

ACCOMMODATION GUIDE 2024-25

Rambert School is not a residential school. Moving away from home for the first time can be daunting, but we hope with the help from this guide it won't be.

When searching for accommodation you should make sure you know what you need and how to start your search, so that you don't end up renting over-priced or substandard accommodation just because you need somewhere to live.

What type of accommodation is best for you?

- *When choosing the right accommodation for you consider the cost, who you will be living with and the living experience that comes with it.*

Shared houses and flats

Most of our students live in house/flat shares that are arranged between the students. Once you have accepted an offer of a place at the School, you will be added to a closed Facebook group. Students can then discuss accommodation needs amongst themselves. Current students also advertise spare rooms on the group and the School add details of accommodation that becomes available.

Students may choose a Homestay option, especially those who are under 18 years of age (see information below). However, it is up to the students themselves to decide on a Homestay or flat sharing option.

Students under the age of 18 can rent a property but will need their parents to act as a guarantor. Some Landlords may not let properties to under 18s.

Homestay

A 'homestay' is where a host family has a spare room in their house which they would like to let to a student. If you are interested in this please contact Christine Mckenna on tel: +44 (0)208 898 9558, mckennashomestay@btinternet.com and see further details in the Homestay information document.

Deciding who to live with

Choosing the right people to live with is very important. Choosing how many people to share with is also an important decision, too few or too many and you could limit your choice of properties. If you have a large group and are struggling to find a suitable property, you should consider splitting into two smaller groups.

If you decide to look for accommodation with a group, remember that you will be signing a legally binding agreement, these can be very difficult to get out of if you're unhappy. Common causes of disagreements in shared properties are tidiness, noise and money (if one member of the group does not pay the rent/bills on time, this could have an impact on other housemates), so consider these things carefully before signing a contract.

Don't worry if you do not have a group as there are landlords who will let the rooms in their properties out on an individual basis. The Rambert School Facebook group is a good place to look for other students in the same situation, or for a group of students that need to make up their numbers. During the summer there may also be students looking to replace a housemate who has left.

Searching for a property

Areas closest to the school are Isleworth & some of Whitton, Richmond, St Margarets, Twickenham, Teddington (Isleworth & Whitton tend to be cheaper areas). You may find out about a property from existing students who will be vacating at the end of the year. These will usually be advertised via the Facebook group. If you need to locate a property yourself, where possible, try to rent via a reputable Lettings Agent. The agent list below are all local agents handling student property who belong to a professional Lettings organisation (ARLA) and have to abide strictly by its code of conduct (*please note that these are not recommendations, merely suggestions*).

We advise that you do not engage with anyone unknown through social media channels. There are many scams around with fake properties listed and they disappear once you have paid a deposit.

If in doubt, please contact us for advice before handing over any money.

Viewing and choosing a property

You should be accompanied by the Landlord or a representative when viewing a property. Make sure you are happy with the location e.g. is it easy to get to Rambert School? Is it safe at night? Ensure that you are happy with the condition of the property and its contents and that you feel the rent is reasonable in price before committing.

Rent and bills

- ***Before you sign a contract, draw up a budget plan to make sure that you're able to pay your rent, bills and any other related costs.***

Renting accommodation can vary in cost depending on type of accommodation, the area and size of the property, as well as how many of you are living there. You may be expected to pay your rent monthly or termly, if paying termly check that you will have received your student loan instalments before the date your rent is due.

Most students pay on average a monthly rent of around £500-£650 per calendar month. Rental prices vary dependant on location. Properties closer to Central Richmond/Twickenham or St Margarets may be more expensive.

If your tenancy agreement starts during the summer and you and any other students you may be sharing with will not be living there, try to negotiate a reduced rent during this period (particularly if the landlord will be using this time to complete any repairs).

Contract and payment of rent

You will be given a contract to sign which will confirm the rent and deposit payable. This will state whether the rent includes or excludes utility bills e.g. gas, electricity, water (as a student you will not need to pay council tax for the period you are a student). In nearly all cases, the contract will be for an 'assured short hold tenancy'. This gives the Landlord the right to have the property back after 6 months, regardless of how long the contract is for. The Landlord can also have the property back at any stage if you are at least 2 months behind with your rent payments. In practice, if you are a good tenant and prompt payer, this is unlikely to happen unless the landlord has other plans for the property, e.g. selling the property.

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You are not normally entitled to leave the property before the end of the term of the contract. If you do so without good reason, you could still be liable for the rent until the end of the contract.

Make sure you read, understand and are happy with the contract before you sign it. Please also note that some landlords request that overseas students pay the full annual rent in advance if a UK guarantor cannot be provided by the tenant. The School is unable to act as a guarantor.

Household bills

You may be responsible for paying for the bills in your rented property, particularly if you are renting a shared house or flat. You should clarify what is included in your rent before signing a tenancy agreement.

The average cost for student household bills is up to £80 per month. However, bills are increasing due to the current cost of living crisis, so make sure you're prepared for any increases in costs.

Gas, electricity and water

Most shared houses will have an Energy Performance Certificate, which addresses how energy efficient a particular property is and will give you an idea of the energy required by the property. To find out if a property has an EPC, check www.epcregister.com.

- If possible, ask the previous tenants for the rough costs of these bills.
- Take meter readings as soon as the contract starts
- Change the bills to your name(s)

Phone, Internet and TV

If internet is not included in your rent you may decide to sign up to a package. Shop around as there are many different packages available, some will include a phone line or extra TV channels.

If you live in a shared house, one TV licence is needed per house as long as you have a joint tenancy. If you move out during the summer, you could be entitled to a refund. See www.tvlicensing.co.uk/Students for more details.

Insurance

The average student has around £3,000 worth of belongings, including laptops, smart phones, etc., with them in their student accommodation. To cover these items in the event of theft, accidental damage, loss or fire, it is advisable for students to have contents insurance. You may be able to get cover via your parents' existing home contents policy, or you may want to buy your own specialist student policy. There are plenty of specialist student policies available, so be sure to shop around.

Council Tax

If only full-time students occupy a property, you will usually be exempt from paying Council Tax. If one or more of the occupants are not full-time students, the house would be taxable. You should clarify whether you will be expected to pay anything towards the cost.

Remember, it is your responsibility to inform your council that you're a full-time student. You may need to provide them with a council tax exemption certificate/Confirmation of Study letter which you will receive once you have registered with the School in September. To find out more visit www.gov.uk/government/publications/students-and-council-tax-guidance.

Deposits

You will be asked to pay a deposit when you agree to take the property, which will be returned to you when you leave. Please note that the Landlord is entitled to deduct money from this deposit to cover any damage, unpaid bills or rent. Take an inventory, listing all existing damage or wear and tear when you arrive to avoid disputes with the Landlord over deposit returns. You may also be asked to pay a holding deposit or retainer, but this cannot be equivalent to more than 5 weeks rent. This secures a property over the summer period and is non-refundable as it usually covers the first month of rent or part of it. Find more details on Housing advice via [Shelter](#).

Inventories

The Landlord or agent may produce an inventory. This is a list of all the furniture, fixtures and contents that will be in the property while you are there. Importantly, the condition of these items will be noted. This can be very important when you leave the flat as the Landlord may try to withhold some of your deposit for breakages and damages – this can be your proof that something was damaged in the first place. If there is no inventory, you can create your own by listing out contents and damage and taking photos and let the Landlord have a copy.

Guarantees

As students, it is likely that you will be asked for a parent/guardian to enter into a guarantee with the Landlord. It means that as a Guarantor, they are liable to pay the Landlord in case of any unpaid rent if you leave the contract early or are unable to pay. Your Guarantor will need to meet certain financial criteria that differ between Landlords and can be different if your Guarantor is not UK based. Rambert School is unable to act as a Guarantor.

Duties of a Landlord

These will be laid down in your contract – make sure you are familiar with them. The Landlord is responsible for keeping the exterior of the Property and the facilities inside (e.g. heating, gas and electrical appliances, baths, sinks, toilets) in good repair and working order. If you have any problems with these, contact the Landlord and Letting Agent straight away. The Landlord must arrange a gas safety inspection annually – ask to see a copy. For added peace of mind, we would recommend that you check that the Landlord has provided both a fire alarm and a carbon monoxide detector.

Duties of a tenant

Again, these will be set out in the contract. Tenants are responsible for looking after the property and not damage it or its contents. You should do any minor maintenance work and keep it clean! You should also try to protect it when you are away.

Dealing with problems

Occasionally problems do arise. Initially, it is always best to discuss these with the Landlord or his agent. If this does not resolve matters, please feel free to discuss with the Head of admissions, Registry & Student Support, and we will do what we can to help. Advice websites include [Shelter](#) and [Citizens Advice Bureau](#).
https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/private_renting
<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/>

Estate Agents

Below are local lettings agents who belong to ARLA:

STIRLING ACKROYD

Location: 25 London Road, Twickenham, Middlesex

Telephone: 020 8891 6371

Website: <https://www.stirlingackroyd.com/>

YOUR MOVE

Location: 115 High Street, Whitton, Middlesex

Telephone: 020 8898 6055

Website: www.Your-move.co.uk/rent/student-accommodation

SNELLERS

Twickenham office

Location: 64 Heath Road, Twickenham, TW1 4BW

Telephone - 0208 892 5678

St. Margaret's office

Location: 36 Crown Road, St. Margarets, TW1 3EH

Telephone - 0208 892 8008

Teddington office

Location: 74 Broad Street, Teddington, TW11 8QX

Telephone - 0208 614 6140

Website: [Snellers | All Properties to let](#)

DEXTERS

St. Margarets office

Location: 1 Chertsey Road, St.Margarets, TW1 1LR

Telephone: 0208 744 9700

Website: [Properties to rent in London from St Margarets office | Dexters](#)

Richmond office

Location: 1 Sheen Road, Richmond, TW9 1AD

Telephone: 0208 288 0828

Website: [Properties to rent in London from Richmond office | Dexters](#)

Twickenham office

Location: 84 Heath Road, Twickenham, Middlesex

Telephone: 020 8744 0074

Website: [Properties to rent in London from Twickenham office | Dexters](#)

Isleworth office

Location: 568 London road, Isleworth TW7 4EP

Telephone: 020 8560 1717

Website: [Properties to rent in London from Isleworth office | Dexters](#)

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CHASE BUCHANAN

Twickenham office

Location: 112 Heath Road, Twickenham, Middlesex

Telephone: 020 8744 2111

Email: lettings@chasebuchanan.London

Website: <https://www.chasebuchanan.london/twickenham-office.html>

St. Margarets office

Location: 117 St Margarets Road, St Margarets, Twickenham, Middlesex

Telephone: 020 8744 2888

Email: stmargarets@chasebuchanan.London

Website: <https://www.chasebuchanan.london/st-margarets-office.html>

Richmond office

Location: 20 Red Lion Street, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1RW

Email: richmond@chasebuchanan.London

Website: <https://www.chasebuchanan.london/richmond-office.html>

ANTHONY ROBERTS

Location: 44 Crown Road, St Margarets TW1 3EH

Telephone: 020 8 891 3209

Email: stmargarets@antonyroberts.Co.uk

Website: <https://www.antonyroberts.co.uk/>

ANTHONY JAMES MANSER

Location: 542 London Road, Isleworth TW7 4EP

Telephone: 020 8568 2992

Email: let@anthonyjamesmanser.co.uk

Web site: <https://www.anthonyjamesmanser.co.uk/>

MARTIN & CO

Location: 44 London Road, Twickenham, Middlesex TW1 3RR

Telephone: 020 8898 3330

Website: <https://www.martinco.com/estate-agents-and-letting-agents/branch/twickenham>

DAVID MCGEACHIE PROPERTY

Location: 191 Richmond Road, St Margarets, Twickenham TW1 2NJ

Tel: 020 8891 2929

Email: david@tenant-finder.co.uk

Website: <https://www.davidmcgeachie.co.uk/>

RIGHT MOVE ONLINE

Website: <http://www.Rightmove.co.uk/student-accommodation.html>

Allows refined searches just for student properties.

STUDENT SPARE ROOM

Website: <https://student.spareroom.co.uk/flatshare/search.pl>

Per room not per house.