

Guidelines

A homestay program provider is an organization or company that arranges homestays. Sometimes the homestay program will be provided by the school or school district. Sometimes the provider will be a third-party company or organization.

SECTION 1: HOMESTAY PROGRAM PROVIDER RESPONSIBILITIES

To promote the best possible homestay experience for international K-12 students, homestay program providers should:

1. Maintain a homestay screening process for host families and for international students to determine suitability. The host family screening process should be published and should include:
 - A. *Scheduled host parent interviews and home inspections. Home Inspections should be scheduled at least once every two years*
 - B. *Scheduled Criminal Records Checks with Vulnerable Sector Checks every three years for all adult household members*
 - C. *Reference checks for the host family parent(s) where required*
2. Gather appropriate and up-to-date personal records/contact information for the student, parent/guardian, custodian and/or host family, including:
 - A. *Legal first and last names (i.e., as they appear in a passport)*
 - B. *Gender*
 - C. *Age*
 - D. *Relevant medical information*
 - E. *Country of residence*
 - F. *Address*
 - G. *Contact phone number and email address*
3. Ensure that all data collected and any information distributed by the homestay program provider complies with protection of privacy legislation.
4. Deliver a comprehensive training program for new host families to ensure familiarity and understanding with best practices and develop a process for regular host families to stay current with best practices.
5. Place no more than two international students with a host family at the same time.
6. Avoid concurrently placing both adult and minor international students in the same home unless there is a clear rationale for how this benefits the students. In circumstances where minor and adult students are placed together, parents of the minor student must be informed of the situation.
7. Inform the host family of potential student placements by using a standardized student profile form that includes the dates of accommodation, special requirements, and relevant medical and behavioral background.
8. Liaise with the student, school, host family and parents/guardian and provide each with support.
9. Communicate with international students and host families on a regular basis.
10. Provide 24-hour emergency contact for international students and homestay families.
11. Implement and maintain quality assurance and program evaluation mechanisms.
12. Offer conflict resolution services (*and the opportunity to reach consensus*) to both the host family and the international student.
13. Maintain clear, published standards and procedures relating to homestay, including procedures for the dismissal of host families in warranted cases and procedures for transferring students to a different host family.
14. Develop separate reference manuals for host families and for international students (*and their parents*) that describe relevant legislation, standards and procedures. Manuals should contain standards and procedures applicable to the full range of a host family's and an international student's homestay experience.

15. Maintain clear, published fee information including:
 - A. *Terms of Agreement – payment of fees to whom and when*
 - B. *Per diem and monthly homestay fees*
 - C. *Services included with fees*
 - D. *Additional fees (e.g. airport pick-up or drop-off or storage fees)*
 - E. *Refund policy*
16. Ensure published documents and templates use gender-inclusive language and include a place for legal and preferred names where appropriate.
17. Provide, as appropriate and where possible, the international student with access to a person who can speak the student's primary language. This may include agent, parent, or other contact via online communication.
18. Share medical or mental health concerns that arise during the course of the homestay with the international student program, the host family, the custodian or the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) as appropriate.
19. Provide additional standards and procedural supports and requirements for younger homestay students as appropriate.

20. Publish the homestay program provider's legal limitations.
21. Inform international students who are about to be placed with a host family about the following resources:
 - A. ***B.C. Helpline for Children (Tel: 310-1234)***
May be called to report when a child or youth under 19 years of age is being abused or neglected. There is a legal duty to report your concern to a child welfare worker
 - B. ***Kids Help Phone (Tel: 1-800-668-6868)***
Provides counselling and mental health support
 - C. ***Kelty Mental Health Resource Center (<http://keltymentalhealth.ca>)*** *Resources regarding mental health issues, substance use, medications, and healthy living*
 - D. ***HealthLink BC 8-1-1 Services (Tel: 811)***
Free-of-charge provincial health information and advice phone line available in British Columbia
 - E. ***Suicide Crisis Helpline (Text/Tel: 988) <https://988.ca>***
Confidential, free, 24-hour access to responders trained in suicide prevention.
 - F. *Medical insurance provider options*

