

# MINI STAY HANDBOOK

FOR GROUP LEADERS 2026



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# WELCOME

At Donegal English Language School our team of teachers, coordinators and office staff will always be on hand to help and support Group Leaders travelling with Mini Stay Groups for our various Mini Stay programmes.

Mini Stay breaks run from February 1st to Mid-June and from the end of August until November. These stays are normally one week long and consist of pre-arranged groups from a school led by a Group Leader.



Gina Witherow,  
Owner and Director

## MINI STAY PROGRAMMES



Irish culture week



Work experience



Specific itinerary



The following information aims to inform Group Leaders of their role whilst at DELS and how they can work with us to ensure a great experience for their students.

# GROUP LEADER DUTIES



THE GROUP LEADER IS THE FIRST POINT OF CONTACT FOR THE STUDENTS AND SHOULD BE THE PERSON TO REPORT ANY ISSUES TO CAMP MANAGEMENT SO IT CAN BE ADDRESSED SWIFTLY.



Live and work closely with the students acting as a point of contact between them and DELS



Make sure your students respect the rules of the camp and make an effort to speak English.



Ensure students are prepared for their activities and classes. Stay with a sick student if they are not fit to participate.



Report any student welfare concerns to the Designated Liaison Person



Support DELS staff in ensuring students tidy up after themselves



Encourage students to enjoy the healthy balanced diet in the canteen

# GROUP LEADER DUTIES



IF YOUR GROUP IS STAYING WITH HOST FAMILIES, THERE'S SOME THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW:



Hosts Families cannot be changed easily



Try to ensure students work with the family around the house



Ensure students keep their rooms in host family clean



Host families will drop the students off in the morning and collect them at the end of the day in our locations or bus stop



Students get packed lunches made by their families.



Remember any issues, contact or Camp Management as soon as is possible!

# ACCOMMODATION

## ACCOMMODATION TYPES



RESIDENTIAL



HOST FAMILY

## BENEFITS OF RESIDENTIAL

RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION OFFERS STUDENTS AN EXPERIENCE WHERE THEY CAN SOCIALISE WITH STUDENTS FROM A RANGE OF DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES.



Activity Room



Kitchen



Student Lounge



Weekly Cleaning



Social Environment

## BENEFITS OF HOST FAMILY

HOST FAMILY ACCOMMODATION ALLOWS STUDENTS TO STAY WITH A LOCAL IRISH FAMILY AND IMMERSE THEMSELVES IN IRISH CULTURE.



Cultural Immersion



Homemade Meals



Home Environment



Practice English



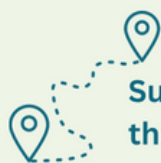
Live like a local

# RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION



## Surfers' Bay

- **Surfers Bay** is our main residential accommodation.
- **15 minute's walk** from the school and **5 minutes** from the centre of town.
- **Sleeps 45** students with bunk rooms of 2/3/5.
- Students will be separated into **boys and girls**.
- Unless otherwise arranged, the Group Leaders will be staying in Surfers Bay in a private room to ensure the safety of their students.
- Residential accommodation may at times be shared between different groups.



Surfers Bay is located 15 minutes walk from the school



# HOST FAMILIES

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## BENEFITS



**See local attractions**



**Cultural Immersion**



**Home environment**



**Home meals**



## WHAT TO EXPECT

Host family students will arrive to Surfers Bay where they will meet the DELS team before being introduced to their host family, who will collect them once they have had their welcome presentation.

Students will have a room either to themselves or shared with other students.

The host family will provide breakfast, packed lunch and dinner for the students staying with them.

# THE SCHOOL



This stunning Georgian building in the West End of Bundoran is the heart of the DELS operation. This is where the students will go for English class every day and where our Management and Admin team are based.

Our teaching staff will ensure students are allocated to the right class level based on the information provided from your school in advance.

The timing of English classes depends on the programme, activities and the time of year.



The school is also where students are given lunch and dinner in the DELS Canteen.

We pride ourselves on our freshly prepared meal options.

The kitchen can and will cater for special dietary requirements, however only if advised at enrolment stage.

# THE LANGUAGE SCHOOL



The school consists of **4 classrooms** and a **canteen** along with an **outdoor area**.

The students are free to play outside on the green between class and during breaks.

Our ethos is to **learn by doing** and to ensure students are engaged using our project-based approach to learning.

There is a dedicated space for group leaders to work while classes are ongoing.

One group leader should stay in the building while their group is in class. All group leaders are welcome to view the presentations made by each class on the last day, during the last half hour of the class.

Leaders should also be aware that, based on our experience, standards of behaviour among students tend to slip after the second day, so it should be reinforced to your group that the standard set on the first day is expected throughout.



# FOOD

## BREAKFAST

DELS Coordinators will ensure that there is a sufficient amount of food provided.

Host families will provide their students with breakfast.

## LUNCH

DELS provides a lunch for residential students at the school canteen.

Host families provide a packed lunch for their students.

## DINNER

Residential students will have dinner in the school canteen.

Host Family students will take our private bus back to their host families for dinner.

## YOUR ROLE AS A GROUP LEADER

Coordinators will help you set up for breakfast in Surfers Bay each day. In Casa/Zephyr/Portbeg the coordinator will show you how to set up on the first day, and then it is your responsibility each day after. It is also your responsibility to:

1

Ensure students clean up after themselves and are helpful in their host families.

2

Make sure students are ready to leave on time for class/activities at the correct meeting point.

3

In the canteen, your role is to help the students settle in. Ensure they are seated in a calm, organised fashion, behaving themselves and respecting the staff and food.

### BREAKFAST

Let the morning coordinator know what breakfast you are running low on each day and they will arrange a stock up. Please try to order for a few days at a time. Please remember that breakfast supplies are for breakfast and if eaten during the day, will leave your group with limited breakfast supplies.

### LUNCH AND DINNER

Students with special dietary requirements will be served their meals first.

# ITINERARY

## SAMPLE SCHEDULE

| Sun                        |                          | Mon                                  | Tue                                     | Wed                                | Thur                              | Fri                                     | Sat                                  | Sun                        |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Arrivals<br>Dublin Airport |                          | Breakfast at Residence/HF            |                                         |                                    |                                   |                                         |                                      |                            |
|                            | 8am - 9am                |                                      |                                         |                                    |                                   |                                         |                                      |                            |
|                            |                          |                                      |                                         |                                    |                                   |                                         | Sliabh League<br>Cliffs<br>Excursion | Dept for tour<br>of Dublin |
|                            | 9.15am - 12.30pm         | English Classes                      |                                         |                                    |                                   |                                         |                                      |                            |
|                            |                          |                                      |                                         |                                    |                                   |                                         |                                      |                            |
|                            |                          |                                      |                                         |                                    |                                   |                                         |                                      |                            |
|                            | 1pm - 2pm                | Packed Lunch                         |                                         |                                    |                                   |                                         |                                      |                            |
|                            |                          |                                      |                                         |                                    |                                   |                                         |                                      |                            |
|                            |                          |                                      |                                         |                                    |                                   |                                         | Donegal Town<br>Shopping             | Departure<br>Flight        |
|                            | 2pm - 5.15pm             | Fairy bridges<br>and coastal<br>walk | Irish crafts<br>and culture<br>workshop | Irish ceili<br>dancing<br>workshop | Big Bundoran<br>scavenger<br>hunt | Organic<br>center and<br>waterfall hike |                                      |                            |
|                            |                          |                                      |                                         |                                    |                                   |                                         |                                      |                            |
| 5.30pm                     | Dinner in school canteen |                                      |                                         |                                    |                                   |                                         |                                      |                            |
|                            |                          |                                      |                                         |                                    |                                   |                                         |                                      |                            |
| 7pm - 9pm                  |                          |                                      | Bowling /<br>Cinema                     |                                    |                                   |                                         |                                      |                            |

## YOUR SCHEDULE



You will be given an itinerary specific to your group in advance of your arrival. While all itineraries are subject to change due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances, the itinerary is what we plan to deliver to your group.

# ITINERARY

## AFTER BREAKFAST / LUNCH

- You will know from your schedule if your group is doing English or activities in the morning.
- When students are in English, you have 3 hours off. You are free to explore the town, take in some of the amazing scenery or go for a coffee in one of the local cafes. If one of your students is sick or there are discipline issues, you will be asked to stay at the school.
- You are expected to attend all other activities, meals, walks with students. We always encourage participation, however our activities are led and delivered by our coordinator team.

## AFTER DINNER

- Each evening, your students will return to the residence and be under your care.
- Depending on your programme, we have evening activity/activities for all students. These vary depending on your booking.
- Students have free time before bed at 22:00.
- Bedtime must be maintained, as students have a very busy week and need as much sleep as possible to ensure their energy for the week's activities.

STUDENTS SHOULD NEVER LEAVE THE PREMISES OR BE LEFT UNATTENDED

## BOWLING/CINEMA

On bowling or cinema evening, **ALL students** (including those staying with Host Family) will either go bowling or to the cinema. A team member will bring you there and then you will stay with the students on your own.



Walk students to activity



Remind students to bring money



Monitor students across 2 floors



Ensure silence during movie



Respect environment and staff

# PHONES

WE LIMIT PHONE USE WITH STUDENTS TO ENSURE CONNECTION WITH EACH OTHER, WITH THEIR SURROUNDINGS, AND WITH THE NATURE AROUND THEM

During Mini stays, we collect all the students' phones at the start of the day and return them after dinner that evening.

The exceptions to this rule:

1. First and last day of English classes, as they need their phones for class.
2. Students are allowed phone on Excursions.
3. Scavenger Hunt activity (one phone per group).
4. The night before departure.
5. Work experience groups.



## THINGS TO NOTE

Please collect the phones at 22:00 each evening. Students are allowed their phones 17:00 to 22:00 pm each day. Phones are stored in a box provided by us in the group leaders room.

On day one of school, students are allowed their phone during the day for class only  
On the last day of school, students are allowed their phones during the day for class only.

A student may use their phone in case of emergency. Be very strict with this rule as if one student gets their phone, they will all want their phones.

Please be very careful with storing and transporting phones.

# EXCURSION

MOST MINI STAY EXCURSIONS INCLUDE A HIKE FOLLOWED BY SHOPPING.  
EXCURSIONS MAY CHANGE DUE TO WEATHER.

**Every week there is an excursion. You must:**

- Wake up the students at 08:00 as their bus will be leaving at 09:30 for their excursion. If the excursion is the day after you arrive or on a Sunday it leaves at 10:00.
- Ensure that your students have their money and jacket in case it rains.
- Have all of the students phone numbers in case you need to contact them.



## THINGS TO NOTE

Students are allowed to explore the city, but they must stay in groups and be sure not to leave anyone on their own. While they do this, you are free to enjoy some time off around the city.

A packed lunch will be brought for each residential student and handed out during the excursion at a location where they can all enjoy it. Host family students get their packed lunch from their host family.

You are responsible for ensuring your students are **back on the bus on time.**

# CLEANING

## SCHEDULE

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The common areas are cleaned daily in Surfers Bay.

Every two days in Casa del Mar, Portbeg or Zephyr Lodge.

Bedrooms are cleaned once a week for a 5 to 6 day stay.

Bedrooms are cleaned twice a week for a 7 day stay.

There is a full clean on Sunday for a two week or more stay.

### WEDNESDAY

The cleaners will clean the students bedrooms during the day.

It is the responsibility of the group leader to ensure that students have all of their belongings off the floor.

### SATURDAY

If students are staying over the weekend, Saturday is a full clean of the building and students must be out of their rooms by 10:00.



# DEPARTURE

CONTACT OUR OFFICE A FEW DAYS BEFORE YOU TRAVEL, WE WILL GIVE YOU THE NAME AND MOBILE NUMBER FOR OUR DRIVER.



## NIGHT BEFORE CHECKLIST

- ✓ Check your students have their Passports/Identity Cards.
- ✓ Make sure their bags are the correct weight.
- ✓ If your students are below 15 years old, ensure you have the appropriate paperwork for their flight (Unaccompanied Minor Form).
- ✓ Ensure your students have cleaned the rubbish from their room.
- ✓ Remember that boarding passes can be printed if requested.
- ✓ Report any damage done to staff.

## THINGS TO NOTE

Students will be given a snack pack on departure by Host Families or DELS canteen depending on your accomodation.

On departure, your bus will leave DELS 7 hours before your flights departure time.

This is to allow for transfer and check-in times.

If your group has booked "Dublin Tour on Departure" you will go from the school to the tour before going to the airport.

# F.A.Q.S

## Who do I contact if I have a problem?

For General Questions and queries in advance, call the **office on 00 353 7198 41288.**

For Questions while in camp about your schedule, changes or updates phone the **Camp Supervisor team on 00 353 86 2722495.**

For serious issues or emergencies call the **General Manager Daniel Browne on 00 353 87 3587367.**

## Where can I find the students timetable?

You will be given a timetable in advance of your arrival and a hard copy on arrival. We are happy to help with any questions or queries.

## What should I advise students to bring?

One towel is provided per student per week, but they may bring their own additional if they wish. There are hairdryers available in residence for students. **PLEASE ENSURE STUDENTS BRING APPROPRIATE CLOTHING FOR A TRIP TO THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY – THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS BAD WEATHER – JUST BAD CLOTHES!**

## What do I do in my free time?

You can take the time to explore Bundoran! We will give you further suggestions in our meeting on arrival.

## Do I see the students when they are in class?

On the last day of class, we encourage group leaders to attend and watch students deliver their final project presentation. If you would like to join this class, please speak to the academic manager at the school.

## Where do the students keep their valuables?

Once the welcome presentation is over, Group Leaders need to collect students passports and any other valuable items they wish to have kept safe during their stay. This can include tablets, wallets, money, airpods etc. You can keep these locked in your rooms.

Money and valuables are kept in an envelope. Money can be signed out to the students by the Group Leader if it is needed.

Please note that each student is required to retain 50 euro until the end of their stay as a security deposit. In the event of damage to any property being sustained the security deposit will be retained by DELS.



# Donegal English Language School West End, Bundoran

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