

HOMESTAY FAMILY HANDBOOK

2024 -2025



International Education Program
New Westminster Schools

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 an especially 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.

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 TO 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 staying with host families may range from ages 14 to 18 attending New Westminster Secondary School in grades 9 to 12.

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 lifetimes. 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 must 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.

We hope this manual will provide information and answers to some of the questions about policies and guidelines you may encounter before your student arrives and while hosting. Please contact our office with any questions or concerns.

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 and teachers at school.

International Education Program Office

New Westminister Secondary School

820 6th Street, New Westminister, BC, V3M 3S9

Main Office Phone: 604.517.6285

Fax: 604.517.6170

www.newwestinternational.ca

Mr. Trevor Gee	Program Manager	604.517.6279	tgee@sd40.bc.ca
Ms. Sara Dick	Marketing Manager	604.517.6293	sdick@sd40.bc.ca
Ms. Eva Shen	Homestay Manager	604.517.6280	eshen@sd40.bc.ca
Mr. Yiwon Zhang	Finance Manager	604.517.6282	yzhang@sd40.bc.ca
Ms. Naomi Park	Secretary & Interpreter	604.517.6285	npark@sd40.bc.ca

Emergency Phone Number: 604.356.4980

Please leave a detailed message and we will return your call after assessing the situation.

New Westminister Secondary School Key Contacts

Main Office: 604.517.6220

Ms. Susana Quan	Principal	squan@sd40.bc.ca
Mr. Matthew Mitchell	International Student Counsellor	mmitchell@sd40.bc.ca

* Please note that the Academic Counsellor for the International students will change each year. If you have any questions regarding classes 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 Westminister Secondary School's website under the Counsellor tab at the top. <http://www.nwss.ca>

Teacher Directory:

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

Absences:

Host Families must report student absence. Absences can be reported through the following means:

- 24 hours a day through the voice message system at 604-517-6391
If you are leaving a voicemail message, please state the student's full name, grade, the date of the absence, the reason for absence if possible and the student number.
- Absences can be reported any time in advance, or before 9:45am on the day of the absence, using the link: <https://nwss.ca/contact-us/report-a-student-absence/>
- Please note that students cannot report their own absence.

If your student is repeatedly absent due to illness, take your student to a doctor (see more information under 'Student Medical Insurance' section). If you receive automated messages indicating your student has missed a class(es) repeatedly without a valid reason, please talk to your student and report this to the IEP office.

Checklist for Homestay Families

PRE-ARRIVAL:

- Confirm International Education Office (IEP) has current **Police Vulnerable Sector Check (PVS)** from local police for all members living in your home aged 19 and above.
- Contact your **home insurance provider** to inform them that you will be hosting an international high school student.
- **Prepare the bedroom** for your student's arrival (including desk, lamp, dresser, bed and bedding, hangers in closet, and etc.).
- Prepare a **house key, the door, or the alarm code** to give to students in a secure manner.
- Confirm **bus route** to and from school for your student if necessary.
- Prepare a list reasonable **house rules and emergency phone numbers**.
- Read through the **Homestay Family Handbook** and ask IEP staff if you have any questions.
- **Connect** with your student(s) and their parents by sending a greeting email.
- Invite a **video call** with your student(s) and their parents via social media (WhatsApp, Line, FB, Zoom or Teams).
- Confirm the **arrival information** with your student and stay connected for any flight changes/cancellations.
- Create a **welcome sign** with your student's name on it for a **warm** airport pick up upon their arrival.

ARRIVAL:

- **Pick up** your student at airport
- Encourage student to **phone home** and confirm arrival to parents
- **Tour your 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 always carry in their wallet
 - Include home, cell, and work numbers for family members
 - An emergency contact person such as a neighbour, relative, reliable friend
 - The host family should introduce students to neighbours so students have a greater comfort level in asking for assistance should they need it.
- Explain how **9-1-1** works for emergencies.
- Show your student **how to get to and from school**.
- Show your student how to get to **the postal outlet, bus stops and local amenities**.
- Assist your student with setting up **bank account** if needed
- Help your student to arrange a **cell phone plan** if needed.
- Confirm monthly payments with students
 - Some students will have payment issued monthly by the School District
 - Some students will pay the host family directly
 - Homestay Fees (Effective July 1, 2024)
 - \$100 airport fee for NEW students only
 - \$50 for arrival support to be paid together with August and September or February homestay fee
 - \$50 for departure support to be paid together with January or June homestay fee
 - \$40/night fee for partial months
 - \$1200 monthly fee
- Contact IEP for details on "Orientation Week" for the student (this may be sent to you in advance). If your student will arrive late, please contact IEP for assistance.
 - During Orientation Week at school, students will:
 - take an English and Math Placement exam (to be completed prior to starting classes).
 - obtain medical insurance information.
 - register for classes and meet with counsellor to discuss the course schedules.
 - understand school rules, expectations, and IEP's policy and procedure.
 - learn the things to know about New Westminster Secondary School and join a campus tour.
 - receive tips on a successful homestay experience.
 - enjoy fun activities and make connections with IEP and the other international students.

IN RESIDENCE:

- Arrange to accompany your student on their first day of school,
- Attend meetings organized by your student's school - student/teacher/parent interviews or any other that is relevant.
- Correspond with natural parents, even if natural parents do not read English.
- Occasionally revisit house rules and make any necessary adjustments.
- Check study permits and passports for expiration dates (inform IEP office if documents need renewal).
- Ensure your student stores their passport in a safe place.
- Communicate with International Education Program (IEP) regarding any concerns and issues with students:
 - Emotional issues
 - Mental health concerns
 - Use of alcohol, drugs, or smoking
 - Ongoing behavior issues
 - Repetitive lateness and/or absences of classes without a valid reason
 - Physical illness that requires medical attention
 - Travel out of Greater Vancouver Area
- 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, hosting for the other program and so on.

DEPARTURE:

- Remind your student of packing up their belongings; donating the items which are in usable and good shape; cleaning up the garbage; host family should run room checks a few times in the last month
- Assist the student with boxing and shipping possessions home (this is done at the student's expense).
- Inform IEP office of your student's departure date
- Drive your student to the airport, assist with check-in, and see them off by the security gate. (Please arrive at least 3 hours prior to departure time for an international flight)

Homestay Guidelines and Requirements

Our Homestay program is an especially important component of our International Education Program. Homestay parents must be committed to helping our international students feel welcome and supported. The intent of our Homestay placement program is to find the best match for our students. New Westminster School District #40 prides itself on implementing this process with the highest degree of care. Criminal Record Search must be in process/completed before a student is placed in your home. IEP requires a valid copy of the CRC report on file to fulfill the student placement process.



Language

- Household members must speak English in the presence of students.

Accommodation

- Private bedroom
 - egress window, bed & bed linens, desk, lamp, dresser, closet/wardrobe & hangers
- Access to a bathroom/s
 - towels and bathroom tissues
- Access to laundry facilities
- Access to the internet
- A clean and tidy environment
- Reasonable use of the common areas in the home and utilities and instruction in their use

Nutrition

- Three nutritional and well-balanced meals per day
 - Food portions should reflect appetite
 - Sensible Snacks available

Social, Emotional, & Medical Support

- Provide a caring, nurturing and supportive environment for international students.
- Monitor your student's physical health and take your student to see the doctor if they are sick or injured. The IEP will help when possible but cannot be available for students at all times.
- Respect religious/non-religious beliefs and practices of your student.
- Respect the culture and values of your student.
- Be cautious and mindful about some sensitive topics such as religion, sex, gender, race, politics etc.
- Provide understanding and extra support if your student experiences culture shock.
- Involve the student in various family activities or outings (if the student is willing).
- Assist your student in seeking extra-curricular activities and sports. This may be as simple as showing them the local Parks and Recreation Guide.
- Impose reasonable limits around curfew and personal internet use.
- Implement reasonable "house rules" which encourage consideration of others in shared family space.
- Be aware of the following resources regarding child health and safety and assist student with reaching out if needed:
 - **B.C. Helpline for Children** (Tel: 310-1234) May be called in cases where the international student feels he/she is being mistreated or feels unsafe in the home or at school.
 - **Kids Help Phone** (Tel: 1-800-668-6868) Provides counselling and mental health support.

- **Kelty Mental Health Resource Center** (<http://keltymentalhealth.ca/>) Provides resources regarding mental health issues, substance use, medications, and healthy living.
- **HealthLink BC 8-1-1 Services (Tel: 811)** Free-of-charge provincial health information and advice phone line available in British Columbia
- **Suicide Crisis Helpline (Text/Tel: 988)** <https://988.ca> – Provides confidential, free, 24-hour access to responders trained in suicide prevention

Notifications/Communication

- Inform the Homestay manager of any other international students living in the home prior to accepting a student regardless of their school.
- Inform the Homestay Manager of any changes to their family (and/or the people living in their home) as well as changes to address/contact information
 - *Home location, new telephone numbers, new family members, additional family members/friends moving into the home, new pets, divorce/separations, serious or prolonged illness within the family, significant renovations.*
- Attend meetings organized by your student’s school - student/teacher/parent interviews or any other that is relevant
- Participate in the Annual Refresher Homestay Orientation for program updates, policy and expectations review, and sharing ideas and experiences with IEP and the other host families.
- Correspond with natural parents (even if natural parents do not read English)
- Inform IEP of intended Student Travel – this needs to be approved in advance by the student’s natural parents and IEP (see Travel Policy for Students section for more details)
- Inform IEP of any significant concerns regarding a student’s physical and/or mental health.
- Contact IEP regarding any following issues with the student:
 - Repetitive absences without a valid excuse
 - Use of alcohol, drugs or smoking
 - Ongoing behavior issues
 - Illness that requires medical attention (MRI, surgery and so on.)
- Seek medical attention if necessary
 * *Host families cannot expect students to maintain their house or yard, babysit their children or cook their meals.*

Transportation Support

- Airport support on the student’s arrival and departure
- Airport support on the student’s winter or/and spring breaks when student visiting home
- Field trips organized by IEP or school
- Under rare circumstances, when it is not safe for the student to arrive home on their own (talk to your student for planning better in the future social activities/events.)
- We strongly encourage host parents to carpool for any international student activities/trips

The International Education Program together with the Homestay family, school counsellor and school officials will work together to ensure the student’s success for their program in Canada.


Different Homestay Programs

International students are participating in different educational programs and require differing lengths of homestay accommodation.

- A. **Long Term** – 1 semester or 1 academic year programs (*student may or may not be returning the following academic year*)
- B. **Short Term** – 2-week programs (*only run through July and/or August*)

In addition, the International Education Program requires short term homestay families to accommodate students when a host family needs to take a short break. (i.e., pre-planned vacation or family emergency)

Long Term Homestay

- New Westminster School District reserves the right to move a student without notice. However, the program strives to mediate and resolve issues prior to moving the student unless it is an emergency. At such times, the host family will reimburse the student/school district on a scale of \$40 per night for the unused days of the month. The student will only pay for the nights spent in the home.
- If a student does require temporary accommodation due to the host family's vacation or unavailability, the regular host family is responsible to make alternate arrangements with another host family from our program when possible; or another trusting adult supervisor (e.g., extended family, reliable and close friend) aged 25 or older with a valid CRC in place with our program. The regular host family will pay the temporary homestay family directly at the rate of \$40 per night for the student's stay. The pickup time should be before dinner time on the last day, otherwise an extra \$40 per student should be added and paid to the temporary homestay family.
-  Host family is responsible to pick up a long-term student from and to the airport upon their arrival and help the student/s check-in for their departure flight.

Short Term Homestay

- If the match is not compatible, the district reserves the right to move the student without notice. At such times, the host family will reimburse the student on a scale of \$50 per night. The student will only pay for the nights spent in the home.
- Homestay Families can host a maximum of 2 students in the same bedroom, and each student must have their own bed and be from the same program.
- Homestay families who do not plan to take vacation during a student's program will be given priority regarding placement.
- Homestay families must provide transportation support to the students for their everyday classes/activities (to and from school) and the weekend or evening outings (to and from home).
- Students must obtain approval from their chaperone, IEP, and host family for any social plans with their friends before proceeding.
- If a student does require temporary accommodation due to a host family's vacation, the host family must pay \$50.00 a night to the temporary Homestay family.

Guidelines for Homestay Fees (Effective July 1, 2024)

1. Nightly Fee

- The nightly fee is \$40.
- When a student arrives to begin the semester on a date other than the first of the month the nightly fee will be applied. 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 \$40 for each night they are away to the temporary family.

2. Arrival Fee

- There is an airport fee of \$100 for **NEW** students joining IEP
 - \$50 for arrival support to be paid to host family together with August and September or January and February homestay fee
 - \$50 for departure support to be paid to host family together with January or June homestay fee
- All students require the host family's support for airport pick up and drop off.

3. Monthly Fee

- The monthly fee is \$1200.00 per month.
- The monthly fee does not change from September to June regardless of whether the student is absent for holidays/vacations/early departures later in the month.
- If a student vacates the host home completely and returns home before the 15th of a month the nightly fee will be paid to the host family.
- If in rare cases a student completes their program before June and returns home, the June fee is not owing to the host family.
- Monthly Fee Payment Process:
 - (A) Most students arrange to have their monthly payments distributed to the host family through the SD40 Accounting Office.
 - (B) We encourage the student to pay homestay fees through SD40. If the student prefers to pay the homestay family directly, they need to consult with IEP and receive approval.
- Homestay fees should be paid one month at a time, in the first week of each month.

4. Summertime 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 School Classes but returning home before August 15th
 - \$1200 for July
 - The August fee will include \$200 plus the nightly fee of \$40 per night.
- For example, students departing on August 5 would pay \$200 + \$160 (\$40 x 4 nights).*
- Students departing in June but returning to Canada to resume school in September
 - \$1200 for June
 - \$400.00 for July and August
 - Students departing at the end of June but returning to Canada at the end of August
 - \$200 for July
 - August Fee will include \$200 plus the nightly fee of \$40 per night.

For example, students arriving back to Canada on August 25 would pay \$200 + \$280 (\$40 x 7 nights).

5. Short term homestay fee

- Students participating in our short term program pay \$50 per night per student.
- Short term homestay payments are distributed to the host family through SD40.

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 CRC must be in process or done prior to student's arrival at your home. If another adult moves into the home at any time, it is the responsibility of the Homestay Family to notify the Homestay Manager and ensure the additional household member(s) complete a criminal record search.

The CRS report must be renewed every three years. The Homestay Manager will contact you if any of your adult household member(s) is up for renewal.

The IEP **only** accepts the criminal record search processed by local police. Criminal Record Search can be completed <https://www.nwpolice.org/pic> for New Westminster residence. *Please select the **Police Vulnerable Sector Check (PVS)** > **Employment (\$78)***

Burnaby Residence can find more information at <http://burnaby.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ViewPage.action?languageId=1&siteNodeId=932&contentId=15343>

Please do not forget to choose the Police Vulnerable Sector Check (PVS) as you are hosting minors.

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 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.

Airport Transportation Support

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. For your students' departure, we expect that the host family will assist the student through the check-in process and say goodbye to them at the security checkpoint.

If the homestay family is unable to transport the student for their arrival or departure, it is the host family's responsibility to find alternative arrangements, and to pay for those arrangements. Please contact IEP if you cannot find alternative 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.

Home Insurance Policy

You are advised to notify your insurance provider that you will have an international student(s) living in your house. Confirm with your insurance company that the policy covers the student's personal belongings and if the student damages your home.

If your student caused willful damage to your home, please contact IEP to review the level and determine the next steps to support our host family.

The international student/IEP is not responsible for ordinary wear and tear. New Westminster School District is not liable for any damage to the home caused by the homestay student.

Homestay Family Vacations and Respite

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 be prebooked and cannot be avoided. Please let the Homestay Manager know at least two weeks in advance (or as soon as possible) of any pending vacation.

Host families are encouraged to include the student in your traveling plan. The host family should provide accommodation (if your student is sharing the room with your children), food, and transportation (excluding the flight ticket). Your student should provide the cost of activities and spending money (e.g., souvenirs, clothing, etc.). The host family should discuss with the student and their parents regarding all the arrangements and trip details before proceeding the traveling plan. The host family should assist the student with filling out the Travel Request Form and required documents and submitting it to IEP for approval.

International students cannot be left unsupervised overnight. 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 years 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. After a temporary homestay family is located and secured, the Homestay Manager will connect the regular host family and the temporary host family. The regular homestay family will need to make direct payment to the temporary homestay family at the rate of \$36 per night for the student's stay. The regular host family should arrange to drop off and pick up your student. The student needs to be picked up before dinner time on the last day, otherwise an additional \$36 needs to be added and paid to the temporary host family.

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 Travel Policy

Any students wishing to travel outside of Greater Vancouver area must first speak to the International Education Program and complete the Travel Request Form. The form and required signed documents should be completed and submitted to IEP to process at least two weeks before the trip.

New Westminster Schools takes student safety seriously. Students may take day trips with their friends to any cities within Greater Vancouver area and return to homestay family in the evening. Students cannot travel independently outside of Greater Vancouver area or overnight without adult supervision and program approval. They may not travel while school is in session without written permission from the natural parent(s) and International Education Program. Any travel that a student undertakes should only occur during school vacation time. If students plan to travel, they must be accompanied by an adult member of their host family, natural family, or an approved adult supervisor and they must be 25 years or older with 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.
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html>

Sleepovers

Students must ask for the host family permission for any sleepover arrangements. It is advised that the host family goes through the following procedure and considerations before giving the approval:

- Host family meets the student's friend in person and gets to know them.
- Student must provide the host family with the friend's (they are going to have sleepover with) name and phone number, their parent's/host family's name, their phone number, and address.
- Host family contacts the other adult family by a phone call to confirm all parties are aware of the arrangement and the other family will be the supervisor while your student is staying with them.
- Students must be of the same gender.
- Students should be in our IEP or a high school student.

It is the host family's judgement and discretion if the arrangement is appropriate and safe to approve. Please contact IEP if you have any questions or concerns.

Curfews

IEP understands that every host family has different family composition, dynamics, and daily routines. IEP respects each family's set up of curfews for their student(s) but requires your curfew times for your student(s) should not be later than the recommended time shown as below:

- **If next day is a school day:**
Aged 14-15: 9pm
Aged 16-18: 10pm
- **If next day is a weekend, Pro-D Day, winter/spring break, or holiday:**
Aged 14: 10pm
Aged 15: 11pm
Aged 16-18: 12am

Curfew may be extended on specific events at the discretion of the host family. The specific events can include a movie night, concert night, school activity, and so on. Please contact IEP if you have any questions or concerns.

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

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 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.

Student Medical Insurance Information

The IEP office assists students with applying for both private medical insurance (guard.me) and BC Medical Services plan (MSP).

If a student becomes ill or injured, the host family makes the judgement and decides which step should follow:

- Your student has a cold and stays at home to recover. Host families can either give over-the-counter medications to them to ease the symptoms or let them rest (please discuss with the natural parents).
- Your student can connect with a mobileDOCTOR on their phone or laptop (see more info below)
- The host family needs to take the student to see a doctor in the clinic or hospital:
 - Student is referred to see a doctor in person by mobileDOCTOR.
 - Student has fever for more than three days.
 - Your student has an injury that requires a doctor's attention, e.g., dislocated arm, sprained ankle, and so on.
 - Your student is sick at the level to require professional medical care
 - Contact your student's natural parent and IEP before proceeding if your student needs to take certain medical procedures (e.g., MRI, CT, surgery, and so on).
 - Student has encountered a major accident, please call 911 and then call our emergency phone number on Page 1 as well as inform your student's natural parent.

The one semester students who are enrolled in our program will receive **guard.me K-12** medical insurance coverage for the entire length of their stay. The full school year students who are enrolled in our program coming to Canada with their study permits, will be covered by **guard.me K-12** medical insurance in the first few months (August – November) when they start their study in New Westminster, and then they will receive **MSP** after three months and **guard.me K-12 PLUS** medical insurance coverage.

Guard.me K-12 and K-12 PLUS International Insurance

All the students will have guard.me international insurance coverage. Please refer to the detailed guard.me policy on the website <https://www.guard.me/> using student guard.me details (policy No. and ID No.). With its health benefits, student can see a doctor in different ways:

Seeing a doctor through mobileDOCTOR

Your student can connect with doctors virtually through mobileDOCTOR service on their phone or laptop. This service only applies to the one semester students for their stay; and the full year students for the first three months. Please note that full year students with guard.me K-12 PLUS (after three months) are not covered by this benefit; instead, they should use MSP to see the doctor in person or virtually.

How to Use the mobileDOCTOR:

- Your student registers at www.guard.me/mobiledoctor (using the information on their guard.me card).

- Your student describes their symptoms (click the 'see the doctor' button. One of their doctors will review the students request and respond in minutes).
- Your student will be connected to the doctor by text, video, or audio chat for their health consultation.
- The doctor will diagnose the student's symptoms and provide prescriptions, as necessary. The prescriptions will be sent to the pharmacy that is close to the student's host family (or student's choice) for pick up.
- Your student might be referred to see a doctor in person if necessary

Seeing a doctor in a walk-in clinic with direct billing

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 for the clinic to invoice Guard Me directly. Please check guard.me website for the most updated information about the clinics that do direct billing with guard.me as there might be changes. The clinics with 'preferred' label are the ones that they can do direct billing with.

J-Von Medical Centre

4468 Beresford Street Burnaby, V5H 0C8

Phone: 7783798299

Seeing a doctor in other Clinics

If a student uses any other public medical clinic, he/she will be expected to pay and then submit the receipt online at www.guard.me. Students can come to the International Office with the receipt and the Financial Manager can assist the student to submit the claim.

****Note: Keep** a copy of your claim and a copy of your receipts. If a student needs treatments such as physiotherapy, chiropractic, and so on, they will need the referral/doctor notes. Otherwise, guard.me might not cover the expense.

Medical Services Plan (MSP)

Full school year students with a valid study permit will receive MSP card after three months. They must always have their card with them.

If the student is sick or has an accident, he or she must present their MSP Care Card 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. The medical plan pays for the health care service directly. There are no receipts issued or required.

Bank Accounts

Please assist your student in opening a bank account immediately if requested by the student. It is advisable to use your own branch. If your student pays the homestay fees directly, they should be encouraged to have a chequing account and to use cheques to pay Homestay fees. Students should be discouraged from carrying large amounts 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 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 possible, please avoid loaning your student money or purchasing items on their behalf.

Visiting Parents

The Homestay Program provides housing for students while they are attending school. Visiting parents should arrange to stay in a local hotel or Airbnb. Families may make private arrangements with the host parents if they would like to and families have space, but it is not required nor expected by the program that the host family must host the natural parents or other family members of their student.

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 any time.

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 and vaping are prohibited.

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
- Do not 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 many 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 strengths 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 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 diverse 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 effective 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.

Household Rules

A careful explanation of the household rules you expect 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. It is important to review the rules together several times later if necessary.

We suggest that you include the following considerations in your rules:

- Your student needs to ask permission from you about any social activities with their friends
- Your student should always be in communication with you about:
 - Where the student is going
 - Who the student is with and their phone number(s)
 - What the student is doing
 - When the student will be home
- Cleaning up after using kitchen, bathroom, and common areas of the house
- Inviting friends
- Sleepovers
- Curfews
- Dinner time
- Shower time
- Quiet time
- Laundry schedule

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. 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 students. 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 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 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 and IEP. 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 do not need guidance on studying, but it is still a good idea to set aside a certain time of day as study time. The student should be provided with a quiet place 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 is all right if he/she needs to be alone for a while each day. Assure the student that you will not 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. 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. Do not 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 is 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 agree on what is most comfortable for you and your family early in the student's stay to minimize initial adjustment difficulties.

In establishing a relationship with your student, affection is a crucial factor. Your new family member may need, or be accustomed to receiving 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. Be considerate and careful about discussing religions with your student. The topic might be sensitive, and the student might feel pressure if they do not agree with you. Your student may want to attend your services or may prefer some quiet time alone. If special arrangements are needed for your student to observe his/her religion in everyday life, try to help work out something satisfactory to your student and appropriate to your family life. Your student will probably enjoy explaining his/her religious holidays and appreciate some recognition by your family of holidays 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. Also, ask what foods they enjoy and take them shopping on occasion. Find a recipe from your student's home country and cooking together with your student will also be a great family activity. It can improve homesickness and culture shock if student experiences any. Remember, the Homestay family provides a variety of nutritional, well-balanced meals three times a day. Food portions should reflect your student's appetite.

Communication

Establishing effective 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 way they express 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 significant 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 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 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, using short sentences with simple and clear words, 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 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 and 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 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 contacting the International Education Program Office regarding any problems that arise. Homestay families are also advised to contact the parents where possible and stay connected 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!