

Student Homestay Guidelines

Qualicum School District families are generously sharing their homes with you to help you adjust to your new life in Canada. Both you and your host family have the opportunity to enrich your own lives by learning about new cultures and sharing valuable memories.

Your Homestay family will want to share their Canadian culture with you. They will also want to learn about your home, your family, and your culture. Please remember that you will be a part of their family, which means that you will have to adjust to the way your Homestay family lives and interacts with each other. This may also include having to participate in family outings or having to do your share of the household chores!

A successful homestay experience depends a lot on your attitude and willingness to try new things and your acceptance of cultural differences.

FOOD

Who provides my food?

Your host family will provide your food for every meal.

Who prepares my meals?

Most host parents will prepare your dinner and will expect you to prepare your breakfast and lunch. If you will be preparing these meals yourself, your host parents will show you where they keep all of the items you will need. Your host family will prepare dinner for you every evening. If you need help then you need to ask. If you don't like what is in your lunch, don't throw it away – tell your host parents.

What if I go to a restaurant?

If you go to a restaurant with your host family, they will pay for your meal. However, if you go without your host family, you must pay for your own meal.

What if I am hungry?

When you arrive at your homestay, your host parents will show you where they keep their snacks. Many families will allow you to prepare your own snacks. You may feel uncomfortable at first, but remember that this is your home. If you ever feel that you are not getting enough food to eat, tell your host parents first.

If you still have the same problem after you tell the host family, contact the Homestay Coordinator.

What if I have dinner plans with my friends?

If you make plans to have dinner with friends instead of eating with your family, tell your host parents in advance. This will help them plan their meals.

Will my family prepare dinner for me every night?

Your family will prepare dinner for you every evening. Occasionally, your family may find that they must be away from home at dinner time. They will leave a prepared meal for you. Also, on some occasions, your family may take you to a restaurant for dinner. They will pay for your meal when you are eating with them.

Will I like the food that my host family prepares?

Eating Canadian food is an important part of your cultural experience. If you are served food that you do not like or you cannot eat for religious or health reasons, tell your host parents immediately. They will appreciate your honesty. Otherwise, try to keep an open mind and try new things.

ILLNESS AND EMERGENCY

What should I do if I get sick?

If you feel sick during school hours, tell your school counsellor.

If you feel sick while you are at home, your host family will take you to their family physician or a walk-in clinic. If it is an emergency then they will take you to either the Urgent Care Clinic or the Hospital.

If you are seeking any medical treatment, remember to take your health insurance card with you.

What should I do if I have an emergency?

• If you are involved in an accident, or some other serious incident, and you need to get assistance after hours, call Mr. Pepper, or Sandie Wassbauer

You must always carry an emergency card. Make certain that it is completely filled out with your host family's name, address, and telephone number. Have your homestay help you with this.

RESPONSIBILITIES

What are my responsibilities to my host family?

- **Respect house rules.** One of the best ways to show respect for your host family is to abide by the family house rules and guidelines. These guidelines apply regardless of your age. For instance, if you are 21 years old and your family asks you to be home by 10:00 p.m., you must be home by 10:00 pm.
- **Respect your family's schedule.** Your host family will have their own lives, including work, family, school, and hobbies. **If you want to go somewhere, you should ask your family at least three days in advance.**
- **Respect your family's property.** **REMEMBER that you are responsible for what you damage.**
- **Always tell them where you are.** You must carry a cell phone with you at all times and be able to text with your host family. This is for your safety. They also need to know where you are in case there is an emergency in your country and you need to be contacted.

What are my host family's responsibilities to me?

- **Food.** Your host family will provide you with three meals per day, seven days per week.
- **Housing.** You will be provided with a bed, a desk, and many other items to help you feel comfortable in your new home.
- The homestay family is also responsible for providing a safe place to live.

If you feel, at any time, that any of your host family's obligations are not being met, please contact the Homestay Coordinator

RULES

What rules will my family have?

As a member of your new family, you will be expected to abide by the same rules as any other member of the family.

The following rules apply to all students in homestay:

- You will be expected to call your host parents when you will be arriving late. They will worry if you do not return home on time, and they could call the police.
- You will be expected to ask in advance if you want to stay over at a friend's home, or bring a guest home, so your family can plan for it.
- You are expected to clean up after yourself (includes bathroom and kitchen) and clean **your OWN room**. **DO NOT LEAVE ANY FOOD IN YOUR BEDROOM OR IN YOUR BEDROOM GARBAGE.**
- Follow your family's policies on telephone usage. You are required to use an **International Telephone Card** when you make long distance calls from their home phone.
- Follow your family's rules on internet usage.

- It is very important to respect your family's rules regarding water usage.
- Most families have rules regarding how long family members should be in the bathroom. If your family has such rules, they will discuss them with you.
- One rule all families agree on is that students should feel free to talk with their host parents about any problems or concerns they have. While this may be uncomfortable at first, you will find that the family appreciates such honesty, and it helps to encourage better family relationships. **Open communication is critical to a successful homestay experience.**

HOMELIFE

Will I have a curfew?

Curfews depend on your host family's preference as well as your age. If you are a junior student, your family may give you an earlier curfew than if you were a senior student.

Can my friend spend the night at my homestay with me?

You must ask your host family if your friend can spend the night. If your host family and your friend's host family both say yes, then your friend may spend the night. Your friend must be of the same sex as you.

May I buy a bicycle?

If you plan to use or buy a bicycle, you should be aware of traffic rules and safety. You must observe all traffic rules, and you must wear a **bicycle helmet**.

Will I get along with my family?

Here are a few guidelines to help you communicate with your family:

- **Be specific.** Whenever your host parents ask you a question, be truthful and say what you really feel or what you want. Americans expect you to do this.
- **Tell them when you do not understand.** Your host family wants you to understand. If you do not understand, ask someone in your host family. At first, you may have to communicate by writing, gestures, or by using a dictionary. Soon, you will be able to communicate more fluently.
- **Talk about problems.** If you have a problem, it is very important to discuss it. If, after talking with your host parents, you feel you still have a problem, or if you are uncomfortable speaking to your family about the problem, contact your school counsellor who will contact the homestay coordinators.
- **Speak up.** Talk about yourself and your home country. Americans are curious and want to know more about who you are. Do not be afraid of making mistakes with your English.

What if I have a disagreement with my host family?

If you have a disagreement with your family, first try to talk with them yourself. If you are uncomfortable, talk to someone in the Homestay Office. The Homestay Office will help you to resolve the issue.

Who will drive me to school?

You will either catch a school bus, walk, or ride a bike. Our school district provides bus service for students who live more than 4.8 km from the school. Your host family may choose to drive you, but students are expected to bus, bike or walk. Your Host family will provide transportation to some activities.

What if I decide to stay at school later than usual?

Call your host parents as soon as you know how late you will be staying. If they are not able to pick you up at the time you want to leave, you must find another way to get home. Parents cannot always accommodate last-minute schedule changes.

When can I take a shower or bath?

You should ask your host family what time they prefer you to take a shower or bath. **Please keep your showers to 10 minutes or less.**

How will I wash my clothes?

You may wash your clothes or your host family may wash them for you. If you will wash them yourself, your host parents will show you how to use the washer and dryer. Also, they will provide laundry soap and any other items you need. Remember to have a full load of clothing before you use the washer. Also remember to wash your bed-sheets weekly.

Where should I keep my valuables?

Even though you should feel comfortable in your new home, it is wise to keep your valuables in a safe place. If you have a lot of CASH, then have your host family take you to the bank to deposit it. The ISP Program and homestay family is not responsible for money or valuables lost.

Who provides my toiletries?

Toiletries are personal hygiene items, such as shampoo, toothpaste, soap, and any other items that you regularly use. You are responsible for purchasing your own toiletries. Your family will provide towels, blankets, sheets, and many other non-toiletry items.

What if I decide to stay longer at the same family?

You must discuss with your homestay family first. If your family agrees to extend your stay, you will be responsible for paying them directly for homestay.