

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.



Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in becoming a host family for students attending the New Westminster School District International Education Program. Students attending our program and staying with host families may range from ages 12 to 18. These students may be attending an elementary school or middle school if they are younger. However, the vast majority of students are high school students attending New Westminster Secondary School.

Before embarking on becoming a host family it is important to know and understand that being a host family is very different from being a landlord to tenants who occupy a separate suite in your home and with whom you may have no daily contact. Although we hope that hosting an international student can be beneficial to your family in numerous ways it is important to note that students in our homestay program *are not rent paying tenants* who are to be counted on to meet financial obligations.

Like any school student population international students bring a variety of personalities and abilities with them. Some students are outgoing and make friends easily. These students often have a higher beginning level of English. Students of this nature appear to have adjusted well and seem to function with little or no input from the host family. Other students may be weaker at English and of a quieter nature and be less likely to make friends quickly. They tend to stay close to home and spend many hours in their rooms or in the presence of host families. Both student types will present some challenges.

Regardless of personality or age, international students are minor students who are at a vulnerable stage of their lives. This is compounded by being away from parents, being immersed in a new culture and trying to master a new language. Therefore, as with all school age children, visiting international students require guidelines, routine and the knowledge that someone here cares about their well-being.

Most hosting experiences are positive with students and families becoming friends for years and years. Some hosting situations end with the student changing host families after a few months. It is important to not take these situations personally and to realize that the “match” sometimes doesn’t work for both student and host family and a change is perhaps the best resolution for both parties.

Our host families are encouraged to work together with international education and school staff to solve the day to day issues that come up. Host families are not expected to “go it alone” with the student placed in their home. We do however, expect host families to be the “adults” and interact with students in a respectful, calm and non-demeaning manner. Again, we have to bear in mind that these students are minor children away from home and that we would want them to be treated as we would like our own children should they be in the same situation.

It is our hope that this manual will provide you with information and answers to some of the questions regarding policies and guidelines that you may encounter before your student arrives and while hosting. Please do not hesitate to contact our office with any questions or concerns you may have.

To conclude, when speaking with international student graduates about their experiences in Canada, they often cite their homestay family as having the most influence on their positive experience. Although hosting an international student is not without its stresses and bumps along the way, most families will agree that hosting has changed their perspective of the world.

Thank you for joining our program and hosting our students.



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KEY CONTACTS

Homestay parents should feel comfortable contacting the International Education Program Office regarding any problems that arise. Homestay parents are also encouraged to contact the student's parents where possible, as well as with teachers at school.

International Education Program Office

Room 166
835 8th Street, New Westminster, BC, V3M 3S9
Main Office Phone: 604.517.6285
Fax: 604.517.6170
www.newwestschool.com

Ms. Karen Klein	Vice-Principal/General Manager	604.517.6293	kklein@sd40.bc.ca
Mr. Trevor Gee	Assistant General Manager	604.517.6279	tgee@sd40.bc.ca
Mr. Elliot Kwon	Marketing Manager	604.517.6281	ekwon@sd40.bc.ca
Ms. Sara Dick	Homestay Manager	604.517.6280	sdick@sd40.bc.ca
Mr. Yiwen Zhang	Finance Manager	604.517.6282	yzhang@sd40.bc.ca
Ms. Somi Park	Secretary & Interpreter	604.517.6285	spark@sd40.bc.ca

Emergency Phone Number: 604.356.4980

Please leave a detailed message and we will return your call as soon as possible.

New Westminster Secondary School Key Contacts

Pearson Office: 604.517.6220

Mr. John Tyler	Principal	jtyler@sd40.bc.ca
Academic Counsellor *	Counselling Office	604.517.6219
Ms. Meiyan Yip	Personal Counsellor	To make an appointment for your student please contact the International office at 604-517-6285.

* Please note that the Academic Counsellor for the International students will change each year. If you have any questions regarding classes or attendance please contact the Counselling Office and they will forward you to your student's counsellor. You can also find the counsellor's contact details on the New Westminster Secondary School's website under the Counsellor tab at the top. <http://www.nwss.ca>

Teacher Directory:

New Westminster Secondary School's Teacher Directory can be found on the New Westminster Secondary School's website under the Staff List tab at the top. <http://www.nwss.ca>

Absences:

Host Families must phone the Pearson Office (604.517.6391) prior to 1:00pm to inform them of a student's absence. Students are **also** required to provide a note from their guardian to all teachers whose classes were missed during an absence.

In your phone message, please include:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| (1) Your child's student number | (3) First name (including spelling) |
| (2) Last name (including spelling) | (4) Day of absence and/or blocks to be missed. |



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
 - \$30/night fee for partial months
 - \$900 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
- 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 and assist with check in. (Please arrive at least 2 hours prior to departure time)
- Advise Homestay Manager if you would like to host another long or short term student



PROSPECTIVE HOMESTAY INFORMATION SHEET

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

The first month 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 \$30 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. There may not be 30 day notice when a student requires a Homestay change.
3. Homestay families must inform the Homestay Manager of any other International students living in the home prior to accepting a student.
4. Homestay families must inform the Homestay Manager prior to accepting additional students into their home regardless of the school they attend.
5. Homestay families must inform the Homestay Manager of any changes to their family and/or the people living in their home.
6. All household members understand and are willing to respect program policies and procedures.
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. The student must have access (free of charge) to a printer in the home and access to the internet.
10. Host families must provide a clean, well-supervised environment.
11. Host 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. Host parents must attend Homestay meetings arranged through their school and district office.
16. Host families can apply for 2 types of hosting:
 - a. Short Term (Homestay must be available for the duration of the student's stay)
 - b. Long Term (Homestay must be available to pick student up from airport)
17. Criminal record searches must be completed before a student will be placed in a home.

Thank you for your interest in the New Westminster 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.



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 Westminster 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 \$40 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 \$40.00 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 Westminster 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.



HOMESTAY PAYMENTS/FEES

1. Nightly Fee

The nightly fee is \$30.

When a student arrives to begin the semester on a date other than the first of the month the nightly fee will be applied.

Students departing the program (and not returning) at the end of the semester (June or January) pay the nightly fee for their final month.

If a Host Family needs to be away during the program and the student is required to stay with a temporary host family, the host family pays \$30 for each night they are away to the temporary family.

2. Arrival Fee

There is a onetime arrival fee of \$50.00 for students requiring airport pick up when they first join our program.

All students require airport drop off when they depart.

3. Monthly Fee

The monthly fee is \$900.00 per month.

The monthly fee does not change from September to May regardless of whether the student is absent for holidays/vacations.

Monthly Fee Payment Process

Students can pay this fee in the following ways:

- (A) The student may pay their host family in cash, by cheque, or by e-transfer.
- (B) The student can arrange with their host family to have the monthly payment wired-transferred to the host family account.
- (C) Students may arrange to have their monthly payments distributed to the host family through the SD40 Accounting Office.

Homestay fees should be paid one month at a time, in the first week of each month.

4. Summer Time Fee Structure for Long Term Students

- Students requesting to stay in July and not attending summer school must see the International Office for prior permission and fee details.
- Students who are taking summer classes but returning home before August 15th pay \$200 plus the nightly fee of \$30 per night. For example students departing on August 5 would pay \$200 + \$120 (\$30 x 4 nights).
- Students departing at the end of June but returning to Canada to resume school in September pay a total of \$400.00 for the months of July and August.
- Students departing at the end of June but returning to Canada at the end of August pay \$200 plus the nightly fee of \$30 per night. For example students arriving back to Canada on August 25 would pay \$200 + \$210 (\$30 x 7 nights).

5. Short term homestay fee

- Students participating in our short program pay \$40 per night per students. Families can host more than one student to a room, but each student must have their own bed and be from the same group program.
- Short term homestay payments are distributed to the host family through SD40.



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/DROP OFF

It is the responsibility of the Homestay family to pick up the student upon arrival into Canada, take the student to and from the airport during their stay and bring them to the airport when they return home at the end of the program. 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.

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 VACATIONS

While hosting students it is preferred that families do not take extended (1 week or more) vacations during the academic term. However, we realize in some cases this may not be avoided. Please let the Homestay Manager know at least 1 month in advance (or as soon as possible) of any pending vacation.

If the student is unable to join your family on vacation the host family can arrange for a family member or friend (over the age of 25) to stay in your home while you are away to assume the role of caretaker. A criminal record search must be completed for anyone 19 year of age and older that will be residing in the home while you are away.

If the student is uncomfortable staying in your home with a caretaker the Homestay Manager can arrange a temporary homestay for the student during your absence.

Ultimately, it will be the decision of the student and their natural parents as to their preference. Please inform the Homestay Manager as soon as possible.

STUDENT GUIDELINES

1. Student must agree to abide by program policies
2. Student must have reasonable expectations of the Homestay family
3. Student must abide by Homestay curfew
4. Student must respect household rules
5. Student must show consideration and tolerance to the Homestay family
6. Student must ask permission to invite friends to dinner
7. Students must make arrangement with the Homestay family regarding the use of telephone
 - a. Late night calls should be restricted
 - b. Calls need to be a reasonable length of time
 - c. Calling cards are the best option for long distance
8. Student must keep own bedroom and bathroom clean
9. Student must reimburse the Homestay family if he/she causes any damage
10. Students should make an effort to participate in family activities
11. Students must have written permission from parents and IEP Office if travelling outside of the Greater Vancouver area and into the United States of America
12. Students will inform Homestay parent(s) where he/she is going, with whom, when he/she will return and a contact phone number or cell phone number where they can be reached
13. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure they have the proper letters, permission and immigration Visas to authorize travel. The International Education Program can cancel prearranged travel if the proper procedures are not followed

FAMILY RULES

Students must abide by all reasonable household rules. Please find below guidelines on rules found in the average household.

1. Household duties including keeping their bedroom and bathroom clean as well as cleaning up after themselves when they use the kitchen
2. The student will have a curfew that is expected to be followed
3. The student will request permission to have guests in the home
4. The student will inform the Homestay parent(s) they are going, with whom, when they will return and a contact number they can be reached at while they are out
5. The student will show respect to all family members and the 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.



MEDICAL COVERAGE

The IEP office assists students to apply for both private medical insurance and BC Medical Services plan (MSP). It is therefore, important to report with the student to the IEP office immediately (with the passport and study permit) after arriving in Canada to sign medical forms, thereby receiving the earliest possible medical coverage.

If a student becomes ill or injured and requires professional care please take them to a clinic or hospital. If it is an emergency please call the emergency phone number on Page 1. If it is not an emergency please call the Homestay Manager at the office.

PHASE ONE: Private Medical Insurance – First three months

There is a three-month waiting period before MSP coverage begins. All students will be covered during this time by Guard Me.

Guard Me has an agreement with the clinic listed below whereby direct billing has been set up. Guard Me Insurance Services Card and your student ID must be presented at the time of treatment in order for the clinic to invoice Guard Me directly.

Elicare: Royal City Medical Clinic
Second floor of Royal City Shopping Centre
228B – 610 6 Street
New Westminster, BC
Tel: 604-545-0420

Other Clinics

If a student uses any other clinic he/she will be expected to pay and then submit the receipt online at www.guard.me.

****Note:** Keep a copy of your claim and a copy of your receipts.

PHASE TWO: After the First Three Months – Medical Services Plan of British Columbia

If the student is sick or has an accident, after the initial three-month period, he or she must present their MSP CareCard at the time of treatment. The health care services (e.g. the doctor's office or hospital) need to see the number on the card. This medical plan pays the health care service directly. There are no receipts issued or required.

Students will receive their CareCards from the International Education Program Office. Students must have their CareCards on their person at all times.

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

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.

DRINKING, DRUGS & SMOKING/E-CIGARETTES

There is zero tolerance of alcohol and/or drugs. It is also against the law for students under the age of 18 to buy cigarettes. Smoking is not allowed inside the Homestay home or on school property. Please contact the International Education Program Office if you have any questions or concerns.

Smoking is strongly discouraged.

PERSONAL CRIME PREVENTION SAFETY TIPS

- Be aware
- Be alert
- Be prepared

The students you have in your care are from different countries and what seems common sense for us can be strange to them. These students are someone's children. The same rules you have for your children should apply to your student.

Suggestions

- Create a sense of belonging – have a **photo** of your student on the **fridge**
- Know any health concerns
- Have a copy of their Passport and the Notarized Custodianship Form
- Know where your student keeps their passport and other important documents
- Advise against wearing clothing or accessories with their name on it



- Ensure that they always carry the family's contact information card in their wallet
- Know their cell phone number if they have one
- Get their friend's telephone numbers and if possible friend's Homestay family, if applicable
- Explain our currency
- Talk to them about carrying cash and advise them not to display large amounts of cash in public
- Talk to them about using an ATM and being aware of their surroundings.

Safety tips for your student on the street

- Plan your route – know where you are going and keep your Homestay family informed
- Walk deliberately – be alert and sure of yourself
- Avoid shortcuts & dark, isolated places
- Carry ID and limited money
- Never accept rides from strangers
- Carry a flashlight & personal safety alarm when walking alone at night
- Don't overburden yourself with too many parcels when shopping
- If you suspect you are being followed:
 - Cross the street
 - Go to the nearest group of people/store/business/etc.
 - Call the police if necessary
 - Stay within a group
- 911 calls are free from any phone (pay-phone/cellular, etc.)
- If riding a bike you must wear a helmet

Safety tips for your students on public transportation

- Try to avoid isolated stations
- Sit near the front or near an emergency exit
- Use the "Request Stop" service if available
- Avoid confrontations with other passengers

Source: BC Crime Prevention Association

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.

The Homestay experience can bring endless new insights. It involves change, questioning and sometimes frustration. Openness, sensitivity and respect are necessary to ensure a valuable experience for you, your family and your student.

THE EARLY DAYS

Give your student time to adjust. It is normal for the student to be disorientated and tired for the first few days. Since English is not the student's native language, try to speak slowly and use eye contact to ensure good communication. Give the student a tour of your home and local area. Once "jet lag" has worn off, the student will be ready to learn about his/her surroundings.

Remember, your student will be just as nervous as you are. When your student meets you for the first time, he/she may be feeling insecure and shy. You will probably be feeling somewhat the same. Silence may be due to fatigue and the struggle with a new language. Watch your student and set the appropriate pace. A good sense of humour, warmth and understanding are important.

As you and your new family member become acquainted with one another, misunderstandings and miscommunication often result unless you are prepared for the adjustment. Below, we have outlined the most common sources of frustration, resentment and misunderstanding. Please read through this information carefully. You may be surprised at how much you take for granted.

CANADIAN CUSTOMS AND CULTURE

Remember that your student is not familiar with many Canadian ideas and customs. You and your student have developed different sets of concepts and behaviour patterns based on different cultures and backgrounds. For



instance, you may differ markedly in your table manners. These are cultural differences, and in most cases clarification and discussion are all that is necessary to resolve them. Other differences may be more subtle such as your student's view on the roles of men and women or parents and children. Your student's ideas may affect his/her willingness to do a particular chore, initial expectations, or responses in your family. These differences should be discussed in terms of what is important to do or accept while in your home, rather than in terms of what is "right" or "good". Such issues as frequency of baths and changing clothes need not be embarrassing topics if they are approached early and in terms of your family's customs.

FAMILY RULES

A careful explanation of the rules you wish students to follow and reasons why they are important to you is best done at the very beginning. A few minutes of friendly, frank explanations may save everyone from later irritation and bewilderment.

As time goes on, you may have to re-evaluate your rules depending on the need and maturity of your student. Your visitor may have been given more or less independence than you give your children. If your student comes from a more protected or controlled environment, he/she may need the security of being told what to do. On the other hand, they may be accustomed to coming and going without telling their parents their whereabouts. You may want to follow whatever the norm is in your family or community regarding family rules; however, if you insist on knowing your students' plans, be sure to let your student know ahead of time. Your attitude regarding curfew, dating, smoking, drinking, etc. should be explained as household rules and customs. Please be sure to communicate your expectations and house rules to your student right from the beginning of their stay. Don't wait to talk about these rules to your student. The sooner you lay everything out on the table, the clearer the student understands your expectations. You want to avoid the feeling that you are confronting your student with a rule, after the fact, because you do not trust him/her. Be clear and consistent in your explanation of family rules, and provide an atmosphere that permits explanation and discussion as needed.

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.

AFFECTION

Your student may feel awkward about how to address you. At first mom or dad or similar terms may seem strange while Mr. and Mrs. may seem equally inappropriate. Try to come to an agreement on what is most comfortable for you and your family early in the student's stay in order to minimize initial adjustment difficulties.

In establishing a relationship with your student, affection is an important factor. Your new family member may need, or be accustomed to received outward expressions of affection, such as an arm around the shoulder, a hug, a compliment or praise. Others may be offended or embarrassed by such outward expressions and will need a different kind of assurance of your support. Keep trying until you find an expression of affection that feels right to everyone.

RELIGION

You should respect your student's religious beliefs and he/she should respect yours. Your student may want to attend your services or may prefer some quiet time alone. If special arrangements need to be made in order for your student to observe his/her religion in everyday life, try to help work out something that is both satisfactory to your student and appropriate to your family life. Your student will probably enjoy explaining his/her particular religious holidays and appreciate some recognition by your family of holidays that occur during the stay.

Absolutely no attempt should be made to change your student's religious beliefs. If he/she does not wish to attend your church, this must be an option. Attempts at conversion could result in the student's removal from the home.

FOOD

International Students truly miss their own food. We ask that the Homestay families take their students grocery shopping a few times each month so they can choose some of their own foods. Many of our students miss rice and we recommend that families try to cook rice at least twice a week. Also, ask what foods they enjoy and take



them grocery shopping once in a while. Keep in mind the Homestay family is to provide a variety of nutritional, well-balanced meals three times a day. Food portions should reflect your student's appetite.

COMMUNICATION

Establishing good communication between your student and the rest of your family is very important. Everyone will benefit from honest and open communication. Many Homestay families are uncertain of how to address concerns or problems with their student, which can lead to tension and friction.

It is quite natural for students to have strong feelings about their country. When outnumbered by Canadians, he/she may become defensive. In trying to describe their home country, your student may compare their new home unfavorably with his/her own country. Try to realize these comparisons are not meant as an affront; rather, be generous in allowing opinions that may not be your own.

You may be surprised by some of the things that your student likes and dislikes. Encourage your student to speak freely about his/her feelings at home, since outside the home he/she may feel inhibited. Your student may have trouble judging the degree of tact that Canadians are used to. If you perceive this as a problem, try to help your student recognize when and where certain expressions of opinion are appropriate. Your student will soon find that it is often the manner in which he/she expresses an opinion rather than the opinion.

Keep in mind that your student is still a teenager and, like your own children, will need reminders of your expectations. It is wise to evaluate your own actions, reactions and explanations. It is sometimes easy to have greater expectations of your international student than you have of your own children, thus causing you to overreact. Talking things over can make these adjustments easier for everyone.

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.

Your student may find himself/herself totally overwhelmed among native English speakers or simply be confused by particular words or phrases at first. In either case, you must try to make yourself understood. You can help your student by speaking slowly and being patient. If you feel discouraged, he/she will feel it too. It is even more helpful if you become involved in language and learning efforts. You may want to take a look at his/her books and help with understanding assignments. If you have the time, you can set up a regularly scheduled language time.

It is important to note that your family, as well as the student, will experience some culture shock. You will go through similar phases as you adjust to having someone from another culture in your home. Be aware that you will experience the fascination and then disenchantment just as your International Student will. Being aware of culture shock and knowing what to expect will help everyone to better understand their emotions and how to handle them when the situation arises.

FINAL WORDS

Homestay parents should feel comfortable getting in touch with the International Education Program Office regarding any problems that arise. Homestay families are also advised to have contact with the parents where possible, and keep in touch with other Homestay parents of International Students and most importantly, the Homestay Manager.

IF YOU EVER HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS PLEASE CONTACT THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM OFFICE.

THANK YOU!