A group of five diverse young adults (three women and two men) are smiling and holding a person horizontally in front of a brick wall. The person being held is wearing a white jacket and dark pants. The group is dressed in casual, outdoor-style clothing. The background is a brick wall with some bare branches visible.

# HOME STAY FAMILY HANDBOOK

Bridging cultures

The logo for UWC Maastricht, featuring two overlapping globe icons to the left of the text "UWC" and "MAASTRICHT" stacked vertically.

**UWC**  
**MAASTRICHT**

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## HOME STAY FAMILY HANDBOOK

UWC is home to students of many of nationalities. While students are well cared for in their residential facilities, sharing your home with one of these students is a fantastic way for each of you to share your cultures and learn. Whether for just an evening meal or a longer stay, students will appreciate the opportunity you provide them to have to enjoy family time and the change of scenery.

There is no single “right” way to host a student. Every family is different. This handbook will provide you with information, guidelines, and things to think about so that the Home Stay experience is enriching and rewarding for everyone.

Thank you for opening your home!

## UWC-MAASTRICHT

UWC-Maastricht makes education a platform to invite people, nations & cultures to reside under one roof.

UWC schools, colleges and programmes deliver a challenging and transformational educational experience to a diverse cross section of students, inspiring them to create a more peaceful and sustainable future.

UWC believes that to achieve peace and a sustainable future, the values it promotes are crucial

- International and intercultural understanding
- Celebration of difference
- Personal responsibility and integrity
- Mutual responsibility and respect
- Compassion and service
- Respect for the environment
- A sense of idealism
- Personal challenge
- Action and personal example

## WHEN CAN WE HOST?

Hosting a UWC residential student can take place at many times throughout the year and for many reasons.

- Weekends – Have a student (or two, or more!) over for a weekend.  
It is a nice change of scenery for the students!
- For a Meal – perhaps to celebrate a cultural tradition
- During breaks – for many reasons, there are some students who are unable to return home during the longer school holidays...host for a few days, a week, or longer
- Study times – you can offer your home as a place for a quiet study retreat
- Travel trips – if you are going away, perhaps you have room to take along a student or two



## YOUR OWN CHILDREN

Although you may be excited to host a student, your children may be nervous or shy. Make sure that older children are okay with hosting, particularly if they are at the same school or of similar age to the student you host. It can be awkward for them for a peer they don't know well to suddenly be in their home. If there are any doubts, try hosting for small stretches – a meal or an outing is a good way to start. With older children, agree on terms beforehand that they will be comfortable with, such as not having to share their room. And keep embarrassing stories about them off limits, no matter how adorable the story might be!

To encourage dialogue between the student and your children of any age, give them something to do together. A chore or running an errand gives them a common purpose and takes the pressure off forced conversation. Hosting a foreign student can leave a positive, lasting, impression on children that changes how they see the world for a lifetime.

## UWC CODE OF CONDUCT

UWC students are expected to follow the UWC Common Code of Conduct. You can expect that the student maintain the same standard of behaviour at your house. As a Home Stay Family/Parent(s), we ask that you uphold these rules. For example, if a student in your care goes out in the evening and breaks curfew or returns intoxicated, this needs to be reported to the Home Stay Coordinator at the school. They will handle things further. Please see the UWC Code of Conduct below.

me



## UWC COMMON CODE OF CONDUCT

Pursuing the UWC mission – to make education a force to unite people, nations, and cultures for peace and a sustainable future – requires a commitment to the UWC values: international and intercultural understanding, celebration of difference, personal responsibility and integrity, mutual responsibility and respect, compassion and service, respect for the environment, a sense of idealism, personal challenge, and action and personal example.

At the heart of the UWC ethos is respect for others in all our actions and words. This means that we must think about the common good and be able to rise above our individual desires and needs.

In short, our ideals require good heartedness from all members of the UWC community and a recognition that cultural norms are diverse. The common Code of Conduct is required to make expectations clear.

Students who accept a position at a UWC school or college commit to the pursuit of a healthy lifestyle, one that avoids potential harm to self and to others. The following are not tolerated:

- Illicit drugs
- Tobacco
- Alcohol on school property and school sponsored activities
- Sexual activity in any public area, including student rooms
- Hazing, bullying or harassment
- Assault
- Stealing or 'borrowing without permission'

The expectation is that the UWC common Code of Conduct will be followed both in action and in spirit.



## FAMILY RULES

While the student must follow UWC rules, your family may have its own rules that you would like followed. Particularly if a student stays with you for multiple visits or for an extended period of time, it is very important to make these known. Try to think of what these are before the student arrives, as it is often awkward and difficult to bring the topic up after they have been with you for several visits. That need usually arises when a rule hasn't been made clear and you are feeling unhappy.

If an issue does arise, talk about it as soon as possible or small irritations will turn into big ones. Also, the student needs a fair opportunity correct their behaviour.

Some areas to consider:

- Shower times/length/frequency
- Bed making, room tidying
- Television
- Religious observations\*
- Telephone calls
- Visitors (ie. to stay in common areas or welcome in their room?)
- Chores
- Language

*\*see section on religious observations*

## COMPUTER AND MOBILE PHONE USE

Make rules around computer and telephone use clear, even for shorter stays.

Answering calls or texting during meals is okay in some families, but not in others. Do you have time limits or places where these devices are not allowed? What about laptop use in their rooms, or watching movies that you may not deem appropriate? You may be willing to share your Wi-Fi connection with the student, but be clear what you find acceptable in terms of downloading or usage. Consider for a minute how your family does things and make it clear so that there are no misunderstandings.



If you will be hosting a student for a meal, checking with them about their dietary restrictions, allergies, or religious needs beforehand will be helpful. Often their needs can be met by making minor adjustments, but the student can certainly give you suggestions. If you host for a longer period of time or if you go on to host the same student more often, you will get to know what works, as well as their likes and dislikes. Remember, these students are more adventurous and open to trying new things more than most. Meals are as much about social time as they are about food, so cook things that make your family happy.

Some students may enjoy the opportunity to cook you a specialty dish from their country. If you are happy to allow the student use your kitchen, this can be a good chance to get to know each other. Some of the fun might even be hunting through local stores for the ingredients!

All households have rules around food and meals, so make sure you make yours clear. If you don't allow children to go into the fridge between meals, make this known. If everyone gets their own breakfast, that's fine too – just let the student know and make sure they know where to find what they need.

Let the student know about any other food rules in your home. For example, can they eat on the couch or in their room, or only at the table? What about food they bring with them? Be clear so that the student feels comfortable.



## RELIGIOUS OBSERVATIONS

One of the wonderful aspects of hosting students with other religious backgrounds from your own is the opportunity to ask questions and learn from each other. This promotes intercultural understanding - one of UWC's standpoints. Students are not expected to conform to your religious values (although they may if they wish), but they must be respectful of them. For example, if you pray before you eat, you can ask that they wait until you are done before eating. Afford them the same courtesy by asking about any religious needs. Planning activities and meals around prayer times and fasting might be important for some students or families so don't be afraid to discuss this topic.

## SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

When a student stays for the night, a comfortable bed is usually the only obvious requirement. For longer stays, though, it would be best if the student has a space of their own. Sharing a room with one of your children or another UWC student is perfectly acceptable, as long as they are of the same gender, and each has their own bed. Privacy is scarce in the student residence, so the student may really savour the opportunity to have a space – even a small one, and even just for a night – to themselves, if you can spare it. Students will often arrive tired during one of the breaks, be prepared for them to sleep a lot.

## CULTURE SHOCK HOMESICKNESS

Most of the students in the UWC residence come from abroad and nearly all of them will experience some level of culture shock over the course of their stay in the Netherlands. Homesickness is generally worse when culture shock is at its height. If you are from (or have ever lived) abroad, you may be familiar with how the pattern. If not, it is helpful to recognise the symptoms.

Depending on where they are in dealing with things, the student you host might be experiencing life in the Netherlands as wonderful, miserable, or anything in-between. Understand that negative comments may be a reflection on where they are in dealing with their new “home” in the Netherlands. You can help by asking questions and listening, but also by reminding them that things here are not good or bad compared to what they are used to – they are just different. Being with you might be a good opportunity to blow off steam, learn coping strategies, or share frustrations. Perhaps you have useful hints on how to cope that they can use.

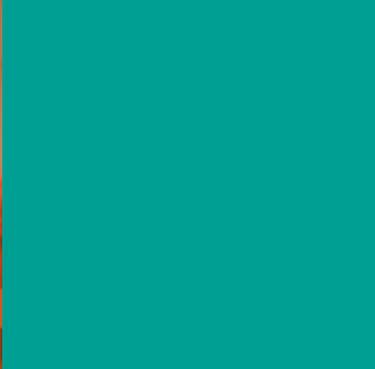
If you host the student more than once throughout the year, their attitude and position on things may change greatly between one visit and the next. Although the student may slide back and forth between stages somewhat, culture shock often resolves itself towards the end of the first year.

## IN AN EMERGENCY

In an emergency, you may have to make fast decisions in place of the student, parent, or UWC representative. The Residence Mentor on Duty is the UWCM representative you need to immediately contact in case of an emergency: 00 31 6 31 76 60 66 or the Head of Residential Life: 00 31 6 34 98 90 21.

## HOW TO SIGN UP

If you are interested in becoming a Home Stay Family or would like to have more information, please contact the Head of Residential Life via mail [homestay@uwcmastricht.nl](mailto:homestay@uwcmastricht.nl) or 00 31 6 34 98 90 21. We will interview all families and complete the necessary documents.



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