



**SUFFOLK**  
**UNIVERSITY**  
MADRID CAMPUS

## **GUIDELINES FOR LIVING WITH A HOST FAMILY**

This document will provide you with information that will help you better understand how to live in a Spanish family and acclimate to your new home.

Every student who accepts accommodation in SUMC-sponsored housing assumes the responsibility of living in someone else's property and treating it as their own. Our housing policies are designed to protect our students and that property, and to abide by Spanish laws and University regulations.

We enforce these regulations strictly, and occupants must agree to abide by them. By signing this document, you agree to abide by these policies and acknowledge that failure to do so can result in warnings or sanctions such as fines and/or disciplinary probation, and can ultimately result in forfeiture of your living accommodations and all associated fees.

### **General Policy for Living with a Host Family:**

The students assigned to each homestay are collectively responsible for any infraction(s) of the policies detailed below that may take place in their host family's apartment unless individual students assume full responsibility for said infraction(s).

Students in SUMC homestays are expected to behave appropriately with the members of their host family, roommates, neighbors and the community at large, in all respects. Violence or threats, sexual harassment, other inappropriate behavior, loud noise or disrespect for communal rules set by the community of neighbors will not be tolerated.

Homestay students are expected to treat their Madrid apartment with respect and, at departure, to leave it as they found it.

Homestay students found in violation of this agreement may be obligated to vacate their housing, will not be due any refund of fees and may be responsible for administrative and legal penalties or subject to a fine.

### **Health and Safety Policy:**

It is against SUMC regulations to:

1. Tamper with fire or other safety equipment.
2. Possess flammable items, appliances or other property that may be considered a fire hazard in any way.
3. Smoke in any part of a SUMC-sponsored apartment or building including common areas such as hallways and elevators.
4. Start or cause a fire in any SUMC-sponsored apartment or building.
5. Cause a false fire or safety alarm in any SUMC-sponsored housing or building.
6. Possess weapons or items that resemble weapons.
7. Throw objects or any substance from, into, or onto SUMC-sponsored housing windows, doors, walls, terraces, ledges, roofs or other areas.
8. Bring unauthorized furniture into your SUMC-sponsored apartment or building.
9. Tamper with devices and furnishings, such as windows, doors, shutters, cranks, stops, locks, door and smoke detectors, or closing devices.
10. Install an unauthorized lock on a bedroom, bathroom, or front door.

11. Leave apartment windows and entry doors open when not present in the apartment and/or fail to lock the apartment door.
12. Enter without authorization, or contribute to the unauthorized entry of another individual, into SUMC-sponsored housing. This includes fraudulent attempts (misrepresentation, using false identification, etc.), to enter or to allow another individual to enter any SUMC-sponsored housing.

#### **Guest Policy:**

No visitors are allowed in your home. Arrange to meet your friends elsewhere. It is extremely rude to bring friends into your host family's house, even if they are not at home. If a special request arises, you must ask permission first from your host family. On special occasions, host families may invite your friends or family to visit them, for example for a birthday celebration. Obviously, no overnight guests are allowed, just as in any other SUMC-sponsored housing.

#### **Administrative Policy:**

##### **You may not:**

1. Move to another apartment or housing facility without authorization.
2. Occupy a housing space assigned to another resident.
3. Sublet a SUMC-sponsored room or apartment, or allow an individual to reside in SUMC-sponsored housing without authorization.
4. Fail to properly complete and comply with the check-in/out procedure.
5. Modify or paint any room in your apartment.
6. Hang posters, photographs or other items using tape, nails and/or tacks that can damage walls.

**Loss of Keys or Magnetic "Bips"** will result in a 50-euro administrative fee, plus the actual cost of the replacement item (key and/or bip).

**Replacing Locks:** In the case of a lock-out or any other situation that you have caused to require the use of a locksmith (such as inserting objects into doors, breaking doors or locks), you will be charged a) the full cost of the locksmith (this can be very expensive if we need to replace a lock), plus b) all costs of replacement items (locks, doors, keys). As Spanish locksmiths are notoriously expensive, please do not call one on your own.

**Key Return at Check-out:** If you do not return your key at check-out, the penalty is 50 euros plus the costs of the replacement key and/or electronic bip.

**Damages:** Students are responsible for any damages in their homestays. In case the responsible party is not identified, all apartment residents will be charged in equal amounts for the total damage. **BE SURE YOU CAREFULLY FILL OUT THE HOUSING DAMAGE REPORT FORMS UPON YOUR ARRIVAL**, making note of any damages you see. **Always immediately notify the SUMC Housing Coordinator of damages that may occur during your stay. Damages to or loss of SUMC-related apartment property and furnishings will be assessed during the term or at check-out, and students will be billed according to the itemized costs for their repair or replacement, as listed in the current SUMC Student Handbook.**

**Utilities:** Act in a responsible manner with regard to the use of electricity, water, and gas in your family's apartment. Unreasonable gas and electric bills may result in additional charge to the homestay student(s). Given the high cost of utilities in Spain, you are expected to use electricity, hot water and gas MUCH MORE SPARINGLY than you normally would in the United States. All apartment meters will be read after one month for information purposes. Students will be responsible for combined monthly utility charges (divided equally among apartment occupants) exceeding 75 euros/month/person. **TURN OFF ALL LIGHTS AND ELECTRICAL DEVICES WHEN LEAVING YOUR ROOM.**

**Individual student:** SUMC reserves the right, for necessary maintenance, interpersonal relations or other reasons, to change a student's homestay assignment during the course of the academic year.

**MEAL PLAN:** "Pensión completa" (full board) in a host family consists of a continental breakfast (coffee, tea or milk and toast, pastries or cereal), usually 7:30 am-11:30 am, the midday main meal referred to as lunch (in Spain, the largest meal of the day) between 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm (weekends: 2:00pm to 4:00 pm), and dinner between 8:00 pm and 10:00 pm (weekends: 09:00 pm to 10:30 pm). These meals are served seven days a week.

You do not have kitchen privileges, and food is not available outside the set meal time. Keep in mind that it is considered bad manners to take food into the bedroom. You may request a complete bag lunch for the first day of an excursion, but make sure you notify the head of the household at least a day ahead.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT	WHAT YOU CANNOT EXPECT
More flexibility for meal times	To be able to cook
More flexibility to cater to special diets	American or international cooking
Use of microwave, toaster, coffee maker	To eat the host family's food outside the set meal times unless specifically invited
Reduced fridge or food storage space	To be compensated for meals you miss
Spanish-style cooking	To eat in your room or outside the designated dining area
To share dinner with the family and a relaxed chat during and after the meal	

**SHOWERS:** You may take one shower per day. We ask that you keep it short. In keeping with established Spanish schedules and in consideration of others, showers are only to be taken between 7:00 am and 11:00 pm. Note: hot water may not be as hot or as plentiful as you may be used to.

**TELEPHONES:** Fixed telephone costs are much higher in Spain than in the U.S., so for this reason you are not allowed to use the host family's home phone except in case of emergency or to receive calls. SUMC will provide you with a basic cell phone with some credit on it for your immediate communication needs. (The use of these cell phones will be discussed during orientation.)

**INTERNET ACCESS:** All host families offer wireless Internet. The password will be given to you by the family. Be aware that the reliability and speed of this service may not be as good as what you are used to.

**LAUNDRY:** You are entitled to two loads a week (one dark, one light), as well as the bed linens and towels that are provided to you by the family. Your host family will do the laundry for you. Dryers are not common in Spain, so most families hang their clothes to dry, either in the apartment or on an outside line. Delicate clothing items should be washed by you personally, by hand. You are responsible for paying for any clothing requiring special handling (e.g., dry-cleaning).

#### **Community Standards Policy:**

**As a subset of the terms of the SUMC Community Standards Policy, which are detailed in the SUMC Student Handbook, the following are examples of behaviors which are in violation of SUMC regulations for students residing in SUMC-sponsored housing:**

1. Disorderly, disruptive, or aggressive behavior that interferes with the general comfort, safety, security, health and/or welfare of the SUMC community.
2. Behavior that causes annoyance to neighbors. (As noise in many apartments can be heard clearly in adjacent apartments—next door, above and below—, students are specifically cautioned against speaking in loud voices, playing music or TV at high volume, slamming doors and wearing high-heeled or other hard-soled shoes while at home.)
3. Hanging, displaying or leaving personal items such as clothes or food items outside of your apartment, on balconies, or any other place that may be visually disturbing to your neighbors.
4. Presence, possession or consumption of illegal drugs and/or of alcohol.
5. Harassment or abusive behavior toward another individual or group by any means (including electronic), for any reason.
6. Physical violence (actual or threatened) against any individual or group.

7. Engaging in, or threatening to engage in, any other behavior that endangers the health or safety of another person, group or oneself.
8. Vandalism or damage to personal or apartment property.
9. Theft or unauthorized use or possession of personal or SUMC-sponsored property.
10. Excessive noise as defined by Madrid city ordinances or by SUMC.
11. Failure to maintain acceptable standards of personal hygiene or room/apartment cleanliness to the extent that such failure interferes with the general comfort, safety, security, health or welfare of a member or members of the SUMC community.
12. Keeping or caring for pets or animals in SUMC-sponsored housing.
13. Smoking in any part of the SUMC-sponsored apartment or building.
14. Conducting any business for profit in SUMC-sponsored housing.
15. Exhibiting or affixing any unauthorized sign, advertisement, notice or other lettering, flags or banners, that are inscribed, painted or affixed to any part of the outside of a building or the inside of a building.
16. Attaching or hanging any projections (including television dishes or antennas, awnings, etc.) to the outside walls or windows of SUMC-sponsored housing.
17. Gambling in SUMC-sponsored housing.
18. Using Internet connectivity in an illegal manner. (Downloading and/or torrenting protected, copyrighted material is a criminal offense in Spain; your Internet provider may terminate your apartment's Internet service as a result of such behavior. We will not be able to restart this service in the event of such an occurrence, thus affecting the ability of you and your fellow students to access the Internet).

#### **Policy on Cleanliness and Tidiness:**

You must do your best to maintain your room and the common areas that you use neat and clean.

1. Follow your host family's instructions regarding disposal of garbage. Garbage must be collected and bags must regularly be thrown into the property's garbage collection bins, usually located within your building's courtyard or on every street, according to the schedule set for pick-up. Separation and recycling of paper, glass and plastic/metal containers from other types of garbage and trash is required by Madrid law.
2. Host families may report students who do not keep their rooms adequately neat, particularly if the disorder prevents the room from being cleaned on a regular basis.
3. If students find bedbugs in their homestay room more than one week after their arrival, they will be held responsible for any fumigation/extermination fees (150 euros per room and per student). SUMC inspects every apartment and makes certain they are free of bedbugs before your arrival. Therefore, if bedbugs are found in the apartment beyond a week following check-in, it is because students have brought them into the apartment. For a list of tips on how to avoid bedbugs, please consult with the SUMC Housing Coordinator.

#### **Maintenance Policy:**

SUMC and the property owners/managers provide maintenance service for your apartment and are responsible for repairing the things that go wrong; accordingly, they will fix them as soon as possible.

#### **HOUSING EMERGENCIES:**

**We are available 24 hours a day for "Real Housing Emergencies". "Real Housing Emergencies" are: Fire, Flood, Gas Leak, Break-in (or any time that the police are in your apartment).**

If you have a "Real Housing Emergency", TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

1. Call the police, fire department or other relevant authority (DO THIS FIRST) by dialing 112 from a Spanish phone for the police or the fire department. (This is like 911 in the U.S.)
2. Call your SUMC Emergency Number: +34 628 294 290 (2264).
3. Notify your host family of the situation.

### **Violations of the SUMC-Sponsored Housing Policy**

Should any student violate any of the housing policies established by SUMC, the student(s) involved will be notified via their Suffolk University email accounts of the alleged violation, and a hearing procedure will immediately begin, as per the SUMC Community Standards & Student Conduct System detailed in the SUMC Student Handbook. Such infractions or violations are considered disciplinary matters; if found responsible for the infraction, the students(s) involved are subject to sanctions that may include, but are not limited to, warnings, fines, disciplinary actions (e.g., housing probation or dismissal from SUMC-sponsored housing), and/or parental information.

SUMC and the host family will inform each other of any infractions or violations of the SUMC Housing Policy that take place in the SUMC-sponsored homestay. In each case, the alleged violation will be documented. If, at the end of the hearing procedure, the student(s) involved is/are found responsible for the reported infraction, the following sanctions may be applied:

1. For a first violation, a warning may be issued. Nevertheless, depending upon the severity of the violation, a sanction may be applied, which could include partial or total loss of housing privileges, monetary fines, or, in extreme cases, permanent eviction from the housing placement. Costs for damage repair to homestay apartments for which the student is responsible must be paid immediately, in accordance with the list published in the SUMC Student Handbook.
2. For a subsequent violation, whether the same as or different from the first, the severity of the violation will be discussed and documented as part of the administrative hearing process. The sanction will be determined in keeping with the seriousness of the infraction, up to and including eviction from the homestay apartment without refund of fees. Any damage, repair, or fine must be paid immediately by those responsible.
3. A third violation may be grounds for immediate removal from SUMC-sponsored housing. Any damage, repair or fine must be paid immediately by those responsible. Hosting parties or allowing apartment mates to host them, or consumption of drugs or alcohol are considered very serious violations of SUMC housing rules and therefore may result in removal from SUMC-sponsored housing.
4. Physical/verbal abuse, whether towards a fellow student, a representative of SUMC, a member of the homestay family, a neighbor or any other person, is NEVER tolerated in SUMC-sponsored housing and will result in immediate eviction from said housing.
5. THERE WILL BE NO REFUNDS FOR LOSS OF HOUSING/EVICTION DUE TO VIOLATIONS. The student will be given 24 hours to evacuate his/her housing placement. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS. All expenses related to dismissal and/or forfeiture of housing are the sole responsibility of the student.