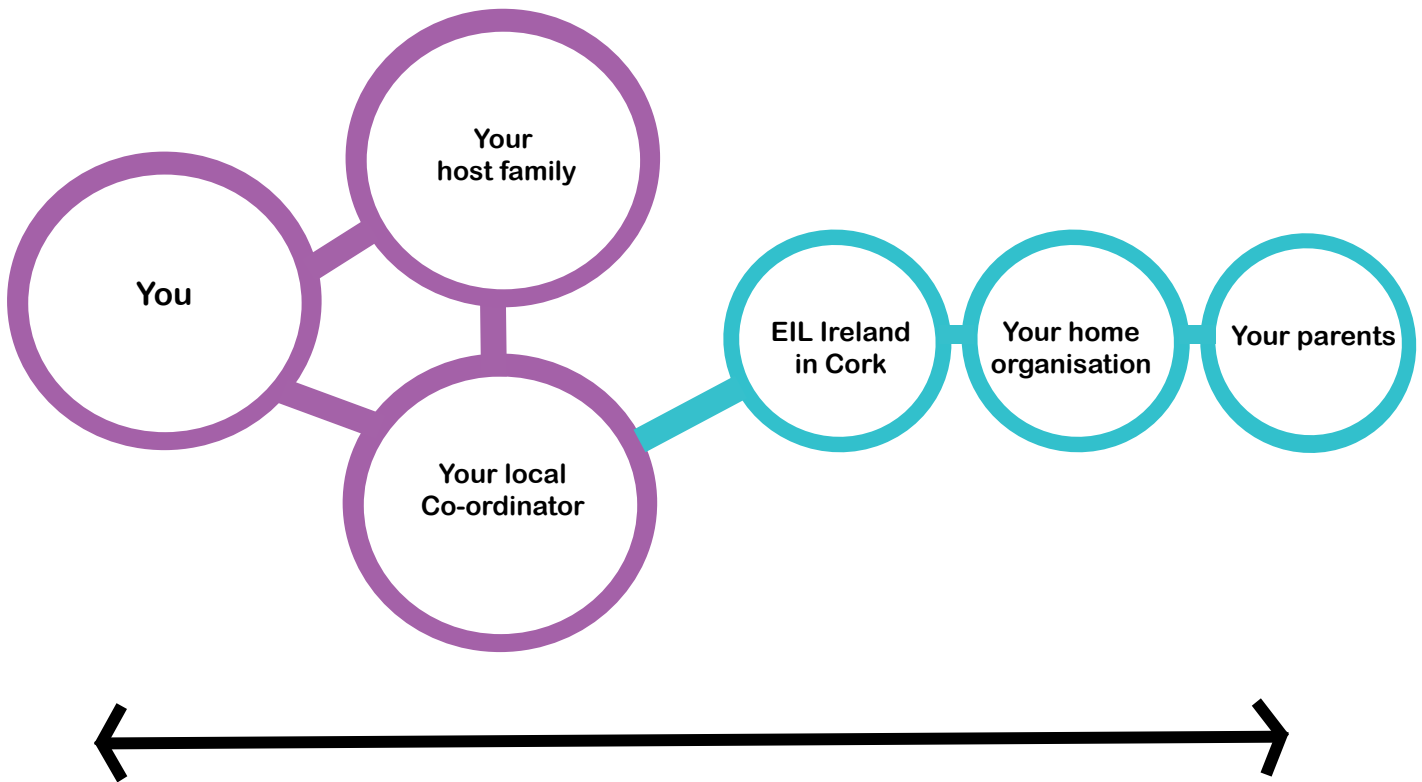


Lines of communication



Your Host Family, Your Local Coordinator and you

The right way:



Any questions or issues should be discussed with your host family first

If the question or issue is very significant, then your local coordinator should be contacted for help in a manner which is fair to everyone involved. Your local coordinator is a mediator and will not take sides, but try to give you both guidance.

He or she in turn will contact the EIL office in Cork. EIL is the organisation responsible for support and supervision while in Ireland.

EIL will notify your home organisation in your home country, who will then contact your natural family and explain the situation.

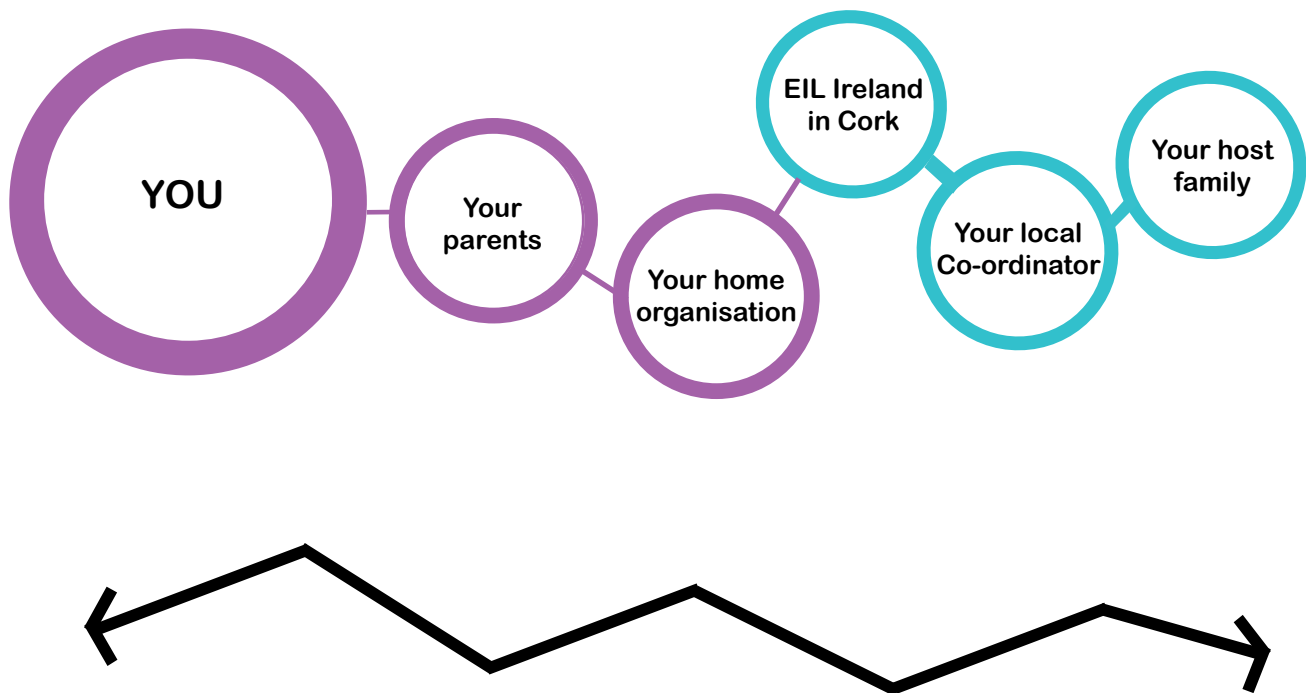
The correct lines of communication allow all parties to be aware of the situation and work together towards finding a solution in the most effective and efficient manner.





Lines of communication

The wrong way



These lines of communication will aggravate the issue in question. When the appropriate measures are not taken, frustration between all parties increases.

Many questions are left unanswered and cause more confusion. This can also add to delays and take longer for the issue to be resolved.

While we realise it is natural to call your family first, this type of communication is discouraged. It is a method of dealing with an issue which will likely result in further problems. Your natural parents and home organisation are not able to easily help you back at home.

If your parents have any questions or concerns, they may contact your sending organisation.

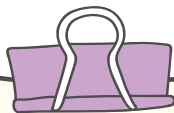
Always look to the people nearest to where you are for support as they are in a position to help you and work on solutions. We encourage you to use the suggested manner of communicating problems, issues or concerns as outlined on the previous page.



Manners and courteous behaviour

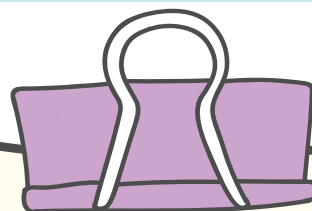


Your Host Family, Your Local Coordinator and you



It is extremely important for you to present yourself in a positive manner from the beginning of your homestay. What is considered good manners in your home country may not be true in Ireland. If you have questions, please ask your host family. A good suggestion is to watch what others are doing and do that.

Good table manners are very important to many Irish people.



The following are some general suggestions to help you at first:

- Bring a small gift to show you appreciate that your host family has agreed to welcome you into their home. Ideally this should be something that is typical from your home country.
- Smile often, even when you may not feel like smiling.
- Join in family activities instead of staying in your room.
- If you are upset or angry about something, take a few minutes to calm down before talking. Use a pleasant tone and a quiet voice. Do not yell, stamp your feet, slam doors or make rude gestures. This behaviour is not acceptable.
- Remember to say “please,” “thank you,” and “may I?” often. Say “Yes, thank you” and “No, thank you” as well. Manners are extremely important in Irish society.
- When you are out with the family, help to carry bags or help without being asked.
- Host families will want to feel loved and appreciated as much as you do. Keep this in mind in all that you do.





Making friends



Many students come on a homestay with the idea of making many life long friends in their host country. Students who accomplish that goal have several things in common. They are the ones who talk to people each and every day, smile at their classmates, ask questions, join activities or sports teams, are interested in others, and are interesting to others. They are willing to risk being the one to smile and talk first. They do not worry too much about their language skills; they talk to everyone (and their skills improve rapidly because of this).

“Hello, how are you?” is a common greeting in Ireland but it does not necessarily lead to further conversation. People are not considered rude when they say, “fine” and keep on walking.

A few things to remember about making friends:

- You are going into a situation where the people who are already there are established in their friendships. You want to join in the group.
- If you spend your time speaking in your language to exchange students from your own country, other students will feel left out and will leave you alone.
- Taking classes or extra curricular activities such as art, sports or any other activities where you often work in teams is a good way to meet people.



Students must be aware that differences in climate and living conditions, as well as the natural stress from any major lifestyle change, can lead to illness. It is important to eat a healthy diet, get regular exercise, and get sufficient sleep while you are in your new country. This is extremely important in contributing to a successful homestay.

If you do get sick, please take the advice of your host mother or father. If they feel you should see a doctor, then it probably is the right thing to do. Over-the-counter medication is available, but please ask for advice when choosing the right medication for your symptoms.

Please be aware that good eating habits are vital to good health. Some students develop a fondness for “junk food” while on the homestay programme. This contributes to weight gain and to lack of energy and vitality. Eating a variety of food will help to keep you fit.

Getting out and getting exercise is equally important. Don't spend all your time on the couch or online. The Irish eat a lot of potatoes, but don't want you to turn into one!

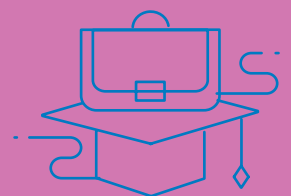
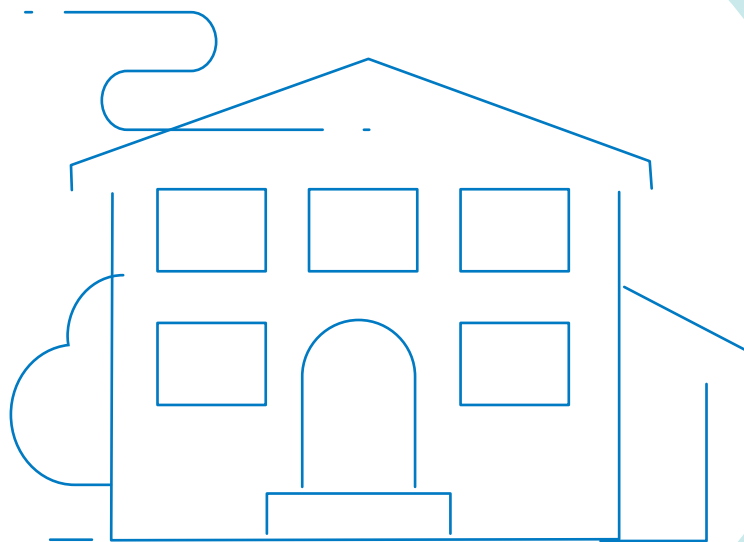


Avoid being a “couch potato” by going for walks, going to the gym or joining a sport or physical activity.



4.

SECONDARY SCHOOL IN IRELAND



The school system in Ireland



Secondary School
in Ireland

In general, students participating in the EIL Secondary School Programme will join Transition Year - 4th Year, or 5th Year. Most schools in Ireland do not permit international students to join 6th year, as it is an academic exam year. Students who are young (14 years old) or with a very poor level of English may be placed in a lower year class (2nd year) with a younger age group. 3rd Year is also often not possible because, like 6th Year, it is an exam year and normally off limits to international students.

Each year is also sub-divided into Honours (advanced) or Ordinary (standard) levels. Students may take some subjects at Honours level and others at Ordinary level.

The school reserves the right to make the final decision regarding in which year each participants should be placed, or subject level they should take, and also to make any changes depending on the progress the student makes during the course of the year.



Students enter the Irish secondary school system at the ages of 12 or 13.

They start in 1st Year and continue to 6th Year as follows:

- **1st Year:** 12–13 years old
- **2nd Year:** 13–14 years old
- **3rd Year:** 14–15 years old
(Junior Certificate Examination)
- **4th Year:** 15–16 years old
(Transition Year)
- **5th Year:** 16–17 years old
- **6th Year:** 17–18 years old
(Leaving Certificate Examination)





We can never guarantee placement in a school where applicants can be assured of classes in their first choice of five subjects.



Irish language is required for Irish students, but International students are normally exempt and have a study period.



5th and 6th year subjects

Students are required to take a minimum of 5 subjects each year. The following subjects are recognised by the Irish Department of Education:

There are usually no exams or assessments at the end of the terms and must be requested in advance if needed for school back home.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Irish | • Spanish | • Agricultural Economics |
| • English | • History | • Engineering |
| • Latin | • Geography | • Technology |
| • Greek | • Mathematics | • Design & communication graphics |
| • Classical Studies | • Economics | • Construction Studies |
| • Hebrew Studies | • Applied Mathematics | • Home Economics |
| • Arabic | • Physics | • Accounting |
| • French | • Chemistry | • Business |
| • German | • Physics and Chemistry | • Religious Education |
| • Italian | • Agricultural Science | |
| • Art (including craft) | • Biology | |
| • Music | • Japanese | |

Please note that not all schools offer all of these subjects. Students will be required to take classes in five of these subjects. Only subjects that the applicant is currently studying in his/her home school should be selected. Students normally select subjects on arrival based on availability at that time. Others will have been asked in advance of their preferences. Alternatively, some schools select the international students subjects and schedule for them.



Transition Year / 4th Year

The Transition Year (TY) is a one-year interdisciplinary programme for pupils who have completed 3rd Year. Transition Year is directed towards the intellectual, social and emotional maturation of the student. It is conceived as an introduction to adult education and to education permanente. The content of Transition Year curricula will include elements of the following: social education, moral education, education for living (including home crafts and education for parenthood, employment and leisure), philosophy and applied logic, music and the arts, Irish Studies, civilisation courses for students of continental European languages, visual education, media education and communication skills, etc.





State Examinations organised by the Minister for Education take place as follows:

- Junior Certificate—end of 3rd Year
- Leaving Certificate—end of 6th Year

State Examinations:

All examinations are written, however examinations in languages also include oral exams. There is no scheme of continuous assessment. The Leaving Certificate Examination covers subjects learned during 5th and 6th Year.

We do not recommend foreign students to take the Leaving Certificate Examination after just one year of study in Ireland. State exams take place after the EIL programme finishes, so will not be available unless an official extension is requested. There are also fees to sit the state examinations.

School Examinations:

All schools have in-house examinations prior to the Christmas holidays. The results of these examinations form part of a report about each student. 1st, 2nd and 5th Year students also have similar in-house examinations at the end of May/beginning of June each year. Junior Certificate (3rd Year) and Leaving Certificate (6th Year) Examination students all have “mock” in-house examinations every year in April. This is in preparation for the state examinations.

Exchange students are expected to take any in-house exams like a normal Irish student. Please do not ask to be exempt, even if you don't need them for back home.





School world

School Year and Holidays:

- **Last week in August:** School year commences
- **End of October/beginning November:** Mid-term holiday, 3–5 days
- **December:** Christmas and New Year holidays, 2–3 weeks
- **Mid- February:** Mid-term holiday, 3–5 days
- **Easter holiday,** 2 weeks
- **End of school year** (other than for state exams): Last week in May.

School Uniforms:

- The wearing of school uniforms is compulsory in the vast majority of schools. You will need to purchase a school uniform on arrival. Many schools have a strict uniform policy and may not allow “modified” uniforms for visiting students.

Homework:

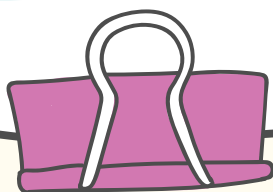
- Most classes will issue homework, which must be completed and turned in on time. This maybe more or less than you are used to back at home

Typical school day:

- **8:50 am: Classes commence**
- **10:45 am: Break** (usually for 15–30 minutes)
- **1:05 pm: Lunch** (usually a packed lunch)
- **1:45 pm: Classes commence**
- **3:45 pm: Classes end**

There is no school on Saturdays/Sundays. Classes usually last approximately 40 minutes each. Many schools do not have classes on Wednesday afternoons. Times will vary slightly between different schools.





Extracurricular Activities:

Almost all schools organise a programme of sporting, social and cultural activities during/after school periods or at weekends. These are generally free of charge or at a small extra cost. We encourage all students to participate fully in the programme of extracurricular activities.

- **Typical sport activities:** basketball, football, Gaelic football, hurling, hockey, tennis, gymnastics, swimming, etc. Most schools organise physical education classes as part of the school curriculum and it is generally compulsory for students to participate.
- **Typical social and cultural activities:** drama, debates, quizzes, exhibitions, films, discos and excursions.



Every school has its own disciplinary code and participants are expected to respect and adhere to this.

This document gives general guidelines about secondary schools in Ireland. Please be aware that regulations and procedures may vary from school to school. Please ask the school if you are unsure of anything.

Foreign students who wish to be exempt from religious education (there are usually one or two classes per week) should inform EIL as soon as possible.



Selected School:

- All schools participating in this programme are public schools managed by local education authorities or religious bodies. Many of Ireland's secondary schools are managed by Catholic priests or nuns. The majority of teachers in these schools are lay persons. Religious education and any costs (including text books) associated with it are regarded as an optional extra. Some schools replace religious education with civics classes. Items covered during civics classes may cover a range of issues such as health education, drug abuse, relationships, etc.





School-What to bring?

Items needed for School:

- A pair of black school shoes
(**not sneakers or athletic shoes**)
- School bag/rucksack
- Coat/jacket
(**denim jackets are not allowed in most schools**)
- Stationary: pens, pencils, etc.

Sports Gear

Students should bring their own sports equipment and clothing, including:

- Gear bag
- Runners/sneakers—(**white soled**)
- T-shirt and shorts
- Socks
- Tracksuit
- Swimming costume and towel



5.

Ireland: A rough guide & general advice



Facts about the Republic of Ireland



Ireland: A rough guide
& general advice

The total area of Ireland is 84,421 square kilometres. The Republic of Ireland comprises 70,282 square kilometres and Northern Ireland 14,139 kilometres. The Republic of Ireland takes up 5/6 of the island (26 counties), while Northern Ireland is located in the upper 1/6 (6 counties). Northern Ireland is politically part of the United Kingdom (it belongs to Great Britain), although the issue of uniting the island has been actively discussed for many years. The population of the Republic of Ireland is just over 4.7 million and the population of Northern Ireland is approximately 1.8 million.

The capital of the Republic of Ireland is Dublin and nearly one in four people live in the metropolitan Dublin area. Other main population areas include Cork, Limerick, Galway, Waterford, Kilkenny and Wicklow. Approximately 85% of the population is christian, 78% Roman catholic, 3% Anglican church and 4% other. 10% identify as 'no religion' and 5% hold various other beliefs.

Ireland enjoys a temperate maritime climate. The coldest months are January and February, which have mean daily air temperatures of between 4° C and 7° C, while July and August are the warmest, with mean temperatures of between 14° C and 16° C. Everyone in Ireland speaks English, but Irish (a Gaelic language) is the first officially recognised language. Irish is only spoken in small Gaeltacht areas, which are in mostly remote pockets of the country. Government documents and road signs are in both languages.

If you make phone calls from your host family's telephone, you must pay for all calls, even local ones. A lot of students purchase prepaid mobile phones or a new SIM card. International calls from a mobile are significantly more expensive. Students who try and keep their foreign mobile number while in Ireland also might find that Irish friends and host family members are more reluctant to use it as they will be charged for making and international call and texts. Whatsapp is the easiest form of communication for most Irish people.

Your local coordinator is an important person in the community and you should contact him/her if you have any questions, problems or otherwise.

USIT student card:

This international student card can be purchased from USIT (Student Travel Company) Offices around Ireland. You can obtain a Student Travel Card to get reductions on rail and bus travel,

www.studenttravelcard.ie.



Petrol and heating oil are expensive in Ireland so do not expect the house to be heated 24 hours a day even in winter, or to have use of family car to take you places each day.



The Irish watch a lot of TV, and it is often on in background during mealtimes. They follow a lot of the American and Australian soap operas on a regular basis. There are four national TV channels: RTE 1, RTE 2, TV 3 and TG 4 (Irish language channel). British channels are also freely available in Ireland, for example BBC, ITV and SKY News/Sports. Most families have only one car. Irish people walk much more than in other countries and also use public transport frequently to get to work / school. It would not be uncommon for some host mothers not to drive at all. Ireland has a high rate of regular church attendance. Your family may invite you to join them at mass or other church services, and even if you are not a Catholic this should not stop you from going to church with your family at least once—it will be an experience. However, they will not be offended should you decide not to go with them. Try to involve yourself in the everyday life of the family and do not expect hotel type treatment. Always keep your room tidy and do offer to help with the dishes.

While you are in Ireland, it would be nice to prepare a typical meal from your native country one day for your family. As well as the potato (often fondly called 'the spud' in Ireland), it is quite common for families to eat rice and pasta. Common main courses include, chicken, pork, beef or bacon. However most Irish people feel a little insecure unless some sort of potato turns up on their dinner plate every day!!! Multiple types of potato dishes in one meal is not uncommon. The Irish also drink a lot of tea. On a per capita basis, they drink more tea than the British. It is always customary to be offered a cup of tea when you visit somebody's house and "No thanks" is never accepted the first (or second) time...expect to be asked again and again...



When you meet your host family, please discuss exactly what you like/don't like to eat. This will avoid any later misunderstandings. If you require a special diet, please ask your family where you can purchase this food. If you have a specialty food that is not eaten by the rest of your host family, you should buy it for yourself.





Social life in Ireland

Irish people do not entertain at home very much, but they do like to go out and socialise at the weekends. Social life for a lot of Irish people revolves around pubs; there are a lot of them. You must be over 18 to drink alcohol in Ireland. Gaelic Football and Hurling are Irish national sports. Some families may take part in these sports or attend games on a regular basis. Other popular social outlets for young people are: going to the cinema, bowling and going to coffee shops.



People under 18 must leave a pub by 9pm regardless of whether or not they are supervised.





Opening a bank account

To open a bank account, most banks will request two forms of identification. One of these forms of identification should have your photograph and the other can be a letter with your name on it (e.g. a letter from EIL confirming your placement details). You will be able to make a deposit immediately, but it will take 3-5 days before you receive your ATM card (to withdraw cash from the ATM Machine). It may be best to have an account linked to your parents at home. If you have a credit card or ATM card with a Cirrus/Maestro sign, it should work at most ATMs.

Some banks will require you to have an adult named on the account, but we do not suggest having your host family getting involved with your banking.

Remember you will be responsible for buying things like toothpaste, shampoo, bus tickets, etc., that your parents might normally have paid for, so you will likely need more pocket money than you would normally have in your home country.

Currency

Ireland has a decimal currency based on the Euro, the single currency of the EU. Each euro (€1) is divided into one hundred cent (100 cent). Bank notes come in values of €100, €50, €20, €10 and €5. Coins in circulation are €2, €1, 50 cent, 20 cent, 10 cent, 5 cent, 2 cent.

Automatic Teller Machines (ATM's)

Many ATMs at banks and building societies in Ireland accept some or all of the following debit/credit cards: Cirrus, Plus System, Mastercard, Visa and American Express. You will need your PIN (Personal Identity Number), but this is a convenient and economic way of obtaining cash both within and out of banking hours.

Traveller's Cheques

Most banks do not cash Traveller's cheques. We do not sell or cash them as they are considered more or less obsolete in Ireland

Cash

It is a good idea to obtain a small amount of Euro before departure for any immediate needs. We suggest €40-€60. Should you have difficulty in obtaining Euros from your local bank, you will be able to convert money at the airport prior to departure or at the airport on arrival in Ireland. Ireland is now one of the most expensive countries in Europe and this is reflected in the cost of living. It is important that you have a certain amount of pocket money so that you will be able to participate in activities with your Irish friends and not become isolated. The spending habits of each person is a personal matter, but our advice is to budget for between €180 - €200 per month.





How to exchange money

You may exchange money at banks, American Express offices, airports, post offices, large hotels, some tourist information centres and travel agencies. Banks, airports and post offices offer the best rates. Avoid changing money at tourist shops; you will get a poor exchange rate. It is not possible to exchange coins. Remember you will need your passport as identification every time you exchange money.

TV and Radio

There are two main TV channels in Ireland: RTE 1 and RTE 2, the other less popular ones are TV 3 and TG 4 (Irish language channel, but some shows are in English, or subtitled in English). The national radio and television station is RTE (Radio Telefís Éireann). Most local areas now have their own local radio stations. News is broadcast on RTE 1 at 6:01 pm and 9:00 pm. British channels are also freely available in Ireland, for example BBC, ITV and SKY News/Sports.

Shops and Shopping

Most shops are open from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday to Sunday, with late night shopping on Thursday nights.



Banks and Banking

Banks normally open from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm (weekdays). They are generally closed Saturdays and Sundays. The largest banks are Allied Irish Bank (AIB), Bank of Ireland, Permanent TSB, and Ulster Bank.

Mail

Post offices open from 9:00 am to 5:30 pm weekdays; and usually to 12pm on a Saturday. Stamps may be bought at some newsagents.

Mail boxes are green.

When making calls from Ireland/from abroad, use the following example:

- **From Ireland (021) 455 1535 (EIL Ireland Head Office Cork)**
- **From abroad, this becomes 00 353 21 4551535**
- **Access code + country code + local code + number**
- **Directory enquiries (to find a number within Ireland)**

Electrical Items

In Ireland the electric current is 240 volts. If your country's current is below this, unless your appliance has a built in converter or you bring a voltage transformer, it will burn out. Plugs have three square pins and so you may also need a plug adaptor. Most bathrooms have separate two pin sockets for electric razors, but check that your appliance can be switched to the correct voltage..



The Internet, Social Media & Skype etc

Social media, whatsapp and Skype are the cheapest and most convenient method of communicating with friends and family. You can discuss internet access and wifi with your host family, possibly using their home computer or a local internet café.

Download whatsapp on your phone to communicate with your local coordinator. Whatsapp, instagram and snapchat are the most popular apps to communicate.

Maybe get an Irish sim or mobile to cut down on costs.

Emergencies

Dial 112 or 999 from any telephone. No coins are needed in pay phones for this number. The operator will ask you which service you require: fire, police or ambulance. You will need as much information as possible (eg. Street names) as this service is now centralized in Dublin, and they will not have knowledge of local amenities..

Credit Cards

Credit cards are useful for obtaining cash for emergencies and special purchases. Remember, however, the exchange rate can be higher than at the banks. Mastercard and Visa are widely accepted, American Express and Diners Club less so. Most credit cards process your purchases at the bulk money market rates current at the time, which is to your advantage compared with other commercial rates of exchange. Please note that most doctors and dentists do not accept credit cards.

Telephones

Please note that some host families may no longer have a landline in their home and calls from your international phone to your home country will be very expensive.



Many students opt to buy mobile phones in order to keep in touch by texting and to cut down on costs. There are several mobile phone providers in Ireland, the most popular are Vodafone, 3 and Eir. If your handset is compatible with Irish SIM cards you can buy a card for approximately €10. Network coverage can vary through the country, it is best to find out what your host family use so you know which network has the best local coverage, and also so you can contact them more cheaply too.



Public holidays



Ireland: A rough guide
& general advice



The following are the public holidays in the Republic of Ireland. Schools, most companies and shops are closed on these days.

- January 1st - New Year's Day
- March 17th - St. Patrick's Day
- Friday before Easter - Good Friday
- Monday after Easter - Easter Monday
- First Monday in May - May Day Holiday
- First Monday in June - June Holiday
- First Monday in August - August Holiday
- Last Monday in October - October Holiday
- December 25th - Christmas Day
- December 26th - St. Stephen's Day





Some tips to make your stay a success

WHAT TO DO

- If you have time, write to/email your host family again before you arrive.
- Make sure your family knows your exact travel arrangements and let them know if plans change.
- When you arrive, be interested in your new family; talk to them and ask them questions about their town and their way of life.
- Tell your host family about your family, your school, your friends and how life in your country is different. Bring some photographs of your family and friends. Bring some tourist brochures of your town or county.
- Bring a small, inexpensive gift typical of the area where you live.
- Keep your room tidy. Offer to help with the dishes or any household chores; just exactly as you would do in your own home.
- Respect the family's property and any rules they may have within their home.
- Talk over any problems you may have with your family.
- Write and thank the family after you return home.





Some tips to make your stay a success

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Ignore your family or avoid having to talk to them.
- Spend long periods of time in your room and only appear for your meals.
- Refuse to join in family activities when asked.
- Be late for meals or other arrangements without telephoning or apologising.
- Expect your family to continuously wait on you.
- Drink alcohol or smoke.
- Stay out at night later than permitted by your host family, local coordinator or EIL programme.





Safety tips

Safety is my first priority

Safety is my first priority. I accept that I have a personal responsibility to co-operate in every way possible with my sending organisation and EIL Ireland to ensure my personal safety and the safety of the people I come in to contact

WHO TO CONTACT

Before I Leave:

While travelling:

I understand that somebody will be waiting for me at the airport and that I **am responsible** to telephone (not text message) EIL Ireland of any changes or delays in my travel arrangements.

In Transit: EIL Ireland

While I am in Ireland:

I understand that emergencies are most effectively dealt with on a local basis and I will avail of the supports in the following order of priority.

FIRST CALL: My host family

SECOND CALL: Local Coordinator

THIRD CALL: EIL Ireland

Checklist:

I have scanned and emailed myself the documents listed below.

I also know where I have packed extra copies of:

- **my passport ID page**
- **my visa page on passport (if applicable)**
- **my insurance details**
- **prescriptive scripts of my medication**

My hand luggage is suitably packed in case of 2-3 day delays with my checked luggage arrival.

Health and safety advice for Ireland:

General Advice

- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Separate your money sources
- Be vague about travel and accommodation details with strangers.
- Leave sentimental items at home and stay connected to your baggage.
- Keep valuable items like phones and cameras concealed.
- If mugged, do as you are told, give up your belongings on attack.
- Avoid using bank card details in internet cafes.
- Most visitors to Ireland experience no difficulties during their stay
- Take sensible precautions to protect yourself from bag snatching and pick pocketing, particularly on public transport and in crowded public places
- Incidents of mobile phone theft are on the increase in Irish cities, especially with smartphones.
- Please make sure you are visible to motorists at night if walking in an unlit area.





Emergency Services in Ireland:

Police, Medical, Fire: 112 or 999

EIL Ireland Emergency Numbers:

Office hours: 00 353 21 4551535

Out of office hours: 00 353 86 2503910

DO NOT TEXT THIS NUMBER - CALLS ONLY

Please fill in below:

Sending Organisation Emergency Numbers:

From Ireland:

From Home country:

My Local Co-Ordinator:

Name:

Phone number:

My Host Family:

Name:

Address:

Phone number:

Embassy of Sending Organisation in Ireland:

Name:

Address:

Phone number:

Email:





Some tips for Online safety

Remember your online footprint is the new CV and is valuable to you for your reputation and future career. Remember it is there forever! So follow these few steps below:

- Think before you post – images, language etc. You want to represent your present and future self in a good light.
- Follow your intuition – if it doesn't feel right it probably isn't
- Assume everything is public - check all privacy settings on social media and change them to private
- Don't reply to any message you are not comfortable with – inform someone
- Don't post information that can show your location or your routine activities
- Don't trust appearances on the internet, a lot of people are not who they appear to be
- Block people you don't trust – tell someone – report them through the site
- Save any offensive posts made – these people are not invisible online and can be tracked via their IP address if anything illegal was done

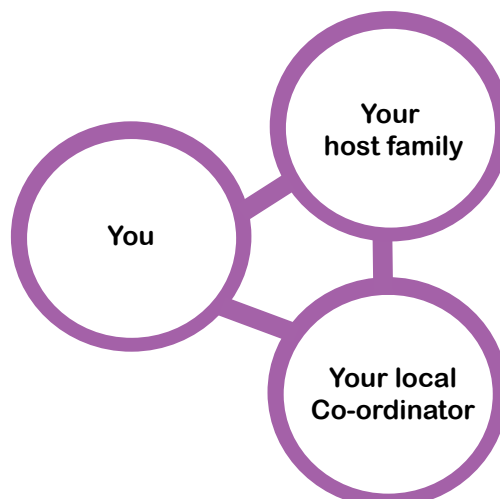
Take some time to watch this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wExUOx5V73I>

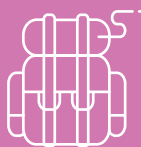
If you do find yourself in difficulty remember the lines of communication.

If it is an emergency ring the EIL emergency phone.

Do not share detailed personal information about others (such as full names or address) /photos/videos etc, without permission of those individuals. Respect Irish privacy laws and also yours and others identity online.



Share your stories - we love to hear them!



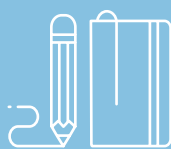
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Share your journey:

- Share your life changing experience with family and friends and spread the word about EIL Ireland.

