

SD40

NEW WESTMINSTER SCHOOL DISTRICT 40  
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM



# HOMESTAY FAMILY HANDBOOK

## NEW WESTMINSTER SCHOOL DISTRICT 40



WELCOME

欢迎 Bienvenido

Willkommen ยินดี ต้อนรับ

환영받는 Bem-vindo ようこそ

# *Welcome*

The New Westminster School District #40 would like to take this time to welcome you as part of the Homestay Program. The Homestay program is a very important component of our International Student Program and we appreciate your support.

**THE GOAL OF OUR HOMESTAY PROGRAM IS TO FIND THE BEST MATCH FOR STUDENTS AND HOST FAMILIES.**

The New Westminster School District #40 has created this Homestay Family Handbook to help guide you through some of the joys and challenges that arise during your time as a Homestay family. Please feel free to email or call our office if you have any questions or concerns.



***THANK YOU FOR OPENING YOUR HEARTS AND HOMES FOR OUR STUDENTS.***



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## CHECK LIST FOR HOMESTAY FAMILIES

### PRE-ARRIVAL:

- Confirm IEP Office has up to date Criminal Record Searches for anyone living in your home aged 19 and above
- Contact your home insurance provider to inform them that you will be hosting a student
- Prepare bedroom for student's arrival
- Cut house key
- Pick up/print bus schedule and any applicable local maps
- Prepare house rules and emergency phone numbers list
- Familiarize yourself with the Homestay family handbook

### ARRIVAL:

- Pick up student at airport
- Encourage student to phone home and confirm arrival to parents
- Set up bank account if needed
- Confirm monthly payments with students
  - Some students will have payment issued monthly by the School District
  - Most students will pay the host family directly
    - \$50 airport pick up/drop off fee
      - This is a one-time fee paid only by our new students
    - \$28/night fee for partial months
    - \$850 monthly fee
- Contact IEP for details on "Orientation Week" for the student (this may be sent to you in advance)
- If "Orientation Week" is not available for the student please make an appointment with IEP to complete registration. Students will do the following during Orientation Week at school.
  - Take an English and Math Placement exam (to be completed prior to starting classes)
  - Complete medical insurance forms
  - Register for classes
- Show student how to get to and from school
- Tour home
  - Show students how things work in your home (toilets, showers, faucets and appliances sometimes function differently in other countries)
- Review with student the household rules and leave a list in the student's bedroom
- Provide emergency contact list for the student to carry in their wallet at all times
  - Include home, cell and work numbers for family members
- Explain how 9-1-1 works for emergencies
- Introduce student to your neighbours
- Show student how to get to the postal outlet, bus stops and local amenities

### DURING:

- Arrange to accompany the student to school on the first day
- Attend student/teacher/parent interviews or relevant meetings organized by your student's school
- Correspond with natural parents, even if natural parents do not read English
- Occasionally revisit house rules and making any necessary adjustments
- Inform Homestay Manager immediately of any changes within the home environment
  - Moving, new phone numbers, new family members, new family members/friends moving into the home, new pets, divorce/separations, serious or prolonged illness within the family
- Check study permits and passports for expiration dates (inform IEP office if documents need renewal)
- Ensure student stores their passport in a safe place

### DEPARTURE:

- Assist the student with boxing and shipping possessions home
- Inform IEP office of student's departure date
- Drive student to the airport (Please arrive at least 2 hours prior to scheduled departure time)
- Advise Homestay Manager if you would like to host another long or short term student



## SHORT TERM PROGRAMS

Our Homestay program is a very important component of our International Education Programs. The Homestay parents must be committed to helping our International students feel welcome. The intent of our Homestay program is to find the ideal match for our students. New Westminister School District #40 prides itself on implementing this process.

The first week is a trial period for all new students. If the match is not compatible the District reserves the right to move the student without notice. At such time the host family will reimburse the student on a scale of \$35 per night. The student will only pay for the nights spent in the home.

1. Host Families cannot depend on the School District to supply students to meet financial obligations.
2. All household members understand and are willing to respect program policies and procedures.
3. **Homestay families must provide transportation to and from school.**
4. Homestay families must inform the Homestay Manager of any other students living in the home while they host for our short term program prior to accepting the short term student.
5. Homestay families must inform the Homestay Manager prior to accepting additional students into their home regardless of the school they attend.
6. Homestay families must call the school before 9am if their student is unable to attend class.
7. Household members must speak English.
8. Host families will provide a variety of nutritional, well-balanced meals, three times a day. Food portions should reflect you student's appetite.
9. The student's bedroom must have an egress window, a bed, dresser, desk and lamp.
10. Homestay families must provide a clean, well-supervised environment.
11. Homestay families cannot expect students to maintain their house or yard, babysit their children or cook their meals.
12. Household members must respect religious/non-religious beliefs and practices of student.
13. Household members agree to respect culture and values of student.
14. Household members will involve the student in various activities or outings (if the student is willing).
15. Homestay parents must attend Homestay meetings arranged through their school and district office.
16. Homestay parents will receive payment one week after the student arrives.
17. Homestay families not taking holidays during our Programs will be given priority placement.
18. Homestay families, for what ever reason are away while hosting a student must pay \$35.00 a night to the temporary Homestay family.
19. Homestay families are responsible for collecting money for any phone call made by the students in their home.
20. Criminal record searches must be completed before a student will be placed in your home.

Thank you for your interest in the New Westminister School District Homestay Program. The process will start when we find an appropriate match for you and our students.

**By participating in our program you are agreeing to comply with the aforementioned guidelines.**



## **TRIAL PERIOD**

The first month is a trial period for all students and host families. Most students stay with their host families for most, if not their entire stay in Canada. However, from time to time moves will be requested and take place. At any time, if the match is not compatible the Homestay Manager reserves the right to move the student without notice. Our goal is to provide both the host family and the student with adequate notice.

## **CRIMINAL RECORD SEARCH**

Every household member 19 years and older MUST complete a criminal record search. This is a mandatory requirement for all Homestay families and must be done prior to the student's arrival. If another adult moves into the home at any time, it is the responsibility of the Homestay to notify the Homestay Manager and ensure the additional household member(s) complete a criminal record search.

If you will not be home over night or for a weekend and another family member or friend (over the age of 25 and is not a permanent resident of your home) is staying in your home to take care of your International student they must have a criminal record search completed. Please make sure the Homestay Manager is aware of the nights you are away and has the contact information for the person staying in your home. The Homestay Manager must have a copy of their criminal record search on file before you go away.

A criminal record search must be processed every three years.

## **AIRPORT PICK UP**

It is the responsibility of the Homestay family to pick up the student upon arrival into Canada. During the student's stay it is the responsibility of the Homestay Family to take the student to and from the airport. If the Homestay family is unable to transport the student, it is their responsibility to find alternative arrangements, and to pay for those arrangements.

## **HOUSE KEYS AND ALARMS**

You are required to provide your student with a house key and/or alarm code for your home when he or she moves in. If the student loses the house key, they are responsible for the cost of changing the locks and cutting new keys for the home should it be required. Please inform the Homestay Manager as the payment may come for the Homestay Deposit.

## **ID WALLET CARD**

Homestay families should provide their students with a wallet sized card that includes the Homestay family name, address, home phone, work phone numbers and an emergency contact person such as a neighbour or relative. Families should introduce students to neighbours so students have a greater comfort level in asking for assistance should they need it.

## **HOME INSURANCE POLICY**

You are advised to notify your insurance provider that you will have an additional person living in your house. Check your insurance policy to see if their personal belongings are covered while in your home.



## HOMESTAY GUIDELINES

The Homestay family is responsible for providing their students with the following.

1. A clean well-supervised environment
2. Clean bed linens and towels provided weekly
3. Three meals daily – breakfast\*, lunch packed for school days\*, dinner and snacks  
\*some students may make their own breakfast and lunch with food provided by the host family
4. Reasonable use of the common areas in the home and utilities and instruction in their use
5. Rules that are reasonable and age appropriate
6. A private bedroom with a bed, dresser, closet space, desk with a lamp for studying and storage space for books and school materials
7. A key to the house and/or alarm code
8. Space, time and opportunity to study and complete all school assignments
9. Assistance where possible with homework and assignments
10. Contact with the school regarding the student's academic progress and when possible attendance at parent-teacher meetings as required
11. Transportation to and from the airport

## INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM GUIDELINES

1. Mediate between the Homestay family and student if there are any misunderstandings
2. Maintains full discretion to terminate the Homestay arrangement at any time
3. Provide a translator if necessary
4. Responsibility to ensure the students are well cared for and safe

The International Education Program together with the Homestay family, school counsellor and school officials will work together to ensure the student's success.

## STUDENT PERMIT, PASSPORT & TEMPORARY RESIDENT VISA

Please check the student's study permits, passports and temporary resident visa for the expiration date. If any of these documents are expiring soon please contact the International Education Program Office.

## TELEPHONE & CELL PHONES

If a student needs to use the host family phone for international calls, please ensure the student uses a calling card. Please discuss lengthy calls in advance.

**Homestay families MUST NOT co-sign for a student's cell phone.** Students should purchase a "pay as you go" or monthly phone plan and should avoid entering into a contract.

## COMPUTER & INTERNET

Students have access to computers and the Internet at school. Use of Homestay family computers should be limited. Many students bring their own computer. Students may use personal computers in their room, but should be encouraged to interact with their host families during dinner and other family times.

Wireless Internet is now viewed as a utility such as telephone and/or television. Host families should not charge for Internet service.



## **BANK ACCOUNTS**

Assist your student in opening a bank account immediately. It is advisable to use your own branch. Students should be encouraged to have a chequing account and to use cheques to pay Homestay rent. Students should be discouraged from carrying a lot of cash.

## **MONEY**

Students are expected to provide their own spending money to cover incidental expenses, such as weekend entertainment, personal items, and school supplies. However, if your family goes to a movie or to dinner at a restaurant as a family, the student should not be asked to pay. You are expected to discuss these financial matters with your student at the beginning of the homestay. Even though this may seem awkward, it prevents hard feelings later on if you are clear from the beginning.

In the event you purchase any items for your student that will need to be reimbursed, you should retain the receipts. This creates a paper record that will help later if any questions arise.

If at all possible, please avoid loaning your student money or purchasing items on their behalf.

## **STUDENT TRAVEL & VISITING THE UNITED STATES**

**Any students wishing to travel must first speak to the Homestay Manager and complete the Travel Form.**

Students may not travel independently while participating in the New Westminister School District International Student Program. They may not travel while school is in session without written permission from the natural parent(s) and the Homestay Manager. Any travel that a student undertakes should only occur during school vacation time. If students plan to travel, they must be accompanied by a member of their host family or natural family and they must be 25 years or older and have written permission from the natural parent(s). The only exception to this requirement is when the student is returning directly to their home country.

Most students will require a USA Visitor's Visa to enter the United States of America. If traveling with your student be sure to find out about visa requirements well in advance of departure, as visas may not be obtained at the border. For more information on travelling to the United States please visit the following website.

[http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types\\_1262.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1262.html)

Always remind your student to purchase extra travel insurance as MSP is not always valid outside the province.

## **VISITING PARENTS**

The Homestay Program provides housing for students while they are attending school. Visiting parents should make arrangements to stay in a local hotel or bed and breakfast. Families may host parents if they would like to and have space, but are not required to by the program.

## **WORKING WHILE IN CANADA**

Immigration Canada does not permit students to take a job or do work in Canada while on Student Study Permits (Visas). Volunteering is encouraged.

## **BABYSITTING**

International Students must not be expected to be responsible for younger children at anytime.





## REPORTING MISSING STUDENTS

- Contact the Police – you do not have to wait 24 hours
- Contact friends or other Homestay parents if you have their numbers
- Contact the Homestay Manager – may have information regarding a relative living in the area

### Questions the police will ask you:

- Age, general description, clothing (recent picture)
- Where and when the student was last seen
- Mode of Transportation
- Frequented locations
- Friends, Contacts
- Missing from e.g. school, club, shopping, home
- Access to money
- History and/or reason for not returning home
- Incidents that may have affected their emotional state or well being
- Disabilities
- Drug Use
- What time last seen

Source: BC Crime Prevention Association

## GETTING PREPARED (HOST FAMILIES)

Before your student arrives, you can prepare for your new family member in a number of ways. You may wish to go to the library and borrow some books about your student's native country. If your children are old enough, you can make this a real learning experience for them as well. Find out about the climate, customs, the lifestyles, and the history of your student's country. You might even try to master some simple phrases of your student's native language. Gather some materials about your own community to give to your student when he/she arrives. Helpful literature might include community information, a map of your area, bus schedule, etc.

Looking ahead to the arrival of your international student, it is important to remember that he/she is coming to learn about living in a different country: its strength and weaknesses, its language and customs, its attitude and beliefs. To a large extent, the impressions of Canada that your student takes home will be formed through the relationship with your family. The reverse is also true. Your perceptions of a foreign culture will be influenced by your international student's attitudes and behaviour.

The purpose of the Homestay is not to convince the student that Canada is in anyway better than his/her own country, nor are you to turn this person into a Canadian. Rather, the ultimate goal is to develop mutual respect and understanding. It is a natural human tendency to feel that one's own customs, beliefs and values are the best. Accepting that "different" does not necessarily mean "better" or "worse" and withholding value judgments will create an environment of mutual respect that will allow for greater understanding.

## AVOIDING STEREOTYPES

Homestay families and students should avoid stereotypes of different cultures that influence their behaviour and communications. There are usually far more exceptions to a stereotype, or generalization, than examples supporting it. As Robert Kohls states in his book, *Survival Kit for Overseas Living*, "The problem with stereotypes, really, is that they prevent us from getting to the richer reality which lies behind them." (Kohls, 1984). Try not to attach "labels" to your student. For example, if your family is matched with a Japanese student, do not assume that he/she will be shy. Instead, do your best to have an open mind. Avoiding pre-judgment will increase your enjoyment of the time you spend with your student.



## **FAMILY CUSTOMS**

Give your student a reasonably typical schedule so that he/she knows when you usually go to bed, when you get up, when you eat meals, and how the schedule may differ on weekends. Think about how you expect your student to fit into your family schedule.

As a member of your family, your international student should share equally in the pleasure and duties of your home. You have the same authority over him/her that you do over your own child, except in major decisions, which must include the natural parents. You also have the same responsibility to offer understanding, affection and care.

Let your student know what you expect regarding his/her room. You might want to make it clear that belongings are to be put away and the bed made daily. Be sure to tell them if you do not want them to have food in their bedroom.

What is your family routine regarding laundry? Show your student where to put dirty clothes. If you want your student to do his/her own laundry, demonstrate the operation of the washing machine and dryer and make sure that you convey his/her responsibility to fold and put the clothes away if appropriate.

Let your student know how often members of your family bathe. Overseas bathing customs differ. The same may apply to the frequency of laundering clothes. Talk with your student freely about these cultural differences and explain how it is done in your home.

Most students don't need guidance on studying, but it's still a good idea to set aside a certain time of day as study time. The student should be provided a place which is quiet and away from the stereo and TV. Decide what your rules are about studying at night. In some countries, students study very late into the night, but it may not be right for your home. Keep in mind that international students will require more study time than Canadian teenagers due to the language difficulties. Encourage your student to take the time necessary to complete his/her studies without feeling pressure to join in the family activities until they are complete.

Make sure the student understands what the volume and time limits are regarding the television, the stereo, and the telephone. Explain about long distance rates and let the student know that he/she is responsible for paying for all personal phone calls.

Explain your family customs on privacy. Let your student know you will respect his/her privacy by knocking on the bedroom door before entering, and that you expect the same privacy in return. You might want to tell your student that it's all right if he/she needs to be alone for a while each day. Perhaps you do too. Assure the student that you won't pry into his or her belongings, phone conversations or papers.

Explain to your student what your family rules are regarding dating, weekend activities, extracurricular activities, and curfew hours. Tell your student, early on, that you should be informed of his/her whereabouts at all times. Make it clear that plans should change, you must be advised.

## **FAMILY HOME**

Give the student a chance to settle in after arriving. Show the student the entire house and where things are located, such as the bathroom, the closet, the dresser and household appliances. Don't assume, as you would with a Canadian guest, that showing your student the bathroom or kitchen is enough. Since plumbing facilities, appliances, etc., vary around the world it is important to show your student how everything is used – from the light switches and locks to the shower and sink.

We take many things for granted in our home, such as the accessibility of the family refrigerator to Canadian youngsters. Many students complain of being hungry, when the real problem is a feeling of reservation or embarrassment to freely take food from the refrigerator. Tell your student what's available for his/her use so that he/she will feel at ease in your home. Consider everything: the kitchen, the telephone, the stereo system, even soap and toothpaste.



Share your thoughts and perceptions with your student. Try to spend a little extra time initially getting to know your student and helping him/her get acquainted with you and your family. Ask your student to tell you how he/she feels or what sorts of questions they might have.

Canadians are usually very “up front” about dealing with problems or misunderstandings. They prefer to address a disagreement quickly, find a solution, and move on. This directness often startles international students who come from cultures where expressing personal feelings, preferences, and opinions may be rude or socially unacceptable. It is important for students and host families alike to recognize this important difference in communication styles and to discuss approaches to problem solving that are mutually comfortable.

Students need to practice Canadian communication styles and families can help them by being sensitive and patient when a student seems reluctant or uncomfortable about discussing a problem, particularly in a foreign language. Homestay parents should acknowledge a student’s unease with reassuring phrases such as, “It must be difficult for you to tell me exactly how you feel right now.”

Set aside a special time to talk to your student. This meeting is a time to address concerns as they arise, discuss schedules, and inquire as to how things at school are progressing. It is very important that students and Homestay families resolve little problems or misunderstandings before they simmer and turn into big ones. We suggest that you begin with weekly meetings and progress to bi-weekly if you find it more appropriate. This discussion could take the form of a weekly family council, or it could just be a private time when you and the student discuss the week’s events over a cup of coffee. The dinner table can be a perfect place to enjoy some interesting conversations with your student.

It is generally easiest to address a problem as it arises, rather than waiting until you become frustrated and angry with a pattern that has emerged. For example, your student comes home at 1:00 a.m. one morning. At this point, a brief discussion to let the student know your concerns and expectations should easily solve the problem. However, if the student becomes accustomed to keeping these hours, they may be surprised when you are “suddenly” quite angry with them for coming home late.

Sometimes problems do “creep up” on us and we realize one day that things are not as we would like them to be. There may be one issue or several, but you begin feeling uneasy about your relationship with your student. You and your student may appreciate a chance to “clear the air.” If you need help getting started, the International Education Program Office will bring everyone together to discuss observations and make suggestions. Often a simple compromise is all that is needed to solve the problem.

## **CULTURE SHOCK**

Culture shock is a normal inevitable response among International Students. Students will experience culture shock to varying degrees and for varying lengths of time, but all will experience it at some time during their Homestay in Canada. Even though the student experiences culture shock, if the Homestay family is aware of what the student is facing, the symptoms can be better recognized and understood.

Culture shock, according to Robert Kohls, “is the term used to describe the more pronounced reactions to the psychological disorientation most people experience when they move for an extended period of time into a culture markedly different from their own.” (Kohls, 1984) It comes from the experience of living in another culture where that country’s values, perceptions, cultural norms and beliefs “threaten” the student’s understanding of what he/she thought to be “right.”

Amongst other things, language difficulty is one of the biggest contributing factors to culture shock. Your student may seem quiet or disinterested when he/she is really just too tired to concentrate fully or talk. A person whose native language is not English has a difficult time grasping involved conversations. Try to understand the concentration and effort required on the part of such students. Along with the fatigue that results, there is the frustration that comes from being unable to express complete ideas or feelings to the extent that he/she can in a native language. Being forced to keep communication on a relatively elementary level may make your student feel like a “child,” a feeling he/she may not like.