

## **Student Homestay Guidelines and Expectations**

**Welcome to Canada and our community!** For some of you this may be the first time that you are away from home. While homestay can be a challenging experience as students struggle to understand a new culture, language, and adjust to a new family, we will do our best to help you adapt to your Canadian home.

It is a privilege to be invited to stay in another family's home. It is an honor for another family to take on the parenting role for a teenager from another country. It can be a special relationship, a cultural exchange, English language integration and a time to blend the lives of international students with local families and community. In order to get the most of the Canadian experience, it is imperative for the student to be immersed in living their daily life within the context of Canadian culture, rules, and responsibilities.

Our staff is experienced, professional, and committed to providing excellent service to homestay students and families. If problems do arise, our staff will provide support to help you resolve the issue. In most cases, problems can be solved through open communication and discussion between student and host family.

### **Host Families:**

Our host families are carefully selected and are:

- interested in hosting an international student
- friendly
- English-speaking
- willing to include the student in their activities

### **As a homestay student, you will:**

- be provided with information about your host family prior to arrival
- receive pre-arrival information to help prepare you for your homestay experience
- attend a homestay orientation meeting after arrival (receive International Student Program Handbook)
- have access to on-going advice and support from International Program Staff
- have a 24 hour emergency contact number

**Here are some guidelines that will assist you to enjoy your stay in Canada:**

**ADJUSTMENT TIME - Clear and open communication is very important on the part of the student and the host.**

Sometimes it may not be easy for you to move in with a family that you do not know, and it is similar for a family to have a stranger move in with them. Hosts will provide a clear explanation of family schedules, customs, habits, house rules and expectations while you are living in their home. Students are expected to be open and honest with the family about their needs, likes and dislikes, as well as anything that is bothering them. **IT IS MUCH EASIER TO DEAL WITH**

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**A SMALL MISUNDERSTANDING THAN A LARGE PROBLEM.** Please discuss your problem with your host first, then your International Assistant if you do not understand. If the misunderstanding is because of a language problem your International Assistant will help you with translation. Your Homestay Coordinator is also available to students as well as host families.

### **SCHEDULES, Habits, and Customs**

Your host family will do their best to make you as comfortable as possible. You will be treated as a member of the family. You will need to pick up after yourself and keep your room tidy. If there is something that you don't understand, ask your hosts. They will be happy to help you adjust to living in their home. The customs of your host family will be different from your home. You will need to learn what your homestay schedule is. For example, what time should you go to bed, what time you should get up in the morning and what time do you leave for school.

### **MEALS**

You will be provided with three nutritional meals and snacks every day, seven days a week while in homestay. If you have been invited to have dinner with another host you must ask your host if you can go. If you wish to invite a friend home for a meal, you must ask your host first. Hosts will tell you what is available for snacks and to eat between meals, and where it is kept. Meal time is a time for you to participate in the family chores. Your host will show you how to set and clear the table and how to help clean up after dinner. Your host may let you prepare your lunch after they have shown you where to find the supplies for your lunch.

When you arrive your host may take you shopping for groceries. They will ask you what you like to eat. If you are having a difficult time adjusting to the food and are hungry, let your host know. They don't want you to be hungry and will try to find something that you like to eat. Canadian meals can be different in each homestay. It is good manners to try the food but you can also tell your host when you do not like something.

### **BATHROOMS - WATER (HOT AND COLD)**

If you are sharing a bathroom, schedule your shower or bath to fit in with the host family members. Canadians normally bathe or shower only once per day, and Canadians are very water conserving. Using too much hot water for a bath or shower is inconsiderate, and may mean that there is none left in the tank for the next person. You need to clean up after yourself in the bathroom.

### **HEAT AND ELECTRICITY**

Canada is not a hot climate. Because energy costs are so high, Canadians normally do not keep their houses warmer than 70 - 72 degrees F. (20 degrees C.) In winter, most Canadians wear warm sweaters and socks or slippers on their feet, even in the house. If you find you are cold, the first thing to do is to put on more clothes in the daytime (a sweater, or a pair of socks),

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or more bedclothes at night. If you are still cold discuss this with your host.

### **Homestay Student Responsibilities**

As set out in the International Program Student Participation Agreement, the school district has expectations of students accepted to study in our program. These expectations include important obligations on the part of each student, and we set a high standard requiring all students to meet their obligations. As a homestay student you are expected to be open, honest and accountable, and to honor your responsibilities and obligations as outlined. When you conduct yourself in this manner, the relationship with your homestay parents will be a positive experience based on mutual trust and communication. As a homestay student you are a part of a family and therefore must respect and adhere to guidelines/rules for living in the household as given by the homestay family as follows:

1. Behave respectfully toward all family members, and their personal belongings and household pets.
2. Treat the home and the property with respect, care and attention.
3. Have your host parents explain and write down your house rules and expectations. Participate in the daily upkeep of the home by assisting with chores.
4. Request permission, a day or two in advance, to have a guest in the home. It is customary for students to introduce their friends to the host parent(s).
5. Inform host parent(s) where you are going, with whom and their phone number, and when you will return. **This is very important!** All parents expect their family members to do the same – they are responsible for your safety and well-being.
6. Do your very best to keep your room clean and tidy at all times. Food is not to be taken into your bedroom. Ask your host parents where you can keep extra food that you have purchased. The hosts shall request a periodic inspection of the bedroom to ensure that the room is tidy, clean, and without damage to walls or furniture.
7. Where applicable pay your homestay fees on time in accordance with the homestay program fee policy.
8. Meet all personal expenses for travel, entertainment, telephone calls, medical expenses, and other personal and incidental cost.
9. Complete written evaluations of homestay placement as requested.
10. Ensure you have read and understood all of the International Program's Policies and Procedures.

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## **STUDENTS WILL FOLLOW THEIR HOSTS "HOUSE RULES"**

- Always make sure that your host knows where you are. They are responsible for your safety and must know where you are at all times. Students are not permitted to spend overnights anywhere without approved adult supervision.
- Always pick up after yourself. Do not leave a mess for your host to clean up. You can participate in family chores such as doing dishes after a meal or helping prepare a meal with your host.
- Ask your hosts who will do the laundry. If you want to do your own laundry, you need to find out how to operate the washing machine and dryer. If you want to hang your clothes to dry ask where you can do this. Do not hang wet clothes in your closet.
- If you do not understand any of the house rules, please ask your host to explain them.

## **TELEPHONE**

If you want to make a phone call to your parents overseas ask your host to help you. You can place a collect call, reversing the charges or you can buy a phone card which prepays for your call.

## **VISITING PARENTS**

The Homestay Program provides housing for students while they are attending school. Visiting parents shall make their own arrangements to stay in one of our local hotels.

**If you have any further questions or concerns, ask your host to explain. Share your culture with your family, as both you and your host family are learning about a different culture and family system. We want this homestay experience to be a positive and rewarding exchange of cultures.**