



# Sancta Maria College

## Homestay Guide for Host Families



*Thank you for agreeing to share your home with one of our international students. The main reason most students come to NZ to study is to improve their English and achieve academic success. As a host family you will play an important part in helping to ensure that the student achieves their goal. However there is another part to the experience of being an international student which is also important and that is learning about a new culture and people and much of what they take away about New Zealand, will be as a consequence of what their homestay families have shared with them.*

*For most of our international students coming to New Zealand will mean lots of changes in their life – a new country, a new family to adjust to, a new language to learn and speak, a new school and education system to come to terms with, new friends to make and even new food to try. Your family's kindness, patience and support will make the transition a little easier.*

*Some of our students will have quite good English, while others will still be very much beginners. It will take patience, persistence and a good sense of humour but within a few months you will begin to see them making progress and gaining confidence.*

*You have been chosen as a homestay family because we believe you meet the following criteria as set out in the NZQA Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students:*

- Are positive, tolerant, and understanding of other cultures*
- Have knowledge of the specific needs of international students*
- Have an ability to meet an international students' emotional and behavioural needs*
- Have the ability to be a good role model*
- Show a willingness to work with the school, international students and their parents*
- Have a stable family environment*

*There are bound to be teething problems to begin with but hopefully it will be a rewarding experience not just for the student, but also for your family. Thanks again for opening your homes and your hearts to the international students of Sancta Maria College.*

# Introducing the International Team at Sancta Maria College

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## **Speaking English in the homestay**

It is the expectation of the student and their parents that the homestay family will speak English to allow the student to improve their English language skills. If you speak a first language that is not English please be aware that the student is likely to complain to their parents and to the school and they may have to be moved because of this.

## **Bedroom Rules**

The Code of Practice outlines that your house must be "clean, secure and warm" and also provide the following:

- Private bedroom
- Appropriate bedroom furniture - a bed, a desk big enough to study at and chair, a study light, cupboard to store clothes and belongings
- Appropriate linen and bedding- warm enough in the winter and regularly laundered
- Provisions for emergencies (e.g. first aid supplies, smoke alarms)
- Appropriate heating

The student must be allowed to feel that their bedroom is their own private and secure area in the house where other members of the family cannot enter freely. When you need to enter the bedroom please let the student know that you will do so. However it is entirely within your rights to ask students to keep the bedroom tidy and free from dirty laundry and if you don't want them to eat in their bedroom, say so.

Please discuss with your homestay if you find the idea of them spending too much time in their bedroom with a closed door a problem. While senior students will naturally have a lot of homework at night and in the weekend, part of the homestay experience is that they also spend time with the family talking and sharing time with you.



## 3 Potential Problem Areas

### 1. Food

Food can be one of the big issues that cause the most problems in a homestay. Your obligation as a host is to provide the following:

- breakfast, lunch and dinner 7 days a week including snacks
- nutritious meals suitable for a young person who is both physically and mentally active
- a balanced and varied diet including sufficient fresh vegetables and fruit

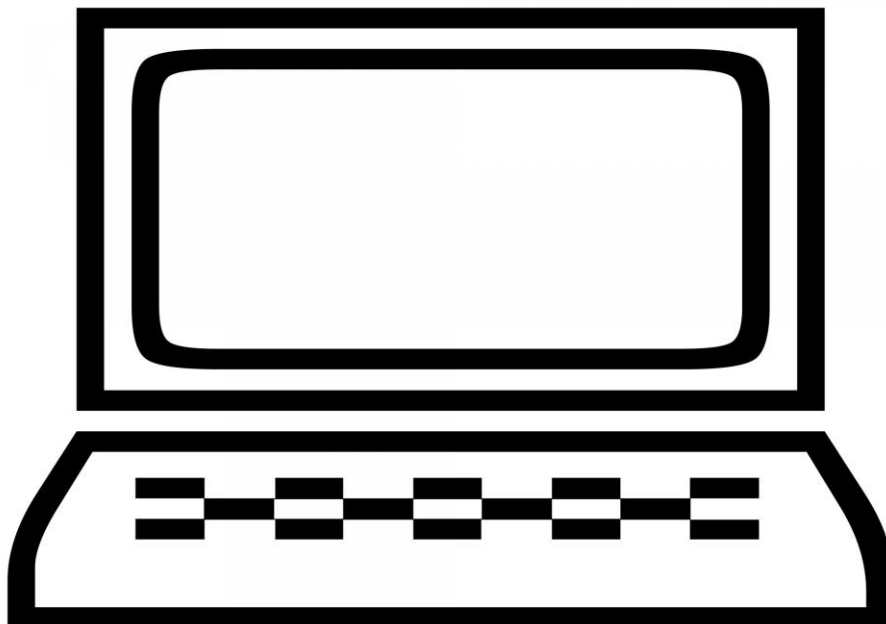
The expectation is that if you are following these rules then students are expected to eat the meals prepared. You are not expected to prepare separate meals to accommodate the student's particular likes and dislikes but if the student is allergic to or doesn't like a certain food then that needs to be considered. This will be highlighted in their Homestay Profile.

It is very important to take time at the beginning and find out what the student prefers for breakfast and lunch. There is little point wasting time and money preparing food that is thrown away every day (this is quite common).

#### **Suggestions:**

- Take the student to the supermarket and get them to help shop from time to time.
- Allow students to organize their own breakfast in the morning - they don't need breakfast served to them but please ensure they do eat breakfast as interval isn't until 11am.
- Allow students to help make up their lunch this way they are more likely to eat it. The old Kiwi staple of sandwiches every day is not popular with most international students. Try things like wraps with vegetables and meat, yoghurt, leftovers from the night before, sushi made at home etc. is much better received.
- Occasionally invite students to cook dinner or weekend lunch for the family.
- Occasionally allow them to buy their lunch from the tuck-shop at school (you will have to give them money for this though).

## Internet Usage



One of the biggest problems that homestay families encountered in the recent past was that their student's internet consumption was so high it used up almost the entire family's monthly allowance in a few days. This is now less of a problem with unlimited data but it is definitely wise to still monitor closely your homestay student's internet habits. Here are a few things to bear in mind:

- You need to spell out very clearly on day 1 your family's internet policy and make sure the student understands and adheres to it.
- If you are on a monthly internet package then you will have to allocate a set amount of data for the student and if they go over their allowance, then they will have to pay the extra. If you need help negotiating this contact us.
- Students should not be downloading or viewing any illegal material.
- Students should not be playing games or using Skype etc. late into the night. Please set a 'lights out / internet off' time and ensure that it is adhered to. Some families pull the plug on the internet at 10.30 pm and this seems to work well.



### 3. Bathroom Battles

**The bathroom is another problem area for families with homestay students but with a little careful planning, many of the problems can be avoided.**

Teenagers like taking L O N G showers. However what many of the international students don't understand is that electricity is expensive in NZ and in some households water is limited and bathrooms need to be shared, so they can't stand in the shower for 30 minutes at a time.

- Be very clear how long they can spend in the bathroom and knock on the door when the time is up. It is best to set an allocated time each day for the homestay student to have their shower time, either at night or in the morning and make sure they keep to this schedule.
- You will most likely have to talk to the student about the importance of keeping the bathroom clean and tidy and give them a few lessons on how to do this. Many of the students will come from households where they have not had to worry about this so a little patience will be needed to begin with.
- Please talk to your homestay daughter about the use of sanitary napkins / products. You will want to avoid expensive and embarrassing plumber call-outs, so let them know early on what is and isn't permissible.





## *A few other tricky areas to navigate*

### **Eating out**

If the family is having takeaways as a meal you cannot expect the Homestay student to pay for this. Likewise if you take the Homestay student with your family to a restaurant for a meal you should not expect the homestay student to pay for this.

If you are going out for a meal without the student please ensure there is a suitable meal for them at home.

However if the student goes out for dinner, a meal or stops on their way home from school and buys their own takeaways or 'treat' food, then they must pay for this themselves.

### **Transport**

From time to time students will need help getting to and from places, especially at the weekend, however you are not expected to be a free taxi service. Please talk to your student about what is and isn't acceptable. We are not comfortable with families charging mileage for taking them to the local mall or a friend's house, but if you feel your student is taking advantage of your kindness, please let the school know and we will talk to the student about this.

### **Airport trips**

The students will need help getting to the airport at holiday time and also with pick-ups on their return to Auckland. It is not your responsibility to organize this, this falls squarely on the shoulders of the student and their parents. Most homestay parents don't have a problem doing the airport drop-offs and pick-ups as long as they are given sufficient notice by the student. It is reasonable to ask the student for petrol money and parking on these occasions. Please discuss this with them beforehand. If the student does not organize a lift with you, then it is their responsibility to organize a taxi or a lift with another student.

### **Damage to Property**

If the student accidentally damages property in your home or loses the house key, we expect that this is covered by your House & Contents Insurance. If the student deliberately damages property then they must pay for this and this should be reported to the homestay coordinator immediately.

### **House Keys**

We expect that if other members of your family are entrusted with a key to the house, then the same should apply to your homestay student. Not having a house key can make life difficult for the student always having to wait around for another family member to let them in and it also shows a lack of trust.

## *Other Useful information*

### **Trips outside of Auckland**

From time to time, families will want to go away for the weekend. When you are planning a trip away can you please send an email to the homestay coordinator to let us know your plans and where you can be contacted in case of an emergency? If you intend to do any boating, skiing or extreme sports, you must check with us first to make sure the students travel and medical insurance covers them for such events.

### **Homestay parents travelling during the holidays**

If you are planning a holiday which does not involve the homestay student can you please give us one month's notice so that we can place the student in a temporary homestay for the duration that you will be away?

### **Change of circumstances**

We ask that if there are any changes to your household including visitors staying for more than a week, moving house, parents being away, pets being introduced to the household or any other matters which could affect the well-being of the homestay student, that you contact the homestay coordinator and keep us informed. If you have adult visitors staying with you we definitely need to be advised beforehand.

### **Neighborhood Safety**

Many of our students naively assume that Auckland is a much safer place than their home city or town. Please keep students streetwise about the dangers that can present themselves to teenagers new to Auckland.

### **Doctors/ Medical**

If a student becomes ill at your home it is your responsibility to assess their condition and decide whether to take them to the doctor or not. All international students have medical insurance (most have Southern Cross) which allows them to get 80% of their medical costs back within 2 weeks. If their condition is more serious and you are worried about them, take them to the nearest Accident & Emergency clinic and phone the International Student Director to let her know. If their condition is extremely serious, call an ambulance and get them to the hospital immediately and contact Andrea Donovan as soon as you can. It is better to be safe than sorry but bear in mind many international students will consider seeing a doctor for common ailments that simple bedrest and flu medicine will fix.

**Emergencies** In case of emergencies, it is the school's responsibility to attend to the student's welfare NOT the homestay family. Please **do not** make any phone calls home to parents. There is a protocol that must be followed. If an emergency presents, call the International Student Director immediately regardless of the time.

## Problems

It is quite common for problems to occur as it would with any teenager. If you are unhappy with any aspect of your homestay student's behaviour or attitude please talk to them about it and explain clearly why you are not happy and what your expectations of them are. If the problem continues by all means contact the homestay coordinator for assistance. In many instances, the problem can be sorted with a little intervention but if the problem continues to persist and you no longer feel happy to have the student in your home, please let us know and we will do our best to move them to another homestay as quickly as possible. Once a situation has arisen and it doesn't look like it can be fixed then it is in everyone's best interests to move the student within a week if that is possible.

## Homestay Visits

It is our responsibility to visit host families twice a year to make sure the homestay experience is a positive one for a student(s) and to discuss any issues that may arise. The homestay coordinator will contact you beforehand to make an appointment time that suits you.

## Curfews

The curfew times for international students under 18 years of age is set by the NZ Code of Practice and must be adhered to unless students have to attend a school function or they have your permission to be out on a week night for a special occasion. Any breaches of the curfew times must be reported immediately to the homestay coordinator.

Age	Sunday - Thursday	Friday & Saturday
Under 15 years old	6pm	Under adult supervision
15 years old	6pm	9pm with the consent of the homestay parents
16 years old	6pm	10pm with the consent of the homestay parents
17 years old and over	6pm	12pm with the consent of the homestay parents

**\*\*\* A special arrangement can be made but homestay coordinator must be notified\*\*\***

## Alcohol

On no account should any international students under 18 years of age be allowed to consume alcohol either in the homestay or outside the family home. Even if you allow your own children to drink, please don't assume it is okay to let your homestay student do the same. We ask homestay parents to report immediately any infringements concerning alcohol consumption for students under the legal age limit.

*Good luck and don't hesitate to call us if you need help.*