

# GERMAN YMCA

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## Au Pair placement service

### Terms and conditions – Family information

## Au Pair Services

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IN COOPERATION WITH  
IN KOOPERATION MIT



IN VIA Katholischer Verband für  
Mädchen- und Frauensozialarbeit -  
Deutschland e.V.

### Who is your au pair:

An au pair is a young person who wants to spend some time in a foreign country in order to improve his or her English and to get a first-hand experience of a different culture. An au pair is a good option for the busy mum/dad who needs an extra pair of hands on a daily basis but does not require an independent and/or professional carer such as a nanny or housekeeper.

A typical au-pair is aged 18 – 19 though some might be a bit older and should be treated as part of the family. The au pair is expected to have some babysitting and housekeeping experience. The idea is for the au pair to stay and help you with childcare and light housework in exchange for pocket money, room and board. Most au pairs speak adequate to good English and some are prepared to drive in London after some training. They are all expected to attend English classes at a minimum of 10 hours a week.

In order to make the year a success for both you and your au pair we suggest you consider the following points:

### 1. Your au pair and her/his working week, babysitting and holidays

#### Working hours:

The au pair should work an average of **no more than 25 hours** per week spread over 5 days. The working hours can be arranged to cater for the needs of the family though please keep in mind that the au-pair has to attend English classes.

#### Working more hours:

We know that it is not easy for either party to keep clear boundaries between work and leisure when both form part of one household. Therefore it is important to be specific about working hours and to respect them.

Although we do appreciate there may be times when it is necessary for your au pair to work longer hours, for example during school holidays, these extra hours should be kept to a minimum. They should be mutually agreed on beforehand and either remunerated or compensated for by extra free time.

We would like to stress that the au pair should not work more than 25 hours a week on a regular basis even if the family is prepared to pay her/him more pocket money. If you need more than 25 hours per week on a regular basis you might consider employing a housekeeper or a nanny.

### Babysitting:

In addition to the 25 hours, you have the option of asking your au pair to babysit up to 2 evenings per week. This is included in the pocket money. Please bear in mind that the hours cannot be transferred to any other time. If you require extra babysitting you will need to pay extra. We suggest £6-8 an hour. Please note that by definition 'babysitting' is an evening activity. Please notify your au pair as soon as possible when you need her/him for babysitting. Babysitting on the au pair's days off (e.g. the weekends) should be kept to a minimum.

### Days off:

While staying at your house the au pair has a minimum of two free days a week, normally Saturday and Sunday plus all bank holidays. Should you need your au pair to work on Saturday mornings, we would urge you to allow her/him at least one complete weekend off per month in order to be able to travel and stay outside London if she/he so wishes. We are sure you agree that the au pair should be given this opportunity, as one of the reasons for her/his coming to the UK is to find out as much as possible about the host country.

### Holidays:

Your au pair should be given a minimum of 1 day **paid holiday** per month based on a 5 day working week (e.g. some holiday at Christmas and some at Easter). This comes to 2 weeks and one day for the working period from August/September until July in addition to Bank Holidays. It would be helpful to discuss right from the start when it would be best for both sides for the au pair to take these paid holidays.

**Full board and pocket money:** We would like to draw your attention to the fact that your au pair should also be provided with full board and pocket money when *you* are away on holiday and she/he stays in your house. The same applies for her/his days off. These days are not to be counted as 'paid holidays' for the au pairs. If you want to leave the au pair money to buy her own food during this time, we suggest £7-£8 per day. If the au pair stays in your house while you're away, please feel free to leave her a list of tasks to do, eg feeding the cat, sorting out some cupboards or other light housework.

## 2. Working together

**Au pair's duties:** The au pair's work should consist mainly of childcare and some light housework, e.g. dusting, hoovering, loading and emptying the dishwasher/washing machine, simple ironing and cooking.

Heavy cleaning such as spring-cleaning, window cleaning, washing and ironing for the whole family etc. should be left for your cleaning lady.

Please explain *clearly* what you want your au pair to do and how you would like it to be done. Remember that the amount of time and training you invest in the first month directly affects the type of relationship you have the entire year.

Do not assume that your au pair knows what to do. If you are happy for the au pair to do things in her/his way – fine, but please keep in mind that their approach may be rather different from yours. It is often a good idea to make a list of what you want the au pair to do, especially in the event that you are not at home, and/or not available for some time.

Child care: Please make sure you give your au pair the **backup** she/he needs in dealing with your children. Since the au pair takes your place when you are not around, please make sure she/he knows how you would like her/him to treat your children and what

measures she/he can take when the children are naughty. If you are not happy about the way the au pair has handled a situation please tell her/him privately – not in front of the children.

Just remember: if you undermine the au pair's authority neither of you will be happy.

### **3. Taking part in the family life:**

Most of the au pairs are invited to take part in the life of the family and in its activities. The au pair should also be invited to share his or her own culture with the host family and vice versa.

What is considered 'work' (i.e. part of the 25 hours) and what is considered being part of the family is sometimes difficult to define. We've tried to give some clarification on this subject:

If an au pair has no option in undertaking a task then that activity must be considered mandatory i.e. part of the 25 working hours/week maximum. E.g. if you *expect* your au pair to help with the evening meal, help feeding the children and to do the washing up it is clearly 'work'.

The same applies when host parents leave the au pair unsupervised with the children, then the au pair is officially on duty and the time counts as working hours.

### **4. Pocket Money**

Our au pairs are currently paid a minimum of £80-90 per week. If you are happy with their work, we would suggest you acknowledge this by giving them a small pay rise or a bonus after the first couple of weeks.

If your au pair has to spend a lot of money on public transport, e.g. to attend language classes, you might consider giving some extra 'transport money' which is not included in the pocket money. Public transport used by the au pair in the course of duty should be paid for by the host family.

If you require your au pair to work longer on odd occasions, then this should be remunerated either by extra pay or additional time off. Please arrange with your au pair at the beginning of her/his stay on which day the pocket money will be paid to avoid the au pair having to remind you.

### **5. Au pair accommodation (room and board):**

The au pair receives full room and board from the family throughout the duration of the placement, that is also during her time off and when the family is away.

The au pair must have her/his own heated and furnished room (which is not shared and not used as a storage room for the family) with a window and a closable door. Minimum furnishing should consist of: a proper bed (single), wardrobe, desk and chair and a little bookshelf.

The au pair is to keep her/his room clean and tidy.

### **6. General Suggestions**

Communication: It goes without saying that it is very important to talk to your au pair and encourage her/him to talk to you. If you are happy with your au pair, please tell her/him. Likewise if you are not happy with something, tell her/him. Please remember: Germans in general are fairly direct. If your au pair does not understand your hints, try to be more direct.

Please give your au pair the chance 'to learn the ropes'. It is not easy to follow in the footsteps of a former au pair, who has been trained by you and worked to your satisfaction. It helps to keep in mind the fact that she/he is a young school leaver and not a professional nanny or cleaning lady.

Try to set clear guidelines from the start. It is generally better to be precise about whether your au pair may stay out late, have visitors, use your phone and whether there are limits to your internet. Have a general chat to your au pair at least once a week. This is an opportunity for both of you 'to clear the air' and have a friendly talk before a small problem gets out of all proportion.

It is good to let your au pair know *in advance* when you will need extra help. Noting things down in a family planner to which all have access can help avoid misunderstandings and means that both you and she/he are informed of each other's commitments. Furthermore, this enables the au pair to plan her/his own social life accordingly. Any such commitments made by the au pair should equally be respected by the family.

**Our service:** Our service is available to both au pair and family throughout the year. Should you have questions or encounter problems of any kind, please contact us and we will try to help you. Please be assured that everything we are told will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

We like to point out however, that we cannot accept any responsibility for the conduct of persons introduced by our services.

If, for one reason or another, the arrangement proves unsatisfactory, we suggest that you give the au pair two weeks' notice. During this time we will try to find a satisfactory solution for both parties.

## **7. Reminder: Costs**

For our services we request a minimum donation of £250 for the academic year, £200 for six months or less (cheque payable to German YMCA). These donations go towards the costs of our au pair placement services. Thank you for your support!

## **8. Data Protection**

Our cooperation partners in Germany are audited once a year by a quality assurance agency to make sure that they are fulfilling the required standards. During this audit au pair candidates are picked at random and the organisations are required to provide information about the au pair's host family including the address. In view of this, we are now required to pass on some details about your family. We can assure you that the information we pass on will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Should you choose a placement via Skype interviews, your family profile and photos will be sent to the candidate(s) via email. They will be informed that all information should be treated and stored with confidentiality and not used on any social media platforms.

Your family profile is stored on our computer and on paper until you choose not to use our service any more. We will take care to keep your information as safe as possible and only use your photos on our website if you specifically agree.

If you choose to use our services we assume that you agree to our handling of your data.

## **9. Finally, you might like to know...**

The German YMCA was founded in 1860 and is one of the largest German charities in England. It is a Christian movement which welcomes people regardless of their gender, age, religion or ethnic background. It supports the German and local community in a variety of ways, from organised programmes and events to information and advice to individuals.

To find the right au pair for the right family and vice versa is one of our aims. Facilitating intercultural exchange is another. Our social/cultural programme is tailored to give as broad an experience of land, history and culture as possible and to enable your au pair to profit from her stay in England.

Should you have any questions please ring us on **020 3238 2197**

**Rachel Shilson** and **Barbara von Alten** will be pleased to help you!