



TENANT CODE OF PRACTICE

This document must be issued to tenants of properties that have received Accreditation under the Runnymede Accreditation Scheme



Supported by



Surrey Fire & Rescue



Your Landlord and the property you are living in has been awarded

Accreditation under the Runnymede Accreditation Scheme (or is being applied for). The property and its management must meet certain minimum standards specified by the Council. As part of this scheme, your landlord is required to issue you with this Tenant Code of Practice and you are expected to abide by it.

Please be aware of your responsibilities under your tenancy agreement and take care to carry them out, in order that your tenancy may contribute positively to the local community, to your landlord and to the students that follow you.

In addition, under this Tenant code of practice you are specifically asked to:

1. Work to build an amicable relationship with your neighbours by introducing yourselves on arrival and being conscious of your neighbours' circumstances;
2. Ensure that any problems with the property are reported immediately to the person responsible for the management of the property;
3. Store all refuse in the bins provided and keep the refuse storage area clean and tidy;
4. Fulfil all arrangements that you have agreed with your landlord or managing agent to ensure that all gardens, yards and paths are maintained in a clean and tidy state;
5. Comply with all duties of occupants under The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006, contained at the end of this document;
6. Ensure that all Fire Doors provided by your landlord are kept shut at all times.

You are also asked NOT to

7. Damage or tamper with any Fire Safety measures within the property, and report any defects to the responsible person immediately;
8. Cause noise nuisance to your neighbours. Do not act in a manner that will affect their enjoyment of their properties or be detrimental to neighbourhood;
9. Keep more cars than recommended at the property and ensure that you and any guests park and drive considerately.

TENANT DECLARATION

By signing below I agree to abide by the above terms of the tenants Code of Practice

Name of Tenant	Signature	Date

Duration of Tenancy

From:

To:

NB: For joint tenancies, all tenants should sign one form. Any change in tenants during the course of the tenancy should be recorded on this form with new signatures being obtained for any new tenants. Where tenants are issued with individual tenancies then this form should be completed for each individual tenant.

FURTHER GUIDANCE FOR TENANTS

Your landlord has satisfied a number of requirements and has agreed to manage the property in accordance with a set of standards. As a tenant of an accredited property your landlord requires you to comply with the 'Tenant Code of Practice'. The code is not onerous and can be easily achieved in your house.

In setting up this scheme, the Council, with the support of the university, is seeking to ensure, amongst other aims that local residents are not adversely affected by the presence of student households.

Local residents occupy their houses on a long term basis, and you can affect their lives by the way that you and your friends occupy your accommodation. Most residents permanently live in the area and have invested much into their homes. They can be subject to a great deal of stress should they be disturbed on a regular basis i.e. by excessive noise, inconsiderate parking or poorly maintained housing.

Do not cause excessive noise that could be a nuisance to neighbours. We ask you to not to cause excessive domestic noise such as loud music late at night or cause noise in the street. If you are planning to have a party, let your neighbours know about it well in advance and consider any objections they may have. It is important if you are returning home late at night, that disturbance is minimised. Remember that your neighbours will consist of working people, children, the elderly and infirm. These groups can be adversely affected by noise, and excessive noise at unreasonable times can affect their health and well-being.

The Council and the police have a wide range of enforcement options available to deal with anti-social behaviour and noise nuisance from seizure of equipment to the power of arrest. The University works closely with these agencies. If you are deemed by them to be causing a nuisance, you will have broken College regulations too, and will be treated accordingly.

You must ensure that you and any guests must park your vehicles considerately and appropriately. Student houses can often have more cars at a property than a single household, which can cause problems to neighbourhoods. Your landlord or Agent should have indicated the maximum number of cars recommended for the accommodation. You must not exceed this limit. Be sure to drive carefully and considerately around residential areas; under new legislation, irresponsible use of a car can lead to it being seized from you by the Police. Where possible keep the numbers of cars to a minimum.

The Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) holds surgeries at Royal Holloway College, look for details on the Student Union Notice Boards.

It is your responsibility to ensure that any refuse that you may have is stored in the bin(s) provided, and put out for collection on a weekly basis. The refuse area must be maintained in a clean and tidy state. Please minimise the amount of refuse for collection by participate in the local recycling service.

Your Landlord or Managing Agents should have made adequate arrangements with you to ensure that any gardens, yards or paths are maintained in a tidy state. You should ensure that such arrangements are made clear at the start of your tenancy, and you participate in the arrangement throughout the course of your tenancy. Landlords have a duty under the scheme to keep these areas tidy; if you fail to carry out your agreed obligations in this area, landlords will be obliged to remedy the situation and may charge you accordingly.

Minor faults can often be repaired with minimal effort and cost, however if left for long periods of time can lead to serious and costly disrepair. It is imperative that you report any faults that the property may have immediately. You may be responsible for some minor maintenance of the house such as changing light bulbs. Please check your contract and ensure you carry out these tasks!!!

Your accommodation will have been provided with some fire safety measures, which may include: smoke alarms, fire doors, emergency lighting and fire fighting equipment. It is vital that these are not interfered with as, to do so, would seriously compromise your safety in the event of fire. The Fire Service is making

every effort to reduce the number of calls it receives to fires, and to unnecessary fire alarm actuations. You can help by ensuring that your activities do not result in an emergency response. The Fire Service provides a wide variety of information and advice, in the form of leaflets or home visits by fire-fighters – all of which are free of charge. Fire alarms are very sensitive to some everyday activities such as cooking fumes, steam from showers and aerosols and every time an alarm system reacts to one of these, the Fire Service responds. This puts a great strain on their resources and stops them being available for a real emergency. It also puts other road users at risk from fast moving fire engines. Your cooperation, by trying to avoid causing these unwanted alarms, will lead to greater safety for all.

READ YOUR CONTRACT!

Tenants should familiarise themselves with their responsibilities under their contract. All tenants of rented accommodation should take reasonable care of the property, and make every effort to ensure a pleasant stay throughout the course of their tenancy.

Joint Liability; If you have signed the same contract as your housemates *and* you all agree to take the property at the same time; **you will be joint and severally liable with each of your housemates** for any rent arrears and/or damage to the property. So, if one tenant moves out, the landlord/agent can pursue the remaining tenants (as well as the tenant who has left) for any money due.

Individual Liability; If you have a separate agreement between you and the landlord/agent, and another tenant leaves, the landlord/agent cannot ask that you cover their rent. You would be liable for any damage to your room. The landlord/agent can make a charge for any damage to communal areas but they have to first try and find out who was responsible.

REPORTING A COMPLAINT

Tenants should first raise any problems over the condition of their property or the management practices with the Landlord/ Agent. The landlord should deal with all complaints quickly and fairly so the parties can move into a more constructive relationship for the remainder of the tenancy. If the complaint cannot be resolved informally the following action should be taken.

If you believe the Landlord has not complied with the Landlord Code and you have reported this to them informally first, then you can make a complaint to Runnymede Borough Council's Private Sector Housing Team

If there is an issue being disputed between landlord and tenant who could benefit from mediation or arbitration then Royal Holloway University may be able to assist. Requests for assistance should be made to the RHUL Community Liaison Officer on 01784443394.

For help with complaints or disputes which fall outside the Accreditation Scheme, further assistance may be available from the following:

DUTIES OF OCCUPIERS UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2006

Tenants must:

- conduct themselves in a way that will not hinder or frustrate the manager in the performance of his duties;
- take reasonable care to avoid damage and disrepair;
- cooperate in a reasonable way with the manager, and provide information to allow him/her to carry out their duties;
- allow the manager to access their living accommodation, at all reasonable times, for any purpose connected with the carrying out of duties imposed on him by these Regulations;
- provide the manager, at his request, with any such information as he may reasonably require for the purpose of carrying out any such duty;
- comply with any reasonable arrangements or instructions made by the manager regarding means of escape from fire and the storage or disposal of refuse.

A person who fails to comply with these Regulations commits an offence under section 234(3) of the Housing Act 2004, punishable on summary conviction with a fine not exceeding £5000

The advice and guidance given in this booklet is based on legislation and guidance in force as at April 2009 which will be subject to revision. The advice given is not intended to be a definitive guide. Independent legal advice should be sought where appropriate. Only the Courts can give an authoritative interpretation of the law.

**RUNNYMEDE ACCREDITATION SCHEME
CONTACT LIST**

Contact	Description of services offered	Contact details
Runnymede Borough Council Private Sector Housing	Housing standards enforcement and Accreditation Scheme enquiries	01932 425886. housing@runnymede.gov.uk
Vice President Education and Welfare, Student's Union Royal Holloway	Guidance for students who are looking for or have problems with private sector housing.	01784 486300 vpedwelfare@su.rhul.ac.uk
Royal Holloway Accommodation Office	Provides Campus Accommodation and has a list of Private Landlords that register with the College	01784 443338 accommodation-office@rhul.ac.uk
RHUL Student Services Community Liaison Officer	Oversees the Mediation service	01784 443394
Runnymede Citizens Advice Bureau	Offers free, confidential, impartial and independent advice.	01932 842666 (Addlestone). 01932 827187 (Egham). www.runnymedecab.org.uk or www.citizensadvice.org.uk
Runnymede Borough Council Housing Advice Service	Landlord/tenant issues, Prevention of homelessness and advice on housing options.	01932 425811 (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 10am - 4pm, Friday 10am - 3pm) housing.advice@runnymede.gov.uk
Surrey Fire and Rescue Service	Provides free home fire safety advice to students and other tenants	01737 733557 waltonfiresafety@surrey-fire.gov.uk
Surrey Police	For all non-emergency police matters. In a genuine emergency, however, always call 999 The Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) holds surgeries at RHUL look for details on the Student Union Notice Boards.	Report crimes or anti-social behaviour directly to the Police on 0845 125 2222 Egham Police Station 1 High Street Egham Surrey TW20 9HJ Tel: 01932 845544 (Basic opening times Mon- Wed 8.30 – 15.30 and Thursday – Friday 8.30 – 17.45 however these times can vary so attempt to telephone prior to visiting). www.surrey.police.uk
BSI	Business Information.	020 8996 9000 cservices@bsi-global.com www.bsi-global.com
Trading Standards	Surrey County Trading Standards	A dedicated business advice line, (10am until 5pm Monday to Friday).

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR LANDLORDS AND TENANTS

1. Runnymede Borough Council does not accept any liability for actions or decisions taken by landlords or tenants as a result of the awarding of Accreditation Status. Accreditation should be used as a general guide only that the property and the landlord are likely to meet certain minimum standards in relation to physical condition, amenity standards and general management standards and practices.
2. The council reserves the right to alter or suspend the Accreditation scheme and there maybe a waiting list in place when arranging property inspections. The Council does not guarantee to deal with Accreditation applications within a set time due to unforeseen fluctuations in demand and /or staffing resources within the Private Sector Housing Team.
3. Accreditation does not prove compliance with the law and nor does it protect landlords or tenants from other types of enforcement action resulting from non-compliance with the law which may or may not fall within the remit of Runnymede Borough Council.
4. Runnymede Borough Council does not accept responsibility for dealing with any other matters or problems between landlords and tenants of accredited properties. Even where matters or problems are reported that relate to non compliance with the Accreditation standards, the Council's remit of involvement only extends to withdrawal of Accreditation status. It does not extend to dealing with matters in any further detail except where other types of enforcement action due to non compliance with legislation for which the Council is responsible for enforcing, exist.