



# The Linguaviva Centre Ltd.



Dear Family,

The Linguaviva Centre has been introducing au pairs to families for many years. We have learned that the happiest au pair experiences have taken place in families that are fully aware of the meaning of "an au pair stay". With this in mind, we would ask you to read this letter carefully.

The Linguaviva Centre is an English Language School. Through our many contacts abroad we have been introduced to a variety of young people who would like to come as au pairs to Ireland. We would like to stress that The Linguaviva Centre is not an employment agency. We merely offer families the chance to look at dossiers of people who wish to come as au pairs. We have not met, interviewed or vetted these girls and therefore cannot in any way accept responsibility for problems or mishaps that may occur when they subsequently come to your family. In many cases, agencies have interviewed the applicants and you can see comments from such agencies. All applicants must have references, a police check and a recent medical certificate, which you yourself can examine when looking at the application forms.

As already stated, the Linguaviva Centre cannot accept responsibility for any person whom you select, but we will assist you in any way that we can with your au pair. Once you choose a suitable applicant, we will then contact them and give them details of your family. We will ask them to telephone/Skype you as soon as possible to agree acceptance of your offer or otherwise and give details of their travel arrangements. Once the au pair arrives in Ireland, we will be there to assist with any difficulties that may arise. Amongst our staff there are fluent Spanish, German, French and Italian speakers. Sometimes it is necessary to speak to the au pair in their mother tongue in order to reassure them or to discuss problems that have arisen. The au pair co-ordinator is here to help both the family and the au pair in case of such difficulties.

We receive applications from European countries - German, French, Spanish, Austrian, Swiss, Swedish and Italian - who wish to be placed with an Irish family. The length of stay varies from a minimum of three months in summer to a minimum of six months in winter. Summer applicants normally come in June or July and winter applicants in September, October and January. It is possible to get an au pair at other times of the year, however this is subject to availability. Once you have selected an au pair it takes approximately three weeks for the application to be processed

We also receive applications from Non-EU countries who wish to combine an au pair stay with their English course. The minimum stay is six months. As Non-EU Nationals must apply for a student visa, processing the visa takes at least four months.

In the following we'll give you some more information about our au pair service and the conditions and we would ask you sign at the end please and return the document to us with your completed application form. Thank you!

We're looking forward to assisting you in finding an au pair!

The Linguaviva-Team

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## Registering as an au pair family:

To register as an au pair family you must send the following:

- A completed application form and a family schedule
- Photos of your family and maybe your house
- Two references from previous au pairs, neighbours or work colleagues
- If possible a letter introducing your family to the au pair
- Transfer the Annual Fee of €150

Families must pay an annual fee of €150.00 to the Linguaviva Centre. The year commences upon submission of the application.

This fee allows families to view au pair application forms and choose a suitable applicant. It covers all administration fees. Au pair files cannot be viewed until this fee has been paid.

The annual fee covers all support services for families and their au-pairs with the Linguaviva office when the au-pair is studying and after they have completed their studies.

Should you for any reason cancel your application, an administration fee of €50.00 will apply and you will be refunded €100.00.

Should we not be able to find a suitable au pair for you we'll refund the fee of €150.

If applicants leave the family before the planned departure date, we will endeavour to replace them as quickly as possible but we cannot guarantee that there will be a replacement.

## How an au pair can help you:

The au pair will do light housework, which does not include window cleaning, brasses, garden work, or spring-cleaning. Au pairs will help with ironing, dusting, vacuum cleaning, washing up, general tidying etc. They will help with the preparation of meals and with clearing up but should not be expected to cook meals for the entire family. The main purpose of having an au pair is to help with the children - dressing them, giving them light meals, playing with them, bringing them to and from school etc.

Full time au pair: A full time au pair must not be on duty for more than 35 hours per week excluding evening baby-sitting, which is a maximum of two nights.

Demi au pair: A demi au pair must not be on duty for more than 20 hours per week excluding evening baby-sitting, which is a maximum of one night.

If for some special reason, the au pair works any extra hours in a week, she must be compensated with either extra pocket money or extra free time the following week.

## The needs of the au pair:

We would ask you to collect the au pair on arrival and to offer them the use of your phone to call home to say that they have arrived safely. The au pair should be given information about the public transport in your area e.g. Bus/Dart/Luas and shown the relevant stops.

Each au pair must have their own bedroom, and all meals. It is important that they are made to feel part of the family, remember the meaning of au pair is "ON PAR". Explain the rules of your household to the au pair and make sure that they understand clearly.

It is imperative that au pairs have access to all necessary telephone numbers so that they can contact someone at any time of the day if there is a problem. We recommend that you keep in full view a list of telephone numbers for emergency services. It is also a good idea to introduce the au

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pair to a neighbour or friend in case they cannot contact you and they need to speak to someone urgently. Au pairs should be given a key to the house.

## **Holidays:**

If the au pair returns home for Christmas, she must be paid for this holiday if she has been with the family for a period of three months or more. The length of the break taken by the au pair is arranged between the au pair and the family. If a family needs their au pair over the Christmas period, they should mention this condition when selecting the girl. If families need au pairs to work on days such as Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve etc, the au pair should be adequately compensated for the work done. An au pair is entitled to one week paid holiday for every six months that she is with the family. During this week the au pair can choose to go away or stay at home. Au pairs do not have to work on Bank Holidays.

When in doubt, always check this with the au pair co-ordinator in Linguaviva.

The Linguaviva Centre is open all year except for public holidays and two weeks at Christmas.

## **Free time:**

Full time au pairs must have two fixed half days (Tuesday and Thursday subject to change) so that they can attend English class in the afternoon (unless otherwise discussed with the au pair co-ordinator). Ideally au pairs should have the same evening free so that they can socialise with their friends.

Demi au pairs can't work from Monday-Friday morning as they attend classes in the mornings from 9am – 1pm.

Sundays are free (all day plus evening) as well as Bank Holidays. Au pairs will also need time off during their "full days" for study and relaxation, during this free time, they can go out or stay in the house.

As au pairs need free time during their "full days", we feel that families where both parents work full time and who have young children not attending school, are not suited to having au pairs.

## **Pocket money:**

The minimum pocket money is €125 per week for full time au pairs and €75 per week for demi au pairs. For full time au pairs transport should be paid for the two days per week they go to school and for demi au pairs transport should be paid for the full week as they have classes from Monday-Friday.

## **Au pair classes:**

It is obligatory for Au Pairs to come to The Linguaviva Centre for classes for a minimum of 12 weeks.

Full time au pairs have classes on two afternoons per week. Classes usually take place on Tuesday and Thursday from 2pm - 5pm (subject to change).

If you have any concerns about class times, please discuss this with the au pair co-ordinator and depending on the time of year, we may be in the position to suggest other options.

If you have discussed another option with the au pair co-ordinator, please write below the days and times discussed: \_\_\_\_\_

Demi au pairs have to do full time classes from Monday-Friday from 9am-1pm.

If Au Pairs have extremely good or weak knowledge of English we reserve the right to ask the au pair to come to classes two mornings per week.

We cannot guarantee classes for specific days. Therefore families must be flexible in this regard.

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Before arrival the au pairs are doing an online placement test, which enables us to assess their level of English. They will then be placed in a class appropriate to their level of English. Credit for classes missed will only be given if a medical certificate is produced or in the case of exceptional circumstances.

The family must compensate their au pair for any classes missed on their behalf (€25 for each class missed). Once the school receives that extra money, the tuition period can then be extended. The money can also be given to the au pair directly but we suggest a receipt is given with this money. If the family arranges holidays and the au pair is also accompanying the family or must return home for that period, the family must also compensate the au pair for the missed classes.

Au pairs who would normally have classes on the day of a public holiday will have their class arranged for another day. Families must be flexible around this time.

## What to do in case of problems:

The au pair co-ordinator is here to help both the family and the au pair in case of such difficulties. Try and sort out minor problems by friendly, honest talking. If you feel you cannot cope with the problems, please contact our au pair coordinator immediately. Where no solution can be found and where the girl or the family want to terminate the arrangement the minimum notice is ten days. If you do not want the au pair in your house for those ten days you must pay for host family accommodation, which we will organise at the school.

We will endeavour to find someone else for the family. If the au pair is suitable for another family, we will try and introduce her to another family.

I, the undersigned, agree to the above terms.

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Signature

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Date

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