

Guidelines to Students living in Homestay

Welcome

Each year thousands of international students complete language or academic programs with their preferred educational institution. For many of you the homestay experience is your first impression and introduction to Australia. Our aim is to make sure that this experience is a positive and happy one.

We value our students and our homestays very highly and believe that your accommodation is just as important as your academic course. We try our very best to match you and your preferences with the right homestay host so that you can enjoy each other's company and also have the chance to **learn about similarities and differences in culture and lifestyle**.

Each campus has dedicated staff that will help you with any concerns you may have. The person responsible for homestay accommodation in your location is your coordinator from ISAA.

We are here to help you have a positive experience while you are studying with us in Australia.

The first 48 hours

The first 48 hours are very important and will have a lasting impression. Here are some ideas that may reduce 'culture shock' and help you to feel comfortable as soon as possible:

1. **Talk to your host family** and show an interest, spend time getting to know them use a phone card to **phone home**, as your family and friends will be anxiously waiting to hear from you. Your host will be more than happy to allow you to make a call from their phone if you don't already have your mobile service connected.
2. **Bring a small gift** for your host. It is a nice thing to do and can be a topic of conversation if it is something that is from your home country.

Accommodation

Your hosts will provide you with:

- A standard sized bed, bedside table and lamp
- An adequate wardrobe and drawer space, a table or desk, and a chair for private study
- Sheets, towels and pillowcases. (These should be changed every week).

You can supply your own linen if you wish however you are not expected to.

Your bedroom will be a secured locked room for you to leave your valuables.

You are responsible for keeping your bedroom **clean and tidy**. It should remain in the same condition as when you moved in.

Your host is responsible for:

- Providing you with the necessary equipment to clean your room (vacuum cleaner, duster etc).
- Keeping your room adequately heated and cooled.

Hosts understand the needs of overseas students, who may not be acclimatized to our weather and may require more heating or cooling than usual. Please ask for a fan or heater if you need one.

Please note: For health and safety reasons **smoking is not allowed indoors**. We try to make sure that students of the same nationality are not together in the same homestay.

Bathroom, Toilet and Laundry

You will have sufficient hot water for a bath or shower once a day. Australia is a very dry country with limited rainfall, so try not to use too much water. Bathroom habits vary from household to household as well as country-to-country. Your hosts will explain **the house rules** about bathing and washing. They will also explain the normal arrangements for the disposal of sanitary towels/tampons and the fact that toilet paper should be flushed away. You should leave the bathroom and toilet as clean as when you entered. Your laundry may be included with the host's own laundry on a weekly basis, or you may like to do your own laundry. **You can talk to your hosts** and decide on the most suitable arrangement. If you prefer to do your own laundry, please let your hosts know so they can show you how to use the facilities.

Telephone / Internet

Telephone: Please ask your host family to assist you in making a call to your home shortly after your arrival to inform your family that you have arrived safely. Your host will assist you in obtaining your mobile telephone service provider.

Internet: All our registered Homestays are required to have **Internet connection** available and will assist you in connecting to the internet.

You will not be charged for the internet as this is part of the homestay agreement. Please be advised that your usage is limited to your school work and some web browsing and not for downloading movies, music etc. Please speak with your host that will advise you of the data availability.

Meals

We want our students to stay healthy and eat properly – government health guidelines suggest that a well-balanced diet should include at least one item from each of the following food groups every day.

- Bread, rice, pasta or cereals
- Milk, cheese, yoghurt, butter or margarine
- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Meat, eggs, lentils or nuts and beans

Your hosts will provide you with:

- A nutritious **breakfast** every day -you might need to organize/cook this yourself.
- A healthy, cooked, **evening meal** including meat, poultry or (individual arrangements are made for students with special dietary requirements).
- **Lunch** is provided on **weekends**, during the week you can buy or take your lunch from home but you will need to discuss this with your host.
- Special food needs will be confirmed on placement.

Your hosts are not required to provide foreign food, however they will be sensitive to your needs, conscience and religious beliefs. For example, in the month of Ramadan, Muslims must not eat between sunrise and sunset and special arrangements should be made at this time. ***Please tell your hosts if you have any problems with the food they give you, or if you require a special diet.***

We recommend that you try to have a **conversation** with your hosts when you eat your evening meal. If you do this every day, your **English will improve** very quickly. Attendance at the College is compulsory for all students. Your host will make sure breakfast is available early enough so that you are not late for class.

Australian meal times are usually earlier than in other countries and you are expected to attend meals on time or telephone if you are going to be late.

Sharing home life

Students should live as full members of the home. You will be sharing the same meals and living rooms as the host(s), and they will try to make you feel comfortable. Your hosts will treat you as a **member of their own household** and explain their **house rules**, Australian customs and habits to you. Try to show interest in your hosts and speak to them in English as often as you can.

Always tell your host where you are going and when you will be back. If you are late or your plans change, you should telephone and explain. If you are over 18, more flexibility will be given to you. You are expected to adapt to living in an **Australian home** and not treat your host as if you were staying in a hotel. There should be someone at home at all reasonable times when you are expected to return. If there is no one home, you should have a key or another way that you can enter the house.

We recommend that the hosts give a house key to all students and it is always a good idea to ask for your **host's mobile telephone number** because you might need to contact them. You should also give your mobile telephone number to your hosts.

Students Under 18

If you are under 18, you are expected to return to your homestay at the end of your day. For many students, this will be your first time away from home as well as your first experience in a foreign country. Many things will be very different and a bit worrying. Your hosts will understand this and will make a special effort to make you feel welcome in their home. ***Students under the age of 18 must have special permission from their University, College/Caregiver if they wish to take a holiday or spend a weekend away from the homestay.*** You must also tell your host if you are going to spend days away from home but you must obtain approval from your University or College/Caregiver and **ISAA** before making any arrangements.

Requirements of your homestay host

All homestays must follow government rules and requirements for hosting students. One of the requirements is that they must have a **National Police Clearance** and a **Working-with-Children Check**. (All members of the household who are aged 18 or over are checked and have these credentials)

Accident or illness

If you are sick or have an accident, your hosts will contact a doctor (theirs or yours) or the nearest Accident and Emergency Department, as appropriate. If you are under 18 and have a Caregiver, this person will also be contacted as soon as possible.

It is expected that students pay their own medical expenses. Hosts are not required to pay these expenses and will not be reimbursed by the University or College for doing so. (Please note: only Student Visa Holders have compulsory medical Insurance). International students are required to purchase Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) as a condition of their visa. If you have recently arrived you may not have collected your OSHC card, but will be covered. You should take your OSHC card with you when seeking medical services. You must complete a claim form and send with your receipt or invoice from your visit to an Australian Health Management Group Ltd (AHM) you will receive back approximately 80% of the fee paid. **Emergency number in Australia is 000.**

If you are going to be absent because you are sick or have had an accident, you must tell the Administration staff at your University or College by 9.00am on each day you are away from university or college. Please remember that you must have a doctor's medical certificate if you are absent from the University or College.

Arrivals

Your host will be at home to greet you on the day you arrive. On arrival, a **private contractor** will bring you to your host from the airport. International Student Accommodation Australia (ISAA) will inform your host of the approximate time of your arrival. If your friend or relatives are at the airport, they should take you straight to your homestay, as your host will be waiting for you. If you have not arrived or haven't contacted your host within three hours of your expected arrival, ISAA will be contacted. Students under the age of 18 are required to use the approved Airport Pickup service if your University or College has issued a CAAW.

Getting to the College

On the first day of your course, a member of the household should come with you to your university or college – either in their own vehicle or by **public transport** or show you precisely how to get to the college on time for your first class (Monday to Friday). Your hosts will also help you with using public transport for the rest of your stay. Please let your host know if you need further help. It is very important that you do not ride on public transport without a valid ticket. If you do, you may incur a very high fine. Your host or ISAA will assist you in purchasing a Public Transport Student Smartrider Card, which allows you to pay student fares that are much cheaper and will save you money.

Authority

Hosts do not accept any other 'authority' from other student(s), agent(s), friends etc. The authority only extends to (ISAA) International Student Accommodation Australia, your parents, Caregiver, your University or College.

Emergencies

In case of emergency, please phone your Host or Caregiver or your Homestay Coordinator from ISAA. **Emergency number in Australia is 000.**

Insurance

All International Student Accommodation Australia (ISAA) Host families have insurance, however, it is advisable that you have some form of **insurance** that will cover you and your belongings while you are in Australia. If you haven't already arranged this before travelling, please talk to the homestay coordinator from ISAA will be able to assist and advise you with insurance matters.

Interpreter Service

Worldcare also provides a 24 hour, seven day a week interpreter service for Homestay Hosts and students with Worldcare OSHC. Just call 1800 814 781

Student time keeping

There are compulsory homecoming times for **all students under 18**:

Students under 16 must be home by 7:30pm Sunday to Thursday, and by 9pm on Friday and Saturday nights. Students over 16 must be home by 9pm Sunday to Thursday, and by 10:30pm Friday and Saturday nights.

Times may vary when students are attending an activity at the school.

Grievance procedures

If you have a problem with your host, it can often be because of a **small misunderstanding** (language or cultural). International Student Accommodation Australia (ISAA) encourages you to sit down with your hosts and try to work out a solution to these minor matters. If you still feel there is a problem, please

contact your coordinator from ISAA, who will speak with both you and your host and try to provide a **suitable solution**. If you are still not happy ISAA can provide you with an official notification form.

Student Holidays

If you wish to take holidays of one week or more away from your homestay, you have to inform your hosts and also ISAA by filling out a notification form available from ISAA. You must give 4 weeks' written notice (signed notification form) to your hosts if you wish to receive this discount. If you are under the age of 18 years, you will need to get permission from your University or College/Caregiver. You will have to pay a room-holding fee for your absence. You do not have to pay the full board.

Extending your stay

If you wish to extend your time in homestay this must be made with the Homestay Coordinator from ISAA and at the university or college. Under no circumstances are you to make private arrangements with your host.

Student Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards

Homestay students:

- Must be aware of the accepted Homestay **Code of Behavior**.
- Should communicate in an **honest and respectful** way and form positive relationships with hosts. (Disguising a problem to 'save face' may not be the best way to deal with that problem). Always speak with your host as they are there to help and assist you in any way possible.
- Should be aware of acceptable levels of hospitality and not take advantage of the generosity offered by hosts.
- Must take responsibility for their own behavior and needs.

Homestay Code of Behavior

Homestay students are expected to:

- provide notice if leaving their homestay (as per ISAA policies)
- Be financially independent; this includes paying all fees in accordance with the homestay programs policy such as placement fees and homestay reimbursement fees. You must meet all personal expenses for travel, entertainment, telephone calls, medical expenses and other personal, incidental costs.
- Respect and follow guidelines/rules for living in the household. This may include rules such as no smoking, no alcohol, time spent showering and other water usage, and leaving bathroom tidy after use
- be considerate and not make too much noise
- ask hosts before inviting friends over
- Pay for any damage to household property (if 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 participate in reasonable household activities
- Respect cultural differences and beliefs of the homestay host. These may differ from your own
- Communicate with your homestay host every day. You should be open about your needs/wants e.g.: if you are still hungry after meals or you don't like some foods or you want to make a late night phone call.
- Advise the Homestay Coordinator immediately if you have any health or welfare worries about your homestay

- Follow the guidelines in the “Homestay Information Booklet”, orientation for homestay students and other advice given about the homestay program
- Follow the laws of Australia. For example, wear bicycle helmets, respect legal age of drinking, smoking etc.

Should students not comply with the Code of Behavior ISAA and its affiliated group of universities and colleges reserves the right to remove the student from the homestay.

Remember

If you have any problems, please contact ISAA without delay, they are there to help and assist you.

International Student Accommodation Australia Privacy Policy in relation to Homestay Accommodation

1. When you submit an application to study with your preferred University or College ISAA gathers and stores the information you provide. We are happy to give you a copy of this information, on request.
2. We collect information about our students for a variety of purposes. This may be to:
 - advise our agents and students about the details of their host
 - help us improve and personalize our services to you, our hosts and agents.
3. Only authorized employees, your host and subcontractors can have access to information you give us. We will not disclose information about you to any other parties without your consent. In exception: we may disclose or access your information if required to do so by law or any other Government body.
4. We aim to keep your personal information secure. ISAA uses the highest standards of confidentiality for online transactions for sensitive data such as bank account details. Our secure server is authenticated. However, no data transmission over the Internet can be guaranteed totally secure. As a result, we cannot promise the security of any information that you send us, and you do so at your own risk.
5. We may update this Privacy Policy from time to time. If we make any changes, we will inform your university or college.