



**Taupo-nui-a-Tia College  
Homestay Family Guidelines**



**Hosting an international student is a rewarding and enjoyable experience for families. This booklet details what is expected of you as the host family and what you can expect from your student.**

#### **On arrival**

When you first meet your student, be open and direct with them. Encourage them to talk about their family, country and schooling. Discuss any cultural differences with them. Encourage them to make new friends by joining sports teams, cultural groups, community groups or pursuing hobbies etc.

#### **Early days**

We will contact you in the first few weeks to ensure everything is OK and to answer any questions or concerns you may have. It often takes two to four weeks for everyone to settle into new daily routines.

Your student is likely to experience culture shock which can last a matter of days or up to three months. Please be patient with your student.

Your student will be given an orientation and introductory booklet. It is a good idea for you to sit down with them in the first few days and go through this. Keep it simple when talking with

your student. You may have to speak slowly and repeat yourself several times. Sometimes it helps to write it down. (Most students have a digital dictionary or translator.)

## **Payments**

We pay by direct credit on a Friday.

**You will need to provide details of your bank account and keep us updated of any changes.**

**Please DO NOT enter into direct payment situations, lend money or act as guarantor for the student.**

## **What the homestay payment covers:**

- ☐ Single furnished room, bedding, desk, wardrobe or chest of draws, reading light, towels and a facecloth
- ☐ Three meals a day (including snack and takeaways)
- ☐ Laundry services
- ☐ Basic toiletries (soap, toilet paper). The student is responsible for all other toiletries including toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo etc.

## **Holiday arrangements**

**Please inform us if you or your student is going away. While they are at secondary school no student can stay in the home without adult supervision even if they are 18 or older.**

If the student is away for a week or longer, we ask you to give the student \$100 per week from the weekly homestay fees as you will not be providing meals during this time.

## **Damage, unpaid bills**

Normal wear and tear is inevitable. Please contact us if you are in doubt.

We advise you to tell your insurance company that you are hosting international students so your coverage is adequate.

## **Telephone**

Most students now use their own phone to call with home. Please check that they have one and that they are not charging calls to your phone. Discuss the time difference with your student and come to an arrangement for making and receiving calls that you can both live with; for example no calls in after 9.30/10.00pm.

## **Internet**

Students now expect to have wireless broadband access for their computer or smart phone. Most host families restrict the download of movies or music as this tends to use up the monthly internet allowance.

The majority of students have their own laptops and we recommend that you do not let them use your computer. **We recommend that there is no internet use after 10.00pm on a school night. Please call us if excessive internet use becomes a problem.**

## **Going out**

Our expectation is that you treat the student as you would expect your own child to be treated if the roles were reversed. The host family must decide on the **time when a student**

**must be home.** Ask your student to leave a contact name and number with you and an estimated time of return.

Teach them how to leave a note with the details on if you are out yourself. Please ensure the student can get home safely from any after-school activities. **You must know where your student is at all times. Ask your student for their mobile number and give them yours.** If they want to attend a party please ask for the phone number of the parents hosting the party and contact them in advance.

### **Student responsibilities**

Students are expected to help in the followings ways:

- ☐ tidying their room and making their bed
- ☐ helping with minor chores such as setting and clearing the dinner table, and doing the dishes after meals.

Be clear from the very beginning of what you expect from them to do. Laundry, toiletries, dirty sheets etc.

### **Participation in family life**

Try to make sure that the student doesn't just live in their room. Where possible invite the student to join in family activities. A student should pay their own way on outings with the family (for example trips to the cinema, etc.) unless you choose otherwise. Make it clear to them what the situation is and how much it will cost. Willingness to join in with the family varies from student to student. Encouragement is the key.

Students must ask your permission before they invite a friend over or to stay the night.

### **Culture shock**

After the initial period of euphoria and excitement at being in New Zealand and having some independence for the first time, many students experience a period of culture shock.

Life in New Zealand may be very different from what the student is used to and coupled with a natural feeling of homesickness, students may experience difficulties in adjusting. They can become introverted, avoiding contact with you and can appear to reject the host family.

For some students this period of culture shock lasts for a few days or sometimes weeks.

Others will experience cycles of culture shock with several highs and lows.

If you suspect that your student is experiencing culture shock then try to provide moral support, offering reassurance and a willingness to listen. Ongoing communication is very important.

Contact us for support and advice too.

Ultimately most students will adjust in time; however, it is the student's responsibility to fit into the host family and New Zealand's culture and not the other way round.

We are here to support you so contact us if you have any concerns about your student.

### **Food/meals**

Teach your student to help themselves to breakfast and lunch and to clean up afterwards. Clear about meal times reminding them what the expectations are for the family.

Find out what foods they prefer and what they can't eat for religious, cultural or medical reasons as we are not always informed of special food requirements. If this becomes an issue please let us know.

Insist that your student notifies you if they are not going to be home for family meals. Have a time set that your student has to phone in by e.g. 4pm, especially on the weekend.

It's also a good idea to take your student food shopping a few times when they first arrive.

They will recognise things that they like.

### **Health**

All students have medical insurance. A copy of their insurance certificate should be taken with them to any medical appointments so claims can be made straight away.

Some students will bring numerous vitamins and medicines from their home country.

Be careful recommending medicines – there may be risks if students mix traditional and Western medication. The school has access to a nurse for non-urgent conditions. Usually the student will refer themselves to this service. The school also has available a trained full-time Guidance Counsellor for any students who are sad or homesick.

### **Smoking**

It is illegal in New Zealand to sell cigarettes and tobacco products to anyone aged under 18. If a student does smoke, please let us know so that we can work with the school and help the student to quit.

### **Drinking/drugs**

Drinking alcohol under the age of 18 is illegal in New Zealand. Drug-taking is also illegal. In the unlikely event that drugs and alcohol are issues please inform us.

### **Bathroom**

Bathroom and toilet habits can be very different. Some cultures stand on the toilet seat for hygiene rather than sit and in some countries toilet paper is not flushed as their systems are unable to cope. Women from many other cultures do not use tampons. Clearly explain your disposal system for used sanitary items. Be upfront about what's expected.

**Don't take it for granted that they know what to do.**

### **Showering**

Show them how to use the shower and where to put their towels. Long showers are common.

When the student first arrives, explain that you wish them to have 5-10 minute showers only.

### **Bedrooms/bedding**

Your student may not be familiar with how to use a bed. Some students come from hot countries where sheets and blankets are not used. Others are used to futon mats on the floor.

Show your student the sheets/blankets/duvet – pull the bed open and show them how to get in.

Help them when changing the sheets and pillow cases for the first few times.

### **Heating**

Students from tropical countries may feel very cold in New Zealand. Advise them to wear more underclothes and wool jumpers in preference to sweatshirts. In the winter encourage your student to join the family in the living room where it will be warm for at least part of every evening. Have extra bedding and a hot water bottle available. (Remember to show them where to find and how to use the hot water bottle.) Teach them how to turn on and off heaters.

### **Transport**

We ask that you take your student to and from school on the first day. Please help your student familiarise themselves with the buses if they are going to be used. Obtain a timetable from the bus company and ensure they understand it.

### **Moving on**

Sometimes things just don't work out. Please don't give up or feel hurt if we move a student. It is always better to part on friendly terms. We try to give two weeks' notice when we move a student, but sometimes this is not possible.

### **Contacting us**

We are here to assist you so please notify us immediately if there is a conflict or difficulty between you and the student. Every effort will be made to resolve the situation.

## **Suggestions for those first few days**

Please spend some time each evening in the student's first week going through these questions with them. If their English is good enough you should give the question sheet to the student and let them ask you the questions, if not then use the questions as discussion points and work through them. Aim to work through one section each night.

Many of the words and ideas in this questionnaire may be new to the student. It may be an idea to allow him/her time to go through the main questions with a bilingual dictionary before you begin.

### **Day One**

1. What do I call you?
2. When can I telephone my family?
3. When can I use the internet?
4. How do I get to and from school?
5. What happens after school?
6. What family rules and procedures do I need to know about?

7. Where can I keep my toiletries?
8. When is the best time for me to have a shower and use the bathroom, in the morning or in the evening?
9. How long may I stay in the shower?

## **Day Two**

1. What do I do with my dirty clothes? Where do I keep them until wash days?
2. Should I wash my own underclothes?
3. Where should I dry any clothes I wash?
4. Where do I put my clothes to be ironed?
5. What times are meals?
6. What would you like me to do at mealtimes? For example:
  - ☐ set the table
  - ☐ clear the table
  - ☐ wash up
  - ☐ dry up.
7. Which food and drink may I help myself to?
8. Which food and drink must I ask first before having?

## **Day Three**

1. What chores am I expected to do daily? For example:
  - ☐ make my bed
  - ☐ keep my room tidy
  - ☐ leave the bathroom clean and tidy.
2. Which bathroom toiletries can I use (shampoo, toothpaste)?
3. What areas of the home are private (parents' bedroom, office)?
4. Where can I store my suitcases?
5. What time should I get up on weekday mornings?
6. What time should I get up on weekends and holidays?
7. What time should I go to bed and turn the lights out on weekdays and weekends?
8. Do I have to ask if I go out?
9. What dates are the birthdays of my host family?

## **Day Four**

1. What is the address for incoming mail?
2. What are my homestay father's likes and dislikes?
3. What are my homestay mother's likes and dislikes?
4. What are my host brothers' and sisters' likes and dislikes?
5. How do I get around?
6. May I use the stereo, television and DVD player?
7. Do you expect me to telephone if I am going to be late home:
  - ☐ from school
  - ☐ from any other outing?
8. What arrangements are there for making lunch
  - ☐ on a school day
  - ☐ at the weekends?

## **Day Five**

1. If I have any problems, who would you like me to go to?
2. May I put pictures and posters on the walls in my bedroom?
3. May I rearrange my bedroom?
4. When can I have friends to stay overnight?
5. When can I invite friends around in the day? (Not opposite sex if the parents are not home.)
6. When can my friends phone me?
7. Is there anything else you would like me to know?

**Have fun and remember talk talk talk to your student.**

**There are no right or wrong rules. You choose what works for you!  
The most important thing is to be clear. Try not to treat them as a guest, but more as a family member.**