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## Sample Covenant for Long-Term Housing

*This document is in reference to the IFI blog post, “Preparing to Host a Student Long-Term” (<https://www.ifipartners.org/blog/preparing-host-student-long-term>)*

Both the Duffs and the Greenes have found this covenant, which the Duffs suggested for IFI’s ISEED Program, to be very helpful in governing a household that includes long-term guests. Feel free to adapt it to your own situation. The words in green are the Greenes’ adaptation of the document.

### Host Family Household Covenant

“But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

Joshua 24:15

It is our desire to honor and serve the Lord in all that we say and do, in how we relate with one another as a family, and in how we welcome those who enter this home. Living in such a way, we hope that Christ’s light and love would shine brightly in this place. The following guidelines are set down as an attempt to clearly communicate our roles, expectations, and responsibilities in order that we might enjoy the Lord’s peace, provision, and protection in this home:

1. We believe that the Lord has brought you, \_\_\_\_\_, to join our household. Because of this we will value you as a sister [daughter/son] and gift from Him.
2. We believe that this home belongs to the Lord and that each household member has the privilege of being His steward to faithfully care for and use it to show hospitality to all who enter.
3. The suite [guest room] on the lower level is for your personal use, and your privacy will be respected. We will not enter without your permission [except to retrieve items being stored in the closets].
4. Guests: You are welcome to entertain guests at any time. We would love to meet all your guests and to make them feel welcome. If you have a male guest, we ask that you entertain him in a common area of the house. If you’d like to entertain guests in the family living space, just let us know ahead of time. We would also appreciate if you would clean up after your guests.

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You are free to come and go as you wish, but we request that you please notify us when leaving or arriving, if we are at home. Otherwise, a text would be fine.

5. Food and meals: You are welcome to join in our family meals. Except on special occasions, breakfasts are usually casual, sometimes with each person eating separately, depending on when he/she gets up. We normally have lunch around noon and dinner around 6:00. We will provide all the food for these meals.[\*] Mai does [As hosts, we do] most of the cooking; you are always welcome but not expected to take part in meal preparations with her (Greenes omit “with her.”) You are welcome to cook for the family occasionally. We respect that you have your own busy schedule, which may not always coordinate with ours. It is our family’s priority to eat meals together as much as possible, and we hope that you will join us as much as you are able [We would like you to indicate, on a calendar provided by us, if you know ahead of time that you will not be able to be here for dinner.]

Any food you purchase and consume on your own can be stored in the refrigerator or in sealed containers in the cabinets to prevent the spread of pests. Do not store items in the refrigerator to the point that they get old and start to mold. Keep “left-overs” stored in the refrigerator to a minimum. Please do not leave food sitting out and daily clean up any dishes you might use. Please scrape and rinse any dishes you use and place them in the dishwasher.

6. Cleaning: It will be your responsibility to keep the entire basement [your room] clean by dusting and vacuuming at least once every two weeks. We will try to keep our things in the common areas picked up so that you can do this. [Greenes omit this sentence.] The [basement] bathroom in your room should be cleaned at least once a week, including carrying out the trash. We will provide the cleaning supplies[\*] and explain how we’d prefer the cleaning to be done.

7. Personal items: We expect that you will provide for your own toiletries and other personal items used in your suite and bathroom downstairs [room and bathroom].

8. You may use the laundry facilities on the second floor from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. We would prefer for you to use the detergent that will be available up there. You may use the laundry facilities. You are welcome to use the detergent that is there.\*

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9. Please respect our privacy on the second floor after 8:00 p.m. You are free and welcome to use the rest of the house any time that you wish, being considerate to keep the noise level appropriate after 9:00 p.m. **Greenes omit Duffs' number 9 and replace it with: Please park your car in the driveway to the far right to allow us clear access to the garage with our car.**

10. **Please respect our privacy when our bedroom door is closed. But you are welcome to knock on our door if the situation warrants our help or attention. You are free and welcome to use the rest of the house any time that you wish, being considerate to keep the noise level appropriate.**

10. **[Greenes' number 11.]** Should any questions or concerns arise, please come talk with us as soon as possible so that we might work them out before they become larger issues. We commit to doing the same with you and promise to do our best to listen and respect your thoughts and feelings. It is by our love for one another that the world will know that we are His disciples.

**\*We will provide these items, but if you use the last of any item (or notice that we are running low on a given item) please let us know so that we can replenish the supply.**

Signed (host): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (guest): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_