Introduction to living together with us

We are delighted that you will be our au pair. We hope that you will quickly get accustomed to life in our family and you will enjoy your stay with us. We hope that we will undertake a lot of excursions together, have a lot of reasons to laugh and create fantastic memories.

We hope that you will quickly be able to complete the assigned tasks independently. Of course, we will help you at the beginning. We are happy to answer any questions you have and please tell us if you don’t understand something or don’t know how to do something.

To help you at the beginning we have created some house rules for you to read. We hope this will help to answer some questions in advance.

General Information

* In Germany, we sort rubbish:
  + Paper
  + Plastic
  + Glass
  + Bio-degradable (foodstuffs, plants, etc.)
  + Everything else.
* Tap water is drinkable in Germany
* In Germany we consider punctuality very important. Please make sure that you are always on time.
* It is always good to ask if you have a question. We are happy to explain everything you want to know.
* If we ask you for your opinion please be honest. We cannot read your mind.
* Please talk to us if there are any problems. We are open to changes within the realms of our possibilities.
* We are very direct in Germany, especially with regards to criticism. Please don’t think we don’t like you when you criticize something you did. And just because we don’t smile doesn’t mean we don’t like you are that we are unhappy or mad.
* Don’t hitch hike or accept rides from people you don’t know.
* You will be paid once a month at the end of the month. We will transfer the money to your bank account.

Working Hours

* In the morning, you should dressed and ready to work at your scheduled start time. You may eat breakfast before you start work or with us.
* We want you to be awake and fit at all times during working hours. Please make sure that you sleep at a reasonable time so that you can do your work.
* Giving notice of not being able to work:  
  Please try to give us notice as soon as possible so that we can make other arrangements for childcare. If you are feeling sick at night and think that you will not be able to work the next day, it would be very helpful to let us know that night. If you start feeling sick in the middle of the night, please leave a note in the kitchen for us to see when we come downstairs in the morning.
* You will have four weeks of vacation time during the year. We ask that you please give us at least at least one month advance notice of when you plan to take days off, so that we can make other arrangements for childcare.
* As much as possible, we try to include you in all of our family vacations. For some vacations, we may require you to go if we need a certain amount of childcare on the trip. For other vacations, if we don’t have a specific need for you to work, we will give you the choice about whether you want to come or not. If you come with us on vacation, we will discuss in advance what your work schedule will be on the trip. Any trip you take with the family will not “count” as part of your vacation days.
* You are invited to spend your free day with us but of course you are welcome to spend it on your own as well. How you organise your free time if up to you. Please let us know when you leave the house and also when you return. If you plan to be away for the night please let us know where you are and when you plan to be home again. We are responsible for you and want to ensure that you are safe.
* Please dress appropriately with clean clothes and in accordance to the weather. Our children look up to you and you should be a good role model to them.
* Please pay attention to good personal hygiene habits. Water in Germany is expensive so please do not shower more than twice a day, though usually once a day should be enough. Please do make sure to shower regularly.

Privacy

* No pictures of us, the house and the cars online/in social medias.
* Please do not pass on our contact details to strangers or online without talking to us first.
* Never give people private details, like your address, on the phone.
* Please only open mail which is addressed to you.
* You live with us and are part of our family life. We as host parents may sometimes have a bad day and might, as a result, fight with each other or the children. Please don’t worry about this and if it does, please speak with us. Please do not talk about what goes on in our private life to strangers. If you feel like you need to speak with someone, feel free to contact the agency.
* If someone who you do not know comes to the door, please do not let them in. Even if they say we are expecting them or know them you are not allowed to let someone in if we are not home.

Rules for you as part of a family member in our home

* You are welcome to have visitors but please ask us in advance. You are welcome to invite your friends over (either during work if they care for kids close to our kids’ age, or during your free time), but we would prefer to meet them first, before you invite them into the house when we are not home.
* We expect you to be home for dinner. If you plan to be away, please inform us in advance.
* No street shoes in the house. Please take them off in the entrance.
* Please only use the house phones for calls in Germany.
* No downloading of illegal content (movies/music) from the internet in our home. Downloading movies or music from websites like bit torrents is illegal and can lead to fines of 1000€ and more. You will be held accountable for any fines incurred.
* Should you consume illegal drugs your contract will be terminated with immediate effect.
* If something is broke, doesn’t work or you break something, please tell us as soon as possible.
* No smoking inside the house.
* Please do not get drunk in our house.
* If it is someone who is dropping off a package, you can take it, and sign for it if necessary.
* Please lock the doors and make sure all the windows are closed when you leave and make sure to bring your keys. Even if we are home when you leave, you should bring your keys in case we are not home when you return.
* When we have the heater on in the winter, please be sure to keep the windows closed so we do not waste electricity by heating a house with open windows.
* You are at home in our home and welcome to you all electrical appliances like the coffee machine and TV. Please ask us to explain any appliances you don’t know how to use.
* You have a bicycle at your disposal. You are responsible for this bicycle when you use it. Please remember to lock the bicycle when you are somewhere and are leaving the bicycle unattended. If it is broken, please let us know. If it gets dark you need to turn on the light when you are riding the bicycle. You are not allowed to ride the bicycle while on the phone. General rules for driving a car also apply to bicycles.
* We try to have meals together. Setting the table and clearing off is something we all do and does not count to working hours.
* During mealtimes please put away your mobile phone.

Kitchen Rules

* Whenever you put leftover food in the refrigerator, make sure that it is wrapped in an airtight package or container. Use see-through plastic wrap, containers, or plastic bags.
* Generally we do not use the microwave for heating or preparing food. Most dishes and containers are not microwave safe.
* The larger cooking knives are washed by hand and left to dry by the drying rack. They do not go in the dishwasher.
* Wine glasses also do not go into the dishwasher. These need to be washed by hand.
* Remember to wash the outside, as well as the inside, of pots and pans that you use.
* With the nonstick frying pans, use only plastic or wooden utensils. The metal spoons, spatulas, and so forth scratch the nonstick coating.
* Please be mindful of resources: avoid wasting water by leaving the water running when you are not actively using it; avoid wasting electricity by leaving the door of the refrigerator open while you walk around the kitchen.
* If something spills in the fridge, please clean it up. Generally try and keep the fridge clean.
* If something is past its due date, check whether it needs to be thrown out or not.
* Dishes go in the dishwasher. Don’t just stack used dishes on the counter or in the sink.
* Empty the dish washer when it’s finished.
* Wipe the counters when you are finished eating.
* Everyone helps to set and clear the table. You do your part and you should also encourage the children to help as much as they can.

Au Pair Room

* You should feel at home in your room and we are welcome to change things around a little. Things like hanging new pictures on the wall or painting your room should be agreed by us first.
* Please put your laundry in the laundry bin.
* Please be sure to open the window in your room and bathroom for several minutes twice a day. This ensures that no mold grows in these rooms. Please turn off the heating during this time in the winter. Please remember to close the windows again afterwards.
* If you eat or drink something in your room please make sure to clear everything away after that.
* Do not hang clothes to dry in your room.
* Please do not heat your room above 22°C, even if you feel cold. You will get ill if the room is too warm. Should you be cold at night we can give you another blanket.
* Please make sure our children cannot reach dangerous items such as medicine.
* Please do not lock the door to your room when you leave the house.
* Make sure that your room is always tidy and the bed is made.
* Please turn off all lights and electrical appliances when you leave a room. We pay a lot of money for electricity and it gets very expensive very quickly.
* Please always leave your bathroom clean and tidy. Cleaning your own bathroom does not count as working time.
* Also remember to change your bedding and replace your towels from time to time.
* Empty the bin in your room and bathroom regularly.
* Never throw hygiene articles or other objects into the toilet, as this may clog it.
* Please open the window after showering or bathing to let the moisture out of the room.
* Please always leave the toilet clean.

General rules when working with kids

* When taking care of our children, please do not use your mobile phone. It is okay to have it on you, but you should not be using it to communicate with friends or watch videos as it takes away from your attention and sets a bad example for children.
* Show boundaries and also say "no" sometimes when it is necessary. You must also not give in when they cry, because otherwise children know that they can always fight a "no" with tears.
* Especially at the beginning, children will test your boundaries. It is important that you remain consistent.
* In the summer, make sure the children have sun protection, such as a hat and sunscreen, and also that they and you drink enough.
* Please make sure that the children are not completely dirty. If necessary, ask the children to wash their hands and change clothes if they are wet or very dirty.
* Put everything back in its place. Take toys, activities, equipment, and so on from "a to z.”
* Each job has a tool; each tool has its own job. If you need a tool that you can’t find, let me know.
* Replace what is used up.
* Treat objects with respect.
* Clean up after yourself. “If you are responsible enough to be able to do it, you are responsible enough to clean up after it.”
* Teach our children to do things "the right way".
* Show lots of enthusiasm.
* Anticipate the children’s needs; be respectful of your own needs.
* Be gentle with criticism.
* Laugh and have fun.
* Ask the children to be respectful to grown-ups and friends.
* Offer our children choices between two things that would be okay with you.
* Make sure you are in charge, not the other way around.
* Ask "what can you do to contribute to a… clean room, happy dinner, tidy bathroom, etc.”
* Guide the children to pick up after themselves.
* Increase what is done with him/her, decrease what we do for him/her.
* Always leave a little bit of extra time so that you can tidy things up together.
* Don’t give into crying too much. It is okay to cry when hurt, but there is no need for drama.
* TV, mobile phones, laptops, tablets, etc. are okay once in a while, but are not to be used as a general means of entertainment.
* A piece of chocolate or a small bag of gummy bears are okay as a treat. It is no substitute for healthy food or snacks.
* Make sure the children drinks plenty: water or tea are best, water with apple juice is also okay. No soft drinks such as coke.
* Make sure the children are outside at least once a day. Dress them appropriately and make sure they have warm feet and a warm hat. If they fuss and won’t dress properly, they are not allowed outside.
* Our children should not go to anyone’s house without you. If you make friends with other au pairs who care for children close to their age, it is fine for you two to go to their homes together, or to invite them to our house.
* Activities that our children enjoy, and we encourage you to include:
  + Singing and reading together;
  + Playing with toys and lego;
  + Pretending to have a “tea party”;
  + Playing with puzzles, coloring and doing craft projects;
  + Jumping on the trampoline;
* Our main reward is praise. It’s helpful to try to notice and praise as much good behavior as you can – the more she/he is recognized for good behavior, the more he’ll/she’ll give you!
* When he/she misbehaves, you may discipline her/him.  
  We usually give a warning or count to 3 when misbehaving. Then, if the behavior continues, we give him/her a “time out” in her/his room. You can leave the door open and he/she is allowed to come back down when calm. Ask if everything is okay again and then give him/her a hug to show that you are ok as well.  
  For certain behavior, like hitting or biting, he/she should get a time out right away without a warning or counting to 3.  
  We want you to feel comfortable disciplining him/her. He/She need to understand that they must listen to and respect you the same way they listen to and respect us, and that they do not make the rules. Please tell us if there are behavioral problems that you need us to help you address. However, if you have problems with the kid(s) during the day and feel like you were able to resolve them yourself, you do not need to tell us every little detail of what happened! If you feel like it is “over” by the time we get home from work, you do not need to tell us about it.

Security of children

* When riding a bicycle, children must always ride on the sidewalk. Adults ride on the street. Children must always ride with helmets.
* Please never leave children alone at the water! You must always be able to see the children. If a child who cannot swim falls into the water, you must go after them immediately.

Use of our car

* You can use our car to:
  + Drive the children
  + Drive to the language classes
  + Go grocery shopping for our family.
* For everything else, please use the bicycle of public transportation.
* All passengers in the car must always wear their seat belts. Please make sure that all other passengers and especially children are wearing seat belts.
* Please obey the speed limit and other traffic and parking rules. If you get a ticket for speeding, parking or similar, you must pay the amount due yourself.
* Do not use your cell phone while driving. Pull over to the side of the road and park before you pick up your phone, otherwise it will be expensive if you get caught.
* Let us know if you think the car needs service.
* Please refuel the car when the fuel gauge comes on.
* If you have a problem with one of the cars, such as a flat tire, please call us immediately and we will help you.
* If you are driving and plan to drink alcohol, you are not allowed to use the car. It is dangerous and illegal to drive a car after consuming alcohol.
* Keep the car clean.
* Please do not forget to lock the car when you park the car, even in front of the house.
* It is never safe to leave children alone in the car. If a child has fallen asleep in the car and you do not want to wake them, it is okay to leave them in the car in the driveway for a very short time to get a book or magazine from the house and then read in the car until the child wakes up.
* If you do have an accident, it needs to be reported to the insurance company as soon as possible.
* If you are involved in an accident with another vehicle, please have the other driver give you the insurance information (driver's name and address, insurance company name, insurance company phone number, policy number). The other person will also ask you for your insurance information, which can be found on a card in the glove compartment. (We will show you where it is.) If you are involved in an accident, please never assume or admit fault. (You should tell the truth about what happened, but not say, "I'm sorry, it was all my fault!").
* If you have a car accident during working hours, we will pay for damages to the car, even if the accident was your fault. If you have a car accident while you are off duty and it is your fault, you will have to pay the deductible yourself. (This is a charge from our insurance company.) If you have an accident while you are off duty and it is not your fault, you are responsible for paying half of the deductible. We will pay the other half of the deductible. If you are in a car accident, it can increase the price of our insurance for several years, so please drive very carefully! If the accident is the result of grossly negligent driving, we will have to reconsider the use of our cars, or may require you to take a course in safe driving, at your own expense.

Important Contact Information

General Contact Information

**Home Address**

Germany

**Home phone number**

+49

**Cell phone numbers**

Mom:   
Dad:

**Other important phone number (name and phone number)**

**Grandmother:  
Grandfather:  
Kindergarten:  
School:  
Neighbour:  
Family doctor:  
Family dentist:**  
Emergency Phone Numbers

**Police 110  
Fire Department & Emergency Doctor 112  
Stand-by Doctor 116 177**

Important information in emergencies

Name of the child (first- and surname):  
DOB:  
Child’s insurance company:  
Allergies:  
Regular medications (name, time for intake, dosage):

Informational matieral written by

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