

Frequently Asked Questions: East 15 Students

Should I wait until the East 15 Open Day to find accommodation?

No, it is not advisable to wait to secure student accommodation. There are more East 15 students looking for accommodation than student properties available in Loughton. The availability at the Open Day may not be as comprehensive, as some of the properties will have already been secured by other students. Our advice is to secure your student accommodation as soon as you are able to.

When can I view Mckinley Residential student properties?

Mckinley Residential are happy to conduct viewings of student properties as soon as we know the property you are interested in is available to let and the current student tenants grant us permission to do so. We do not schedule viewings for properties that may continue to be let by existing tenants. Please contact us to discuss arranging viewings by emailing help@mckr.co.uk or by calling **0208 418 0486**.

Will I have a Tenancy Agreement? What is the length of my Tenancy Agreement?

All Mckinley Residential properties are let on a single Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreement. The Tenancy Agreements are usually for a fixed term of 12 months, which generally start in the first three weeks of September. Ending a Tenancy Agreement before the end of the 12-month period is not possible as students are liable for rent for the full 12 months.

As the tenancies are with private landlords should you wish to vacate early, they will still require the rental payments until the end of the contract.

Should there be another COVID-19 pandemic quarantine, the landlord will still require the rental payments until the end of the contract. As mentioned, this is because the tenancy agreement is with a private landlord who therefore is not linked to East 15.

Do any of your properties include utility bills i.e. water, gas, electricity etc.?

Yes - utility bills are included within the rent for individual tenancies only. Council Tax is excluded, however as students you are exempt from council tax for the period of your course (more information is detailed below).

Do I have to pay council tax?

As a student you are not required to pay council tax for the period of your course only. East 15 will provide you with an exemption certificate when you start in September and you will need to forward this to the local council.

Please note the council will charge you for periods when you are not officially a student. If your course finishes in the Summer and your tenancy does not finish until September, you will be liable for council tax for this period, as it may fall outside your 'student exemption period'. There may also be some liability at the beginning of your tenancy, if you move into the property before your course officially starts. If you are unsure, please check with Epping Forest District Council on 01992 564000.

Should you be liable for council tax then this would be until the last day of your tenancy as stated on your Tenancy Agreement – regardless of whether you move out earlier than the end date.

Joint tenancies - how much are the household bills likely to cost per month?

It is impossible for us to give anyone an accurate guideline on household bills because there are many variables to consider (some properties have gas generated heating systems and other properties are predominantly electric). Each property is different. Mckinley Residential's advice would be to budget a minimum of £15 per week per person for your household bills.

Are your properties fully furnished?

Yes, bedrooms will have a bed (usually small double unless otherwise stated), storage i.e. chest of drawers and/or wardrobe. Living rooms will have a sofa and usually a TV stand. Kitchens will have a washing machine, fridge/freezer, oven, and hob. Some also have a dishwasher or / and tumble dryer. Most bathrooms have a shower. Any other additional items required which are not listed on the property details will have to be provided by you and removed at the end of your tenancy.

Do you provide bedding, crockery, cutlery, microwaves, kettles, toasters etc.?

You will need to provide these items yourself. There are many local stores in Loughton where small electrical and household items can be bought. Large stores such as IKEA and Tesco within a commutable distance.

On occasion previous tenants have left behind toasters / microwaves etc. These are deemed as 'gifted' and it is not a Landlord's responsibility to replace them should they stop working during your tenancy.

Can I remove any furniture from the property e.g. remove a bed and bring my own?

No, Mckinley Residential does not have storage facilities. If you wish to remove any furniture, the responsibility will be yours to organise and provide safe storage for the furniture during the tenancy. You will need to ensure the safe removal and return of these items at the end of your tenancy. If furniture is damaged during the term of your Tenancy Agreement you will be liable for the cost of repair/replacement.

Can I pay the initial Holding Deposit for a property without having a full group of tenants with the intention of putting a group together with other East 15 Students?

Yes, if this is what you choose. However, please consider both the advantages and disadvantages of making this decision. The upside of securing a property before the Open Day is that you are at an advantage to find serious tenants on the day and securing a group. The downside is if you don't manage to get a group together in time of the Tenancy Agreement starting, then you are liable for the shortfall of costs and charges for the entire house. In the event of you deciding not to take the property after all, you will forfeit the payment made.

If I pay the initial Holding Deposit to secure one of your properties and then find another property that I prefer, can I get a refund?

No, the Holding Deposit secures the property you originally selected.

Is the 1 week's holding Deposit per household or per tenant?

Joint Tenancies (shared house)

The Holding Deposit is per household, i.e. 1 week's rent for the whole property. This is required in advance in order to secure a property – the full amount of this pre-payment will be used as part of the first month's rent the household will need to pay. The Holding Deposit may be retained for reasons detailed in the Holding Deposit form Tenants are requested to sign, along with making payment. Mckinley Residential is not involved in how the Holding Deposit is paid by the group, however, you will be given the opportunity to

indicate the amount you personally contributed to it, on the Holding Deposit Form. Once the entire funds have been received, Mckinley Residential will take the property off the market. If a group has had to cover the cost of some of the other tenants (or for people, they haven't found to join their group yet) then they would need to re-coup this money directly from them.

Individual Tenancies (single tenant)

By paying £120 Holding Deposit, you are securing a room within a shared house. This cost goes towards your first months' rent in advance, i.e. this will be deducted from your first month's rent. The Holding Deposit may be retained for reasons detailed in the Holding Deposit form that the Tenants are required to sign, along with making payment.

Do I have to pay any other fees such as a processing fee?

No. We do not charge our Tenants any fees.

I live abroad and will not be able to view any properties until shortly before the term starts, are you likely to have anything available then?

Possibly, but most of our remaining properties will be let by the time of the Open Day. You can view photographs of all our properties on our website www.mckr.co.uk this will give you an indication of the type of properties that we let. Some International students prefer to secure a property without actually seeing it, where possible we always advise that you view a property in advance. Unfortunately it is not possible to withdraw from a tenancy once this has been finalised, and you will be liable for the rent for the full 12 months.

What if I do not get on with the people that I live with? Can I move out early?

If you find another East 15 student willing to take your place then this may be possible, under our 'Swap a Room Scheme.' Mckinley Residential will not be able to help you find a replacement tenant as it is your responsibility; the household would also need to approve the replacement tenant. Please contact us for more information on **0208 418 0846**

We really like the property that we viewed. Can we sign a contract for longer than 12 months i.e. the whole length of our course?

Unfortunately no, our Tenancy Agreements are for a fixed 12 month period. It is in everyone's best interest to review tenancies annually.

What if our household passes the reference checks and someone drops out? Do we have to find someone else?

Yes. We ask all tenants to sign an Assured Tenancy Agreement making all parties jointly and severally liable for each other. All letting agents will work in the same way unless you have taken a room advertised as an individual tenancy. If someone drops out BEFORE you move in, we may have a waiting list of people still looking, so please contact us. There is no guarantee that we will be able to find someone.

I am in a shared house (joint tenancy) what will I have to pay in advance?

A Holding Deposit of 1 week's rent.

1st month's rent in advance – less the Holding Deposit already paid (tenants decide the monthly rent split per tenant- this may be split equally or someone with a smaller room may pay less or for a room with an en-suite you may pay more, etc.)

5 x weeks' security deposit -we calculate 5 weeks' rent and then split this equally by the number of tenants in the household

3 month rent guarantee

Should an international tenant not be able to provide a UK resident guarantor then 3 months' rent in advance is required as additional security for the Landlord. This is set aside to cover the rent for the last 3 full months of the tenancy and is in addition to the first month's rent in advance. Overseas tenants are still required to provide a guarantor that will be named on the tenancy agreement however they will not undergo a reference check.

Our Landlords require UK tenants whose guarantors do not pass a reference check, to make an upfront rent guarantee payment of 3 months, like international students who could not provide a guarantor. The guarantor who failed the checks would still need to be named as a guarantor on the Tenancy Agreement.

Mckinley Residential will provide each tenant with their own individual invoice detailing the above costs once the property has been secured. To invoice each tenant accordingly, we will need to know (a) what each tenants' contribution to the rent will be each month (b) will the tenant be providing a UK guarantor to undergo a reference check or be paying the 3-month rent guarantee (for non-UK tenants).

I am in a single room (individual tenancy) what will I have to pay upfront?

A Holding Deposit of £120.

1 months' rent in advance – less the Holding Deposit

5 x weeks' security deposit

3 month rent guarantee should an international tenant not be able to provide a UK resident guarantor then 3 months' rent in advance is required as additional security for the Landlord. This is set aside to cover the rent for the last 3 full months of the tenancy and is in addition to the first month's rent in advance. International tenants are still required to provide a guarantor that will be named on the tenancy agreement; however, they will not undergo a reference check.

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Do most properties come with parking spaces?

Most properties in the area have free street parking.

Are there any other 'hidden' costs?

No.

Can I pay a terms' rent in advance so that I can budget? Do I get discounted rent if I pay in advance?

Yes, you can pay a terms rent in advance but I am afraid that we do not offer discounted rent rates for this.

Can I wait until I get my loan to pay the first months' rent/deposit?

Although we appreciate that the initial payments can be a large upfront payment, we are unable to accept late payments. All funds are due early August. The payment deadline will be confirmed on your final invoice.

How far will I be from local amenities i.e. supermarkets, banks, post office, gyms etc.?

Most of our properties are located in Debden and are very close to the E15 Hatfields campus. Debden has a shopping parade (The Broadway) which has a post office, Sainsbury's, a small selection of banks, chemists, Boots, Superdrug, cafes etc. In addition, there is a Retail Park nearby with a TK Maxx, Next, Hobby Craft and Aldi Supermarket.

Loughton High Road offers a wider selection of amenities including banks, a post office, gym with swimming pool, cafes, coffee shops and a range of supermarkets (Morrison's, Sainsbury's, M&S). There are also numerous restaurants such as Pizza Express, Zizzi's, and other independent restaurants, bars and pubs.

Who do I go to if there is a problem in the house i.e. the washing machine breaks down?

Mckinley Residential manages all the properties on behalf of our landlords (except for 6 Hatfields Road and 48A The Broadway – as these properties are managed by the landlord), please report any non-emergency maintenance issues via www.mckinleymaintain.co.uk

Why should we let from Mckinley Residential?

We offer a friendly and helpful service throughout your time at East 15. We have been letting to students at the East 15 Acting School for many years and have built up a professional relationship with Landlords, Tenants and East 15 staff.

How do we know that your properties are safe?

All our properties are checked and accredited by an Environmental Health Officer at Epping Forest District Council. All our properties have interlinked smoke alarms, fire doors, fire blankets, improved insulation, and fire safety furniture. Electrical, Gas and Energy Performance (EPC) certificates are also provided. Houses of Multiple Occupation are licensed with the Council. We recommend that tenants provide their own contents insurance. Landlords' insurance covers the building only.

Do you still have any unanswered questions?

Please email help@mckr.co.uk