

INTERNATIONAL Homestay Family Handbook



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Foreword

The Sheldon College International Education Program is proud to partner with homestay families in delivering an unparalleled educational experience to young people from across the globe. Our homestay families are integral to the success of the program and we appreciate your willingness to open your hearts and homes to our visiting students.

The International Education team are always ready to assist you in your role as host parents. This booklet is one of the ways we try to assist you. The comments and suggestions are designed to apply to students from any country in the world. However, because the majority of our overseas students come from Asian countries there is an emphasis on Asian cultural norms and expectations.

This handbook only addresses cultural essentials. It is important for you to do your own research – find out as much as you can about your student's country of origin. This will enrich your knowledge, increase your understanding of the environment your student has come from, and facilitate more meaningful communication.

Please do not hesitate to contact the International Education team if you have any questions or concerns before, during or after your hosting period. Above all, enjoy the experience of sharing your home, your family and your community with a young person from another culture.

Best wishes,

Mrs Rebecca Anthony

International Education Program Manager



“Hosting international students gives you a wonderful glimpse into different cultures, while forcing you to think more deeply about your own.”

MRS REBECCA ANTHONY, SHELDON COLLEGE

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Key Staff

International Education Program



Mrs Rebecca Anthony

International Education
Program Manager

Rebecca is responsible for recruitment of new homestay families, maintaining connections with existing families and supporting host households while students are visiting. She manages the homestay database, processes application forms and provides orientation resources for new host families. Rebecca will conduct regular inspections of all homestay dwellings to ensure they meet our high standards.

.....
Email: r.anthony@sheldoncollege.com

Phone: (07) 3206 5528



Mr Gordon Cunningham

Quality, Risk and Compliance
Officer

Gordon is involved in the home stay program from a Risk and Compliance perspective. Gordon will also be involved with long-term students in homestay, making sure they comply with all of the conditions of their student visa.

.....
Email: g.cunningham@sheldoncollege.com

Phone: (07) 3206 5588

Where Can You Find Us?

The International Office is located in SA6, directly opposite the Administration carpark.



WHAT IS HOMESTAY?

Homestay is when an international student pays to live with a family in the community who provides for their physical, emotional and academic needs. Sheldon College has a code of ethics document that defines the roles and obligations of host families as well as those of the students who live with them. It is a condition of participation in the Homestay Program that host families sign an agreement to meet the expectations of the College and work within prescribed guidelines.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE HOMESTAY FAMILY?

There is a section later in the handbook devoted to roles and responsibilities. There are, however, some general issues, which are important to raise.

Emphasis is placed on the importance of the whole family being involved in supplying a warm, supportive, welcoming environment. Children in the host family may initially be unsettled at the introduction of another person into the family as existing family dynamics change. This also works in reverse when your student leaves. Encourage children to interact with your host student, as it not only gives them the opportunity to learn more about another culture, but also helps the student improve their English. One of the most frequent requests from overseas parents and students is "to have a child the same age in the family".

Sometimes, as well as trying to adjust to a different culture, students may be coping with the onset of adolescence without the support of family and close friends. The concept of the host family as an extended family, offering the patience and understanding required during this developmental stage, is important. Some families may not yet have experienced adolescence with their own children. Many behaviours that are interpreted as negative or culturally different are merely normal behaviours associated with adolescence. Sheldon College staff are committed to helping you enjoy having a new family member and minimising difficulties that may arise.

We suggest you treat your host son or daughter the same as your own children, however this always needs to be in association with the homestay rules. Sometimes there may be situations that are difficult to deal with such as personality clashes, cultural clashes or difficulty adjusting to a new environment. Attempt to deal with these situations openly. If the situation worsens, or you are not confident you can deal with it yourself, please don't hesitate to contact the International Education Program Manager. We are always available to discuss any issue that arises, whether you deem it to be serious or not. Please remember you are not doing this alone. There is a support system in place to assist you.

We also encourage the students to speak with their host family about any problems they may have. Sometimes, because of different cultural backgrounds, students find it difficult to talk directly with the host family. Australian culture favours direct communication as opposed to Asian cultures that favour indirect communication.

Other students don't want to be seen as 'complaining'. We encourage students to come to our office or contact their agent about any problems they may have if they feel they cannot speak directly with their host parents.

HOW LONG DOES A STUDENT STAY WITH A FAMILY?

Students come to Australia for varying lengths of time. Study tour groups stay from one to eight weeks. Study Abroad placements may be for one term or one semester. Long-term international enrolments may stay with a family for several years.

GREETINGS

When greeting your student for the first time shake their hand and introduce yourself. Do not kiss or hug the student as they are not used to such intimacy even among their own families, and this may cause embarrassment.

SPECIAL THINGS TO DO WHEN THEY ARRIVE

There will be a lot of excitement and anxiety on the day a new student arrives. Students will be very tired, possibly suffering jet lag and culture shock, so keep the first day fairly quiet, and limit information to the bare necessities. A study conducted by the Premiers Department in Queensland in 2007 showed the most important thing to newly arriving international students was a warm welcome.

Students choose to study abroad for many reasons, but all of them have some level of anxiety about where they will be staying and what their host family will be like. As soon as students see a welcoming face and discover their host family is kind, they are relieved and happy. This first interaction is so important. Please go out of your way to make your student feel welcome and wanted. Some things to do on arrival may include:

- Take the student to their own room. This helps them feel they have a space of their own and fulfils that very basic need that all of us have regarding a safe place to live and sleep. Some welcoming items in the room show that you want to make their stay with you a positive one – flowers or stuffed toy etc.
- Show them the rest of the house and indicate which areas they are free to use.
- Make sure the student is comfortable with the names of family members and has a name to use when addressing host parents. (Decide what you want to be called, and then talk about this with your student). Writing names down will help your student understand what you are saying. Just as we may find their names difficult to understand or pronounce at first, so it is for them. It is an uncomfortable sensation wanting to speak to someone or get their attention and not remembering what to call them.
- Introduce the family pets and be aware of the fact that some overseas students may not be used to animals in close proximity. If your student is afraid of the animals, you could introduce them to each other gradually. In most instances it does not take very long for a student to become comfortable with your pet.
- If your student has difficulty understanding the family routine, writing out some basic information may help. For example, what time the bus leaves, what time meals are served, washing day etc.
- Demonstrate to students how to use both toilet and shower. Customs may vary across cultures. Make sure you explain to your student to place the toilet paper in the toilet and flush it away. Many countries have a basket beside the toilet for toilet paper. Washing in some countries consists of splashing water from a kind of open tank over the body, soaping down, then rinsing off in the same fashion. (The bathroom floor gets very wet).
- If you have tank water and a septic tank, you will need to be very clear about water usage and disposal of hygiene products.
- Queensland often has water restrictions and explaining this will help students understand why they need to have quick showers.

GIVING GIFTS

Most students will give a gift to your family. Please accept this as part of their custom. If you wish you can give them something, but this is not obligatory. You may wish to give them a small gift such as a stuffed Australian animal or Australian flag.

COMMUNICATION

The students' English ability will vary depending on their country of origin and their age. Communicating in English as a second language can be mentally exhausting. Be aware that it is exhausting, but don't make this an excuse for not communicating or allowing your student to remain alone in the bedroom for long periods of time.

Smiles are universal – a great deal can be said with a smile, a gesture, or body language which suggests relaxation, warmth and welcome.

On arrival, students will appear to have very little knowledge of English. This is for two reasons:

- They have often had more exposure to the rules of English grammar, than to the spoken form of the language.
- They will find our accent and our idioms extremely difficult.

International students may understand the written word better than the spoken word. It takes a while for a student's ear to attune to our vowel sounds. Many of them have had American teachers, or teachers for whom English is a second language. You may find there is an increase in understanding verbal communication after about 2-3 weeks.

Use simple English and short sentences. Speak slowly and clearly. Stress key words. Avoid Australian idioms and slang for at least six months, then explain the expression you use. Don't hesitate to repeat or rephrase. Remember:

- **Speak slowly and clearly.**
- **Do not go into long explanations.**
- **Do not use broken English – your student has learned standard English structures and will not recognise your attempts to speak like foreigners.**
- **Do not shout or speak louder than usual. Your student has difficulty with comprehension, not hearing.**
- **They may consider it impolite to talk about themselves or volunteer personal information.**
- **They would probably be silent for fear of saying the wrong thing.**

Get hold of a bilingual dictionary – paper or electronic. There are some great Apps for translations, be aware though that not all of them are 100% accurate. Utilise these tools – they can be a lot of fun and you may learn a few words in another language.

Avoid negative questions. If you ask, "Don't you like beetroot?" your student will probably answer "Yes" when in reality they hate beetroot.

Be aware that body language differs from culture to culture. For example, beckoning with the forefinger may be quite offensive. Eye-contact with a superior may be considered impolite.

Australians have become very tactile people. We like to hug, to touch, etc. For people from some cultures this may be highly offensive. Keep a distance until you can discuss such issues. Touching of female students by male family members may provoke a response such as anxiety and is not considered appropriate. You may think you are just being friendly or affectionate, but this can be misinterpreted and cause embarrassment for both parties.

WHAT HOST FAMILIES NEED TO PROVIDE

Students require their own bedroom with a study desk, desk lamp and comfortable bed. If the room does not have a built-in wardrobe a cupboard and chest of drawers must be provided. The host family also provides sheets, towels and bedcovers for the student. Sheets are to be changed once per week. Long term students are not permitted to share a bedroom.

Host families must provide a secure lockable cupboard, drawer or other area for storage of money, passport or valuables.

Some students may be uncomfortable on a soft mattress. Talk about this with your student - if there is a problem, it may be possible to alleviate the situation by laying wooden slats across the mattress base. You may also need to demonstrate how to sleep between the sheets.

The host family is responsible for ensuring the student gets up in the morning and gets to school. If your student is ill, please help them make an appointment to see the doctor. The College must be notified if your student does not attend College due to illness. Please call Student Services on 3206 5542.

The homestay family is responsible for the student's laundry. It is your responsibility to ensure students have clean and ironed uniforms and are suitably presented to attend school. Older students may be asked to iron their own clothes.

It is appropriate for students to help with normal household chores such as setting the table and doing dishes. Students must keep their own bedroom clean and tidy and must ask permission from the homestay parents before any materials, e.g. posters, can be attached to any surfaces in the bedroom. Any items that might offend others are not to be displayed.

Students are not to be left unsupervised overnight or for long periods of time, regardless of their age.

Students are to respect and abide by the "family rules". All students sign a homestay behaviour agreement. If your student is not following the school homestay guidelines, please contact the International team at the College.

Students may also be very sensitive to insects and spiders, and often react very badly to mosquito bites. Please make adequate arrangements to exclude insects from the bedroom.

MEALS

Host families are required to provide three (3) meals a day for homestay students as well as a snack for recess and afternoon tea. One meal a day must consist of meat/protein, vegetables and rice/noodles. Please also have plenty of fruit available for them to help themselves to at any time. A packed school lunch and morning tea including a drink and drink bottle is required for school days. If the student wants to buy tuck shop this is permitted, and the student can pay for this.

Students must be present for all meals unless prior arrangements have been made with the homestay family. Students are expected to notify the host family if they will be late for a meal or something unexpected prevents them from being home.

It is polite to refuse a second helping so please offer more than once. If you are dining out, we expect that you pay for the students' meal.

DO I HAVE TO COOK SPECIAL FOOD?

Families need to be sensitive to the fact that what we eat, the way we prepare it and the way we eat it, may be unfamiliar to your student. Ask what their favourite foods are or take them shopping with you. There are many Asian supermarkets in Sunnybank, Darra and the Valley. Maybe you could give your cooking a lift by trying recipes from their country.

Many international students like rice. When you cook rice, make double the quantity. Rice is easy to heat in the microwave or your student may prefer it cold.

Many Asian students will not have tasted lamb. They find our cakes very sweet but generally like them. Encourage them to be brave and to try lots of different things – have a BBQ, give them Tim Tams and the mandatory Vegemite on toast!

IMPORTANT OCCASIONS

It is an expectation that you will familiarise yourself with your host student's birthday or other dates of importance and celebrate appropriately. Mark important dates on your calendar.

TRANSPORT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are required to participate in the co-curricular activities of the College. Host families are expected to assist students with transport arrangements so they can take full advantage of the co-curricular program. This may entail getting a student to the College before school or picking them up after school for practice or dropping a student to school on Saturday morning for school sport or to catch a bus. There may also be occasions when a student may need to be taken to activities such as debating or music rehearsals. Twice a week for practice or rehearsal and once on the weekend is considered reasonable by the College. If you are unable to meet this obligation, please ask friends or family members to assist you.

Please note short term students are not permitted to take a bus to and from the College unless travelling with your own children.

LOCAL AREA TOUR

Please take your host student on an orientation tour of the Redlands and its environs. Take this opportunity to point out facilities such as medical centres, chemist shops, supermarkets and shopping facilities. Also show your student the location of bus stops and train stations and help them obtain timetables for public transport and go cards. Seek out fun filled activities to do on the weekend that showcase Australian life. A trip to the lighthouse for fish and chips or a day trip to Stradbroke Island are some great options.

WHAT DO I DO IF THEY GET SICK?

International students have private medical cover prior to their arrival. They pay for treatment and are reimbursed approximately 85% of basic medical expenses.

In medical matters treat your student as you would treat a member of your own family. If in doubt, consult a doctor. At the beginning of the stay, students often have upset stomachs and headaches as they adjust to our food and water. (See section on food). The College has a sick bay in Student Services. Students may attend the sick bay during College hours. If Student Services assesses a student and decides they must go home, they will contact you and make arrangements for you to collect your student.

International students must meet specific attendance criteria to maintain their student visa. The College reserves the right to request a doctor's certificate from students who have poor attendance records due to illness or who display frequent absenteeism. If your student is absent for more than one day due to illness, please ensure they have a doctor's certificate. Please call Student Services on 3206 5542 to advise of absence due to illness or other reasons. Please use your student's name as it appears in their passport as this is how it is recorded in the College system.

HOMESICKNESS

Students take a few days to a week to adjust to the Australian way as it is very different for them. They may suffer cultural shock and feel overwhelmed and disorientated. Please offer support and reassurance, however if you feel that you cannot handle the situation, please contact us as soon as possible to discuss. In some cases, we may have to move the student. Please remember that this can happen to any student and is not a sign that you have done anything wrong.

LEGAL INSURANCE

It is a good idea to check with the student's education agent regarding what activities your student can and cannot do. You may find that some activities you might like to do with your student such as abseiling, parachuting, mountaineering or 4WD'ing are not allowed under the terms of the student's insurance policy. For activities such as boating or horse-riding we need to obtain written permission from the student's parents.

INSURANCE FOR THE HOMESTAY FAMILY

Each host family must ensure they have adequate insurance cover for their home by checking with their own Insurance Company. This is compulsory. There are two types of insurance that affect an International student in Homestay (referred to as a 'non-related resident'):

- Public Liability Insurance
- Contents Insurance

The family should start with their own Insurance Company. When speaking to the Insurance Company, ask for confirmation of the information from a Supervisor or Team Leader (Home Underwriter Division). Keep a copy of the name of the Supervisor, the date and time of the call. If the Insurance Company is unsure when referring to contents insurance for students, ask about their Shared House Contents Insurance Policy. This is advice from the Insurance Ombudsman of Australia.

Further Information:

- The family home is either their Own Home or it is a Rental Property
- Public Liability Insurance - Own Home

All non-related residents are covered for Public Liability Insurance. This is a compulsory part of any mortgage on a property and is standard. Families who own their property outright need to check that they have continued their home insurance cover. If a student is injured and it is the fault of the Homestay family - (fell through floorboards, wet floor left by Homestay family) - the family is negligent, and the student is fully covered. If a student is careless, i.e. changing a light bulb and gets electrocuted, the Homestay family has no liability obligation and the student is still covered for Public Liability Insurance.



*Homestay families
benefit from
cultural exchange.*

The experience is enriching and rewarding
for both students and hosts alike.



PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE – RENTAL PROPERTY

As a Tenant Homestay Host there is an obligation to advise the landlord of who will reside in the home. If this is not done, then the landlord's insurance provider may not cover students for Public Liability. If you are renting your home and have a host student, please provide written permission from the landlord to have a host student.

CONTENTS INSURANCE – OWN HOME

Students can ask their Host to check if they can be covered for theft of their belongings. Some Insurance Companies will do this under the following conditions.

The name of the student is listed on the Home Contents Policy. This can mean a higher premium in some circumstances depending upon the Insurance Company involved. Each time a student moves out and another student moves in, the Policy has to be changed.

CONTENTS INSURANCE – RENTAL PROPERTY

There is no cover unless the Homestay family has a Contents Policy and has listed their student's name on the contents policy of the home.

BLUE CARDS

The Commission for Children and Young People have made it compulsory for anyone hosting children less than 18 years that they must obtain a Blue Card. Everyone over 18 years living in the home or staying overnight on a regular basis must have a Blue Card. Please advise the International Education Program Manager of your Blue Card number if you have one or arrange with her to get one. If your household members change you must notify the International Education Office immediately.

SECURITY

Warn your student not to carry large sums of money. Australia is often considered to be a very safe place, but this is not always the case.

Encourage your student to take moderate sums of money to the College. There is no need to take more than is necessary for daily purchases. We also give this advice at the student's orientation.

DAMAGE

Occasionally damage to property by the student may occur. In the event of such an incident please make a report in writing to the International Team within 24 hours. Please also include photographs of the damage.

Regardless of whether the damage has been willful and deliberate or accidental, students will be required to contribute to repairing or replacing damaged property.

Homestay families are required to take any foreseeable action to prevent damage from occurring. E.g. waterproof mattress protectors, removal of fragile items from student's reach etc.

DO I DO ANYTHING WITH THEIR PASSPORT OR VISA?

Please ensure these documents are kept in a safe place and both you and your student know where they are. They are to be kept current by the student. In some cases, agents or parents may request passports be held by the College. If your student's visa is due to expire, we can offer advice about renewal.

GOING OUT

Students in homestay wishing to make special arrangements overnight, for weekends or holidays taking them away from their host family (**no matter what their age**) must have permission from the College to do so. This is a Department of Immigration requirement.

The Department of Immigration requires a student under 18 to be supervised by an adult over 21. **ALL CONTACT DETAILS** must be provided to the host family and the International Education office. These details must include:

- **The name of the supervising host.**
- **An address.**
- **A contact phone number (a mobile number alone is not sufficient).**
- **Travel arrangements.**

Permission for overnight absence will not be given until all this information has been submitted to this office.

Students are requested to submit this information by Thursday for weekend absences.

During the week all students are expected to go straight home from Sheldon College to their host family. **If prior arrangements** have been made that a student will not be straight home from Sheldon College, they would be expected to be home by 6.00pm at the latest (depending on times of co-curricular activity commitments). "Prior arrangement" means details have been organised the day before and not left until the afternoon in question. Please advise us if your student is failing to come home directly from Sheldon College without your permission.

If your student is to attend a function organised by the College, you will always receive written notification and be required to return signed acknowledgement.

On the weekend (Friday and Saturday nights only) students may want to go to the city, shopping, or to the movies, etc. It is an expectation that you are aware of the arrangements for getting to the venue and returning home. We are committed to ensuring our students' safety and for this reason require adequate arrangements are in place for them getting home. Students are not permitted to travel alone after dark. You may need to collect your student from a venue or double check they are travelling in a group. All arrangements must be adhered to and you must be notified of any changes to such arrangements. Please negotiate a suitable curfew with your student. A guideline for your information would be prior to 10pm.

Students under 16 are legally defined as "minors". We have a particular duty of care for these students. Students under 16 must be home by 9pm on Friday or Saturday night. **Under no circumstances are these students permitted to be alone on public transport after dark.**

Missing a bus or train is not a good excuse for being late. Students must ensure they are at the station or bus stop in plenty of time to catch the scheduled transport.

Some students over 18 think the homestay guidelines do not apply to them. If a student over 18 remains in homestay they must observe the homestay rules as set out in this booklet. Students sign a homestay agreement acknowledging they understand these conditions and are prepared to observe them. If the College believes they cannot continue to provide homestay arrangements for a student because of poor behaviour, the enrolment of the student will be reviewed.

If you have any concerns or are not sure of the correct procedure, please contact the International Education Program Manager. Contact details are on the front page of the booklet.

DO I ASK THEM TO COME TO CHURCH WITH ME?

You can ask if your student would like to attend church. They may be Christian, although, in the case of students from most Asian countries, this is unlikely. Discuss the matter as openly as their language level will allow. Some non-Christian students like to go to church for the cultural or social experience. Others much prefer to stay at home. Joining your Church Youth Group may be a way for your student to make new friends.

Your student may have religious observances that you need to respect. Please contact the College if you need assistance locating relevant churches, temples or places of worship.

SCHEDULES AND SIGHT-SEEING

Short term students will have a detailed schedule and generally weekends will be spent with the host families. Long term students may have their own plans for the weekend but we ask that you include them in your plans and take them on outings with you.

You are not expected to take them to expensive places but they may wish to go to theme parks and you are permitted to share this expense with them. Remember that even small things are interesting to visiting students as it is a unique experience. Walking the dog might be new. Other activities may include College sport, barbecues, shopping, flea markets, picnics, the local park, art gallery and library.

Tell the students what you have planned rather than giving them too much choice.

SUGGESTED WEEKEND ACTIVITIES:

1. Star-gazing. Point out the Southern Cross
2. Beach walking
3. Mount Tambourine
4. BBQ by the water
5. Cook or bake together
6. Raby Bay or Manly for fish and chips on the shore
7. Local markets
8. 10 pin bowling or try skating
9. Fishing
10. Montville and Maleny
11. Camping
12. Asian restaurant so they can show you their style of food
13. Ask your students to cook for you
14. A bush walk
15. A swim at the Gold Coast

APPROPRIATE ATTIRE, BEHAVIOUR AND LANGUAGE

Students of both sexes will be advised it is inappropriate to walk around the house partially clad. Females specifically are not to wear short shorts or skirts, revealing tops or underwear only around the house (or when they are going out). Females will also be advised they may not sunbathe topless etc.

Host family members are also asked to observe this dress code. This may seem an obviously unnecessary request, however, in relation to child protection legislation we are required to make students and families aware of potentially provocative situations and demonstrate we have taken steps to minimise risk.

Similarly, host family members are requested not to touch a student in places that could make the student uncomfortable. Do not touch a student anywhere on the torso or face. Do not invite students to sit on your lap or other similar actions, as they may not know how to refuse politely and may be confused about what is culturally permissible. You may be intending to be playful or just affectionate, however this may result in a situation that is uncomfortable and embarrassing for everyone. We also speak to students about this issue. We are not saying if you have a student in tears that you cannot hug them and try to comfort them. We are merely trying to make you aware of potentially sensitive situations.

Think about what you say in front of your student and how it may sound. Some students have reported to us that their host family has spoken about them to other people while they have been in the room or in earshot. The comments were perceived as negative and the students felt hurt. Also be mindful of language that may be perceived as overly familiar, for example telling a student they look "sexy" could give them the wrong message or make them feel uncomfortable. Do not swear or yell at students. Please also see the College policy on bullying and harassment in the diary excerpt.

INTERNET AND COMPUTER USAGE

It is compulsory for families to have internet connection in order to host long term students. Please note that as per the handbook the College will not be held responsible for any costs or contracts. The College has an Acceptable Computer Use for Students policy.

Sheldon College Acceptable Use Policy. This can be found in your student's diary. Students are not permitted to use Sheldon College computers until this policy is signed by the student and the homestay parent/guardian. The same policy applies to computer/internet use in the homestay. International students may wish to spend a lot of time on the internet. Most will arrive with their own laptop computer.

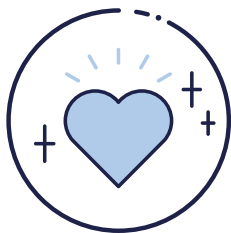
It has been our experience in the past that students who are up late using the internet or playing movies/games are tired when they are at school. Some students have fallen asleep at their desk. This is not only disrespectful to the teacher, but gives the wrong message to other students. While students are asleep at their desk they are not learning. Don't forget your student is here on a **student visa**.

Students are permitted to do school-work or assignments on their computers. This is not an issue and this is not what we are trying to regulate. When a student is using the computer to watch movies or play games, this is when we become concerned. You will know by your student's output whether or not the computer is being used appropriately. Offer to look over your student's assignment to check language usage and content. If they cannot produce anything and they have told you they have been doing homework for the last 2 hours perhaps you need to monitor homework more closely. Every now and then check what your student is doing on the computer. The computer will be in a family area and this should facilitate monitoring. If the internet or computer is being used in the student's bedroom the door will be open and the monitor will be in full view. Please be actively involved in ensuring your student understands the homework assigned.

If there are difficulties, encourage your student to talk with their subject teacher or make a note in their diary.

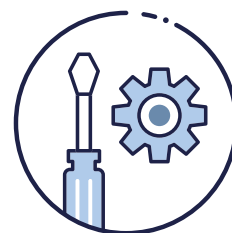


Orientation Checklist



INTRODUCTIONS AND PERSONAL NEEDS

- Names: preferred name – student and host
- Host family introduction
- Household pets
- Food preferences, likes and dislikes, breakfast choice, allergies
- Hobbies and interests
- Occasions to remember, e.g. student's birthday
- Other needs, e.g. spiritual, medical, cultural



HOUSEHOLD FACILITIES AND FEATURES

- Household entry, keys, locks and security
- Student's bedroom: storage, electrical sockets, fans/heaters/air conditioning, window locks and curtains/blinds, sheets and bedding, keeping things tidy
- Bathroom: how to use, timings, lock, toilet, water consumption, hygiene, fresh towels
- Kitchen: utensils, food storage, preparing food, snacks
- Shared spaces, TV and entertainment
- Garden and outdoor equipment



COMMUNICATION

- Asking questions and discussing issues
- Family contact numbers
- Staying in contact
- School and emergency contact numbers
- Where to find information
- Getting a mobile/buying mobile phone credit
- Home internet and telephone use



HOUSEHOLD ROUTINES

- Meal times
- School schedule
- Bedtime
- Laundry
- Cleaning
- Helping with chores
- Shopping
- Transport

Topics to discuss with your student.

Please note, some of these activities do not apply to younger students and Study Tour students.



HOUSE RULES

- Household etiquette, e.g. using mobile phones during family time
- Acceptable behaviour
- Privacy
- Supervision
- Friends and overnight visits
- Curfew and noise
- Personal items and spaces that are off-limits



SAFETY OUTSIDE THE HOME

- Travel
- High risk activities
- Driving
- Evenings out and curfew
- Personal safety
- Sun safety
- Beach safety
- Staying in contact and emergencies



SAFETY AT HOME

- Smoke alarms
- Electrical safety
- Evacuation plan
- Cybersafety
- Swimming pool safety
- Sports and play equipment
- First aid and emergencies
- Breakages and damage



LOCAL AREA ORIENTATION

- Local map, address and directions from home to main points of interest
- Getting to and from school
- Shops and currency
- Bank, post office
- Chemist and medical facilities
- Library
- Public transport, travel cards and timetables
- Things to do nearby

Information sourced from Queensland Department of Education International: <https://eqi.com.au/PDFs/homestay-handbook.pdf>

EDUCATION AGENTS

Sheldon College, actively recruits students from countries overseas. This is done through education agencies which may have an Australian office, or through agents in the target countries. Some students will have an agency appointed counsellor during their stay. Counsellors assist the College and the student. Because we deal with a number of different agencies, and because these agencies may have different expectations, there will occasionally be conflicting requirements of the students. If in doubt please call the College for clarification.

If your student has an in-country agent they may contact you. Become acquainted with their expectations, standards and policies. Never be reluctant to discuss a home-related matter with the agent, as they are there to help you and the student. The agent is particularly helpful if translation is required.

PAYMENT

The homestay payment is \$70.00 per night for long term students and \$70.00 per night for study tour students. This is paid directly into a nominated account or may be credited against College tuition fees. If payments are to be credited to a College account we must have this instruction in writing. Payments are made at the end of each month in arrears. For long term students the payment is processed on the first working day after the end of each calendar month. For study tour students the payment is made on the day after the tour departs. It takes approximately 24 hours for funds to be transferred into accounts at most financial institutions. Please provide your banking details in writing to the Manager of the International Education Program.

It is a requirement that study tour students be driven to and from the College.

If a student remains with a host family during the April holidays, mid-year break or September/October holidays Sheldon College will continue to make homestay payments. If the student returns home for holidays the homestay payment is \$35.00 per night if the room is kept available for their return.

Host families must notify the International Education Program Manager in writing or by email if their student is remaining with them during the holidays or travelling home. Notification of departure and arrival dates is required. If this is not received 10 days before the end of the month it will be assumed your student has returned home. Adjustments will not be processed until the next payment period. Please ensure we have your most recent email address.

If a student returns home for the holidays you may ask them to pack up their belongings and clear their room. Please ensure the student leaves the room in the same clean condition it was in when they arrived. It would be appreciated if you could allow the student to leave their belongings in an area that is out of your way, for example in a garage or spare room etc. If this is a problem, please bring the luggage to the College and we will make alternative arrangements.

When a student vacates your home, any belongings that are left behind should be brought to the College. If students fail to make arrangements for collection after 30 days the items will be donated to a local charitable organisation.

ENGLISH TUTORING

For some new international students, Sheldon College encourages them to receive additional English tutoring throughout their enrolment. This will take place outside of the timetable either before or after school. Once their English is deemed to be at an acceptable level, this tutoring will no longer be required.

UNIFORMS

It is compulsory for long term students to wear the Sheldon College uniform. Host families are asked to assist students purchase their uniform using either cash or debit/credit card. It is important to note, especially for short term students, that second-hand uniforms are available. Similarly, students have the option of selling their uniforms at the end of their stay.

Black, leather, lace up shoes are a compulsory part of the Sheldon College uniform. Shoes must be enclosed in accordance with OH&S requirements. The College hat is also a compulsory uniform item.

The Sheldon College Uniform Shop is open from Monday to Friday from 7.30am to 4.00pm. The Uniform Shop telephone number is 3206 5544.

It is the responsibility of the host family to ensure students are wearing the correct uniform that is clean and pressed.

HOW DO I GET HELP AND SUPPORT?

Depending on the problem or specific needs, the International Education Program Manager will be the first person you contact when it comes to offering support to Host Families. Never feel that you are on your own. There is a whole team of people valuing the work you are doing, and ready to support you in doing it. Sometimes a student will have an onshore education agent representative who can also assist you with some issues.

SAYING GOODBYE

As they approach the end of their stay, some students, particularly those who have been in Australia for a long time, can become withdrawn and apprehensive about saying goodbye to their friends, teachers and 'second family'. There are lots of ways to make this transition easier for them to ensure their last memories of Australia are happy and positive. Some host families create memory books containing mementos, photos and messages, and many give their student a small going away party.

However, there are also a number of practical tasks your student will appreciate your help with.

- When it's time to pack, explain the maximum luggage allowance and any restrictions on items to be carried in the student's hand luggage.
- Assist them to pack and ship any large items via post or courier.
- Help with any final arrangements they need to make, for example, closing bank accounts, exchanging leftover currency, or shopping for gifts to take home.
- Check you have your student's correct home address and contact details to enable you to forward any belongings and future mail.
- On the day of departure, take them to the airport and stay with them until they have checked in and are safely through to the departure area.

STAYING IN TOUCH

One of the most rewarding things about homestay is the connections and friendships that are made between host families and students from all over the world. Most like to stay in contact after the homestay ends but please ensure that you and other members of your household maintain the same standard of appropriate and respectful communication expected during the homestay. If in doubt, particularly if you plan to communicate with young children, please seek permission from the student's parents or legal custodian.



All stakeholders have, in some way, power and influence in the homestay process and therefore each stakeholder has a responsibility to be aware of and to meet some standard of ethical conduct.

This document on the "Code of Ethics for International Students in Homestay Program" is used as a guideline to meet standard requirements for providing pastoral care to international students studying at Sheldon College. It promotes and enhances the conduct of International Student Support and Homestay Program staff in performing their duties in the collegial environment of the institution.

Acknowledgement is given to The New Zealand Department of Education, Griffith University and Queensland University of Technology from where information and procedures were compiled to produce this Code.

It contains a checklist for each key stakeholder to follow and to ensure that they comply within the Homestay Program Guidelines. Because of the diversity of stakeholders involved in homestay study programs at Sheldon College, the code is presented across three general stakeholder areas:

1. Sheldon College International Staff
2. Homestay students
3. Homestay providers

1. SHELDON COLLEGE INTERNATIONAL STAFF

Sheldon College recognises that Homestay providers may come from a variety of family compositions, cultural backgrounds and that these will not be the basis for acceptance or rejection in the homestay provider group.

CODE OF ETHICS

In arranging homestay accommodation for international students attending Sheldon College, the International team guarantees to:

- Familiarise students with the culture and education philosophy of the homestay programs/students through in-service support and individual awareness.
- Be aware of the needs of the international students and have processes in place to support and assist them.
- Identify any personal prejudices and biases and promote awareness of and an adherence to ethical standards.
- Accept flexibility of regulations and communication practices that may be necessary to meet the diverse and variable needs of international students.
- Adhere to non-discriminatory practices set out by the institution based on race, age, gender, ethnicity, disability, socio-economic and sexual preference or religion.
- Keep all possible communications open, honest and appropriate to the situation.
- Commensurate with students' communication needs and their level of understanding, information should be translated where possible.
- Put the best learning interests of individual students above all other financial and organisational needs, as without this focus the impact on the homestay experience can be extremely negative.
- Act with sensitivity and discretion and enact a process of crisis management, in time of grief and trauma.
- Have access to opportunities for professional development with regard to the provision of homestay care and meeting the needs of the international student.
- Maintain the confidentiality of Homestay providers and international students' right to privacy under the terms of Privacy and Discrimination Acts.
- Respect for the law and system of schools' governance.

GOOD CONDUCT GUIDELINES

- The international team must provide ongoing support to homestay providers and students as necessary.
- Advise homestay providers and homestay students of the expectations of homestay by means of orientation, written documents and information, orientation sessions as well as web-based information.
- Inspect all providers and homes registered in the homestay program and provide an orientation of the expectations/requirements of the program.
- Visit each homestay provider and place each student in a home, which is, to the best knowledge and belief, a safe and suitable home for the students
- Ensure all students under the age of 18 years are placed in appropriate families with guardianship arrangements in place.
- Encourage networking contacts to ensure the quality of all providers enlisted in the program is maintained.
- Monitor the number of household members- family members to guest ratio.
- Ensure payment arrangements are confirmed with the homestay providers.
- Follow up any complaint made by homestay students/ providers within 24 hours.
- Respect and be responsive to the beliefs and diversity of cultural requirements of homestay providers and homestay students by providing alternative accommodation immediately if it is believed that the welfare of the student, or host, may be at risk.
- Provide on-going support for homestay providers and students as necessary and ensure that all parties are aware of the wide range of support services available within the College and provided through International Student Support Services, Health Services, Counselling Services, Sexual Harassment Contact Network and Grievance Resolution procedures.
- Issues in relation to taxation, insurance and legislation including legislation changes must be advised to stakeholders.
- Interact effectively and co-operatively with other departments within and outside the institution.
- Act openly and professionally in all dealings with other homestay providers and institutions.
- Ensure that the confidentiality of homestay providers and students is preserved under the terms of Privacy and Discrimination Acts.
- Undertake process and impact evaluations, i.e. conduct surveys periodically (6-12 monthly) with homestay providers and students to ensure that standards and requirement of student placement are met under the basic ethical guidelines.
- The international team should have specific training, skills and experience to provide homestay management services appropriate to the role and level of service they are providing (including demonstrable ability in meeting the specific needs of international students) whether employed or contracted by the institution.

2. INTERNATIONAL HOMESTAY STUDENTS

CODE OF ETHICS

- Students need to be made aware of the accepted code of behaviour within the homestay.
- Students need to be encouraged to communicate in an honest and respectful way, thus developing positive relationships with providers which are based on mutual trust and communication. Disguising a problem to 'save face' may not, in fact, be dealing the best way with the problem.
- Students should be advised on acceptable levels of hospitality and not take advantage of the generosity offered by families.
- Students should be encouraged to develop positive relationships with families which are based on mutual trust and communication.
- Students should be enabled to take responsibility for their own practices and needs.

GOOD CONDUCT GUIDELINES

The student will be expected to:

- Be financially independent; pay the homestay and placement fee to the institution. The institution will manage payments to the host family. He/she must meet all personal expenses for travel, entertainment, telephone calls, medical expenses and other personal, incidental costs.
- Respect and adhere to guidelines/rules for living in the household as given by the homestay family which may include conditions such as no smoking, no alcohol, spend no longer than 10 minutes in the shower and leaving the bathroom tidy.
- Offer to help with minor household chores such as occasional washing up and keeping their bedroom clean and tidy.
- Be considerate and keep noise to minimum after 8:30pm.
- Ask the family before inviting friends over.
- Ask their own parents or guardian to contact the homestay family and give permission for any late nights or overnight stays.
- Advise the homestay family about social activities and when they will be home for meals.
- Pay for any damage to family property (if the student is responsible for the damage).
- Keep all valuables, money, passport and airline tickets in a safe place.
- Attend an orientation with the homestay coordinator, where required.
- Behave appropriately and be prepared to participate in reasonable family activities.
- Respect and be aware that cultural differences and beliefs of the homestay provider may differ from their own.
- Communicate with the homestay provider on a day to day basis. Student should be open about their needs/wants. For example, the need to make a phone call late in the night (after 10pm).
- Advise the homestay coordinator immediately of any concerns relating to their health or welfare which may arise in the homestay environment.
- Adhere to the guidelines set down in the "Homestay Information Booklet", web or fact flyers/sheets, orientation for students and other advice given about the homestay program.
- Be aware and abide by the laws of Australia, for example, wear bicycle helmets, respect legal age of drinking, etc.



3. HOMESTAY PROVIDERS

CODE OF ETHICS

Homestay providers are expected to:

- Develop positive relationships with students which are based on mutual trust and communication.
- Acknowledge the uniqueness of each student and the levels of each student's strength and weakness.
- Support and assist students to live comfortably within a foreign environment.
- Respect the student's right to privacy whilst realising that privacy does not equate to isolation
- Acknowledge the significance of culture, customs, language and beliefs in the life of their student and accommodate appropriately for these within the family's life.
- Assist, support and nurture where needed or requested, but keeping in mind that a desire to please may be interpreted as interfering by the student.

GOOD CONDUCT GUIDELINES

The homestay provider will be expected to:

- Provide a safe environment which will offer the student a total experience of living as a member of an Australian family and which encourages positive study habits.
- Provide the student with a private, clean and warm bedroom, good healthy food, laundry facilities and a supportive environment.
- Offer help, guidance, support and encouragement with language practice, studies, planning leisure activities and adapting to living in Australia (this may require patience and empathy and a willingness to show the student more than once).
- Provide an orientation within the family home e.g. use of pool area and house facilities and security. Applicable house rules should be explained i.e. what time dinner is, telephone protocols, rules regarding smoking, alcohol, guests visiting, curfews, household tasks and bathroom conduct.
- Offer sincere interest in the cultural background of the student.
- Respect the students' need for privacy and allow them space to be alone.
- Have a duty of care towards their homestay student.
- Provide breakfast, a packed lunch and dinner during the week and all three meals on the weekends (unless otherwise required).
- Only provide single room accommodation. A student is not to share a room with another student nor with a member of the family, unless specifically requested.
- Liaise with the homestay coordinator regarding any concerns or difficulties.
- Notify the homestay coordinator of any change of circumstances in the household.
- Be responsive to the cultural differences and beliefs of the homestay student by allowing the student to continue familiar cultural practices without criticism.
- To adhere to guidelines set down by the Homestay Program and attendance at the homestay provider's information sessions.

“By showing these students the best Queensland has to offer, you get to be a tourist in your own backyard!”



You are integral to the success of the program and we value your support and cooperation.

MRS DENITA BIRD, INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM MANAGER



Connecting students with local families; providing genuine authentic Australian experiences.

SHELDON COLLEGE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM



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