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## HOST FAMILY ORIENTATION PACKAGE

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## PROGRAM CONTACTS

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To facilitate communication and to ensure that the program operates smoothly:

1. If you need to contact the Program Director, please call during office hours, Monday to Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. At times, the Program Director will be away. The program Administrative Assistant will then direct your concern to the appropriate staff person.
2. If you have issues involving student accounts, host family payments, medical insurance, or for general information, contact the International Program office during regular office hours.
3. Please use email to contact the Homestay Coordinator if the matter is not urgent. For more urgent matters, feel free to phone the Homestay Coordinator or Homestay Emergency Line.

***Please do not contact past 8:00 pm or on weekends unless there is an emergency that either involves or impacts your homestay student. Please leave a detailed message if the Homestay Coordinator is not immediately available and she will return your call shortly.***

**EXCEPTIONS:** *In an emergency, please contact the Homestay Coordinator or the Emergency Line immediately. If no answer, contact the International office or the Program Director.*

**These are emergencies:**

- A health emergency (including an accident)
- A student is missing or is currently in a dangerous situation
- An emergency has arisen in your family or in the student's family at home

**These are not considered emergencies:**

- A student is not obeying host family rules (but no one is in imminent danger)
- A student is missing class
- A student is late for curfew

## **GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION**

Thank you very much for participating in our International Program as host parents. Some of our students' best memories will be of their experiences with their Canadian family. Our host families are the backbone of our program.

Students have come to Mission Public Schools for many reasons, from many cultures and from many socio-economic backgrounds.

In anticipation of some of the many questions you have, the following are points of information:

### **HOST FAMILY HONORARIUM**

The monthly host family honorarium is intended to cover your expenses for hosting an international student, and to provide you with the funds to do some activities with your student. The School District sets the host family honorarium each year. Under no circumstances are private arrangements authorized unless the International Program Director gives approval.

Most students will arrive a few days before the beginning of the month or leave a few days after the end of the month that their study period ends. Please be understanding. We do not charge students for these extra days and there are no funds to pay host families for the extra days at the beginning or end of the students' visit. Any exceptions must be discussed in advance.

Most host parents are paid by the School District accounting office via direct deposit. These families will be informed and should not request money directly from the student. Homestay payment will be received by the last Thursday of each month.

In some cases, a student may pay the host family directly. Students who pay directly are expected to pay on the last day of the month. If you are paid directly by your student, please do not ask for payments in advance.

If you ask another family to take your student overnight or longer, please be prepared to pay that family \$30.00/night unless you arrange a reciprocal exchange.

If you voluntarily offer to take another student overnight or longer, please do not expect payment for hosting that student.

You are not expected to host the parents or other family members of your student should they come for a visit. Visiting parents can book accommodations in Vancouver, or at the Best Western Mission City Lodge. If you find it awkward to discuss this with the parents, please inform us and we will assist you.

If you choose to host the parents or relatives, please understand the extra work or cost will be at your own expense.

Regardless, please be hospitable to visiting parents and relatives; invite them over for dinner, offer to take them sightseeing, etc.

## **CUSTODIANSHIP**

The Homestay Coordinator usually acts as Custodian on behalf of the school district and has ultimate authority and responsibility for student care while they are studying in our District.

## **AIRPORT ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES**

Imagine your own child arriving in a foreign country. Airport arrival and departure are very important for your student. Host families are expected to welcome their students at the airport on arrival, and to see them off at the airport when they fly home. If for any reason, you are unable to pick up or drop off your student at the airport, it is your responsibility to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made for your student. The International Program office must be aware of any alternative arrangements.

Students from Y.E.S. International Academy arrive and depart as a group. Y.E.S. will coordinate their airport arrivals and departures. You will receive additional information directly from Y.E.S. International Academy if you are hosting one of their students.

Families who host Y.E.S. students, are first, host families for the MPSD International Student Program. We coordinate the homestay families for Y.E.S. International Academy.

## **HOMESTAY PLACEMENT or CHANGES**

You have gone through a selection process as host families. However, this does not guarantee continued placement of students with your family each year. We try to place students appropriately, and that may change from year to year depending upon the applications we receive.

When the Homestay Coordinator decides on student placement, she carefully considers the needs of both the student and the host family. However, the needs of the student are paramount and we reserve the right to move a student from your home.

Please respect the religious beliefs and background of your student. For example, if you have a practicing Roman Catholic student it would be best to inquire if they wish to attend a youth group at a Catholic church, not the church of your faith if it is different from theirs. Some natural parents are adamant about the place of worship for their child.

Sometimes students or their family will ask us to change host families. Sometimes the host family wants the student moved. While we do not like to make changes, we also respect the fact that some relationships just don't work. In some cases, there may be personality conflicts, or there could be sibling rivalry, which is affecting the tone of the house.

If the situation with a student in your home becomes difficult, it is important to inform us. Unless the situation is urgent, we encourage you to contact the Homestay Coordinator by email rather than telephone: [homestay@mpsd.ca](mailto:homestay@mpsd.ca).

Please do not phone the Program Director at home unless there is an emergency and you are unable to reach the Homestay Coordinator.

## **STUDENT BANKING & FINANCES**

Please tell your students not to carry large amounts of cash with them.

Many students arrive with Credit Cards or Debit Cards. Often, they experience some difficulty accessing funds from the bank machines when they first arrive. Please be prepared to help your student with their banking. If your student is staying for any length of time, they may need your help to open a bank account. Students must bring their passport with them to the bank to open an account. Be sure to ask if there will be any service charges or restrictions on the student account.

## **MORE ABOUT FINANCES**

See FAQ's for information about what students should pay for (Page 11).

Immigration Canada does not permit secondary school age students to hold jobs while studying in Canada.

Please do not expect students to participate in paper routes or other activities that supplement the family income.

Never ask your student to be a free babysitter!

## **TELEPHONES, COMPUTERS & INTERNET**

Please discuss your telephone and internet rules early and explain the reason for your rules.

Some families limit the use of the telephone to the hours before 10 p.m. We ask you to be aware that for students from other countries, this may be the only time they can reach their families. Students should pay you for any long distance calls they make on your phone. Unless you have an inexpensive long-distance plan, we suggest that you help your student buy long distance telephone cards, and/or help them purchase a pay-as-you-go cell phone plan. DO NOT... repeat ... DO NOT sign students up for cell phone contracts, and do not purchase cell phone contracts in your name, for your student.

Computer use is a fact of life. Host families are expected to provide reasonable internet access for students. However, internet use must be monitored. If concerns arise, contact the Homestay Coordinator who will alert the Program Director if a reasonable solution cannot be negotiated. The issue of students accessing internet pornography sites is not a myth. It happens. Be diligent and inform the Homestay Coordinator immediately if this is a concern.

## **SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT**

Please take an active interest in your student's progress in school, just as you would for your own child. It is your responsibility to pick up your student's report card, and to attend Parent/Teacher interviews. If your high school student picks up their own report card, please ask to see it. Students will not generally show you their report card. If you have questions about your student's progress, contact the school counsellor as you would for your own child.

International students are required to pay the standard fees for extra-curricular activities and athletic teams. Please encourage them to participate in these activities.

If a student needs to miss school for any other reason, please inform the school just as you would for your own children. It is your responsibility to monitor your student re: tardiness and attendance.

If attitude, attendance or tardiness become a problem, please contact the designated school administrator or counsellor. Inform the Homestay Coordinator or Program Director if the problems continue.

If, however, your student has questions or concerns about their class schedule, please do not deal with course concerns except to alert us. Students are here for many reasons. Scheduling decisions are complicated and demand careful attention. The designated school counselor or the International Program Director has the necessary information to help the student make informed decisions.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

The issue of health and safety for students is paramount. Please review safety procedures with your students, both for your home (for example, fire escape routes) and in the community, without alarming them unduly.

If you become concerned about any safety issue involving your student, please inform us. When in doubt, err on the side of caution. If you are not sure about a situation, please inquire. This includes students breaking curfew and the use of alcohol or drugs, which is strictly prohibited. If you become aware that your student has used alcohol or illegal drugs, it is your responsibility to inform the International Program staff immediately.

If your student becomes ill at school, they should speak to their teacher, counselor or school secretary, who will contact you just as they would for your own child. The school may contact our office in an emergency if you are not available.

If the student must stay home for illness, please inform the school directly. The International Office does not need to be informed if a student must miss a day of school, unless there is an emergency. Any serious health or safety concerns should be addressed with the Homestay Coordinator or the Program Director.

A more delicate matter has to do with relationships that inevitably form with some students. It is important to keep us informed if you suspect your student is becoming involved in a serious personal relationship so that the student can be counseled appropriately.

## **MEDICAL INSURANCE**

Medical and health insurance is arranged through the International Student Program. When a student arrives, he or she is enrolled in private emergency medical insurance with Guard.Me® StudentGuard®.

Long-term students who remain in our program for more than one semester will be transferred to BC Medical Services Plan after they have been resident in BC for 3 months. These students will also have additional coverage which includes travel insurance, prescription medications, and other benefits through Guard.Me® StudentGuard®.

### **BC MSP:**

When a student transfers to BC MSP coverage, BC MSP should be used first, for any medical or hospital visits. Any eligible expenses not covered by BC MSP will be covered through Guard.Me® StudentGuard® private insurance.

### **Guard.Me® StudentGuard Insurance Coverage:**

- Students with only Guard.Me® StudentGuard® private insurance coverage, are insured for emergency medical problems, but not for maintenance of pre-existing conditions.
- When students arrive, they are issued an individual card, which they should carry. Students can also use their phone to take a photo of their medical card, front and back.
- The Guard.Me® StudentGuard® card which is issued to the student, includes a contact telephone number, as well as an individual registration number, which must be quoted when a student is making an enquiry about insurance, or when making a claim.
- A pamphlet providing basic details about the insurance coverage is given to the student when the card is issued. This information is also available online at: <https://www.guard.me/>

### **Procedure to follow when student has only Guard.Me® StudentGuard® private insurance coverage:**

- Typically students are required to pay in advance for medical treatment and will be reimbursed by Guard.me. Receipts must be submitted for reimbursement before the student leaves Canada. Claim forms are available online at: <https://www.guard.me/claim.php>. Claims up to \$2,500 can be submitted online.
- If the student is ill and needs to visit the doctor, you can take the student to any doctor. However, you may wish to use Cedar Care Clinic - 32423 Lougheed Hwy. (Corner of Lougheed Hwy. and Cedar Valley Connector). Cedar Care clinic is a “designated” clinic and does not require advance payment at the time of the visit.
- In the case of a severe medical emergency, take the student to a hospital. **Phone the Guard.me® StudentGuard® number on the insurance card immediately and follow instructions. Ask Guard.me to deal with the hospital directly if possible.** Contact the International office before paying any major hospital expenses. We will help you. Although Guard.me will reimburse you very quickly, we do not expect host families to pay major medical expenses on behalf of their students.

### **Common questions asked about this insurance:**

#### **What conditions are covered?**

- This coverage applies to emergencies only and does NOT take the place of regular health care. Short term students are not covered for standard medical checkups or pre-existing medical conditions. It does not cover dental care except for emergency dental treatment resulting from an accident.

#### **What happens if my student becomes sick?**

- Inform the school if the student is ill.
- Take the student to the appropriate treatment centre.
- If the illness is serious, inform the Homestay Coordinator or the Program Director immediately.

#### **Other expenses?**

- Any extraordinary expense, including out of area transportation, which is over and above that covered through insurance, is the responsibility of the student.

## TRAVELING OR VACATIONING WITH YOUR STUDENT

### FOR ANY OVERNIGHT TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

- **The Host Family** must complete and submit at least 5 days before your trip, the “Out of District Travel Form”, available from the International Student Program office, or on our website.

### FOR ANY TRAVEL OUTSIDE BC

- The Student must have adequate medical coverage. Students with Guard.Me® StudentGuard® insurance have adequate medical coverage for travel outside BC, including out of the country. Students are not covered while in their home country. This medical coverage ends June 30<sup>th</sup>, unless other arrangements have been made.

### FOR ANY OVERNIGHT TRAVEL OUTSIDE BC

- **The Host Family** must, at least 5 days before a trip, complete and submit the “Out of District Travel Form”. The form is available from the International Student Program office or on our website at [www.studyinmission.ca](http://www.studyinmission.ca). You may also email all details to the International Office at [international@mpsd.ca](mailto:international@mpsd.ca).
- **The Natural Parents** must complete and submit the Parent/Guardian Waiver for Travel Out of Province or Out of Country, available from the International Student Program office, or on our website: [www.studyinmission.ca](http://www.studyinmission.ca)

### FOR ANY TRAVEL TO THE USA INCLUDING DAY TRIPS

**The Student** must have:

- The required Visa for travel to the US, or confirm that they do not require a Visa
- A letter from the Mission Public Schools International Program, to verify their valid attendance in our International Student Program. (Some customs officials may not ask to see the letter, but legally, no one should be crossing the US border with a minor without written permission from the legal guardian)

### SPRING BREAK TRAVEL

- If you plan to take your student on holiday with you, out of province, during spring break, we must have written consent and a signed waiver from the natural parents before you go.

### SUMMER HOLIDAY TRAVEL

- Our program ends June 30<sup>th</sup>. Homestay payments end June 30<sup>th</sup> unless the student has extended through the summer for an additional school year. Students are encouraged to depart for home as soon as possible after June 30<sup>th</sup>. Please do not invite your student to stay and go on summer holidays with you. Any such arrangements must be pre-approved by the International Program office.
- If your student asks if they can stay more than a few days beyond June 30<sup>th</sup>, these arrangements must also be approved by the International Program office. Signed waivers are required from both, the natural parents and the host parents releasing our program of responsibility for private arrangements, including homestay payments, after June 30<sup>th</sup>.



## **STUDENTS TRAVELING WITHOUT THE HOST PARENT**

Student requests to travel outside BC without their host family will be evaluated on an individual basis. In all cases, waivers must be signed by the natural parents.

## **RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Caution:

- Extreme sports, such as bungee jumping, paragliding, etc. are not permitted.
- When participating in activities ON the water, such as swimming, boating, kayaking, river tubing, etc. students must wear life jackets.
- Students should only swim in locations where a certified life-guard is present.
- Please ensure that students wear helmets when cycling or horseback riding. It's the law in BC, but not in many other countries.

Activities in General:

- Some of the international students' best experiences have to do with participation in activities both in the school and in the community.
- Many new students need encouragement to participate in activities because of shyness, because of language difficulties or because the concept of participation is new to them.
- The schools offer many possibilities for extra-curricular activities such as sports or clubs. Please encourage your student to become involved.
- The community also provides a host of activities. Again, we encourage you to help your student become involved.
- Our host parents can help by volunteering to coordinate an activity that may involve a small or large group of students.
- Feel free to offer a variety of small group activities which would help to "break the ice" for everyone.
- There may be several 'official' International Program activities arranged by program staff, in which all international students are expected to participate.

## **CHAPERONES & VOLUNTEER DRIVERS**

- We typically need chaperones for student activities such as overnight trips to Victoria or Seattle or Whistler. Please be prepared to participate in some of these activities with your student. As a chaperone, your expenses will be paid, and if your own children are age-appropriate, they are welcome to join the activity. (Your children will pay the same fees as the international students.)
- If possible, we use a school bus for student activities. However, for many activities we do not have enough students to cover the cost of the bus (particularly during 2<sup>nd</sup> semester when many students have already returned home and our numbers are lower). Sometime we cannot offer these activities unless we have parent drivers. Your participation is greatly appreciated.
- All host parents must have a current School District Volunteer Driver Form on file. In addition, we require an updated Drivers Abstract annually. The Drivers Abstract is provided free by ICBC and is emailed to you immediately when you call and request it: 1-800-950-1498

## HOST FAMILY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & SUGGESTIONS

This information is intended to address the broad range of concerns of homestay parents.

### 1. Why do foreign students come to British Columbia?

Students come for a variety of reasons:

- for a short-term cultural experience
- for a one-year intensive English program
- to become more fluent in English, which will lead to greater education or employment opportunities in their home countries
- to achieve BC Graduation because they have not succeeded in more competitive education systems in their own countries
- to achieve BC Graduation and apply to university in North America because admission to top universities is limited in their home countries
- to experience Canadian culture and lifestyle
- a desire to experience life abroad
- as a member of an exchange program
- their parents have sent them

**Suggestions:** *Talk to your student about her/his reasons for coming. Help to set academic goals and language goals based on those reasons. Help them make a plan, which will lead to success in achieving the goals.*

### 2. What am I as a homestay parent expected to provide?

As a home-stay parent you are expected to provide essentially what you would normally provide for your own family:

- a private bedroom with a window, adequate dresser and closet space, a desk and reading lamp
- three wholesome meals a day and snacks as required
- a quiet, adequately lit and heated study space
- hot water and facilities for daily bathing
- laundry (you may expect a student to do their own laundry if you wish, but many will not have any experience and you will have to provide detailed instructions on the use of your machines, etc.)
- emotional support if the student suffers from homesickness, difficulties at school, etc.
- academic support (help with homework if possible, communicate with teachers, attend parent-teacher-student interviews, pick up report cards, etc.)
- include the student in family outings, trips to restaurants, special occasions, recreational activities
- provide access to the common living areas of the house

**Suggestions:**

- *Early in the homestay, have a conversation with your student about expectations (yours and the student's).*
- *Reach a mutual agreement about the appropriate amount of computer use and telephone time.*
- *Discuss how much interaction the student and the family will have and the kinds of activities in which you will participate together.*
- *Discuss these issues regularly. Situations change as the student's understanding of our culture develops and as their English improves.*

### 3. What kinds of things should the student pay for?

- clothes
- school supplies and extra curricular lessons or activities
- toiletries
- all long-distance phone calls; many students buy phone cards or arrange a pay-as-you-go cell phone plan; do not sign students up for cell phone contracts; do not buy a cell phone contract in your name.
- medicines and medications of all kinds
- any dental work
- haircuts or other personal services
- personal entertainment and expenses (If your family is going out for dinner or to a movie you should pay for the student. If the student chooses to eat in a restaurant or go to a movie with friends, the student should pay.)
- costs associated with participation in school-sponsored activities such as graduation ceremonies, school dances, field trips, extra-curricular sports, costs related to individual certification, etc.
- postage stamps, books, magazines, CDs, posters, etc.
- costs related to renewal of student study permits and airplane tickets home

#### School Expenses Students Must Pay:

- refundable cafeteria uniform deposit
- rental or purchase of their own instrument if they take band
- school yearbook
- grad fees for graduating students and optional program fees
- athletic fees if they join school sports teams
- optional extracurricular trips or other optional school activities

*Suggestions: Please discuss this list with your student.*

### 4. What kinds of expenses does the program cover?

The fees that students pay cover the following:

- school tuition
- medical insurance fees
- school agenda, locker, and textbook deposit fee
- homestay payments

*Suggestions: Discuss this with your student so that expectations are clear.*

### 5. What problems can I expect at the start?

Students may suffer from several overlapping conditions for the first few weeks or in some cases, even months:

- Culture Shock: Culture shock is what people experience when they are suddenly immersed in a culture which is different from their own. "Culture" means the largely unwritten patterns of behavior that govern the lives of a particular group of people.
- Culture shock comes from the realization that basic assumptions about life and familiar ways of behaving are no longer appropriate or useful.

- Remember that your student is struggling with the following new (and in many cases, strange) things: language, climate, community, customs, food, home, family, behaving and ways of showing emotions. It is worth noting that if you as a host family have had little experience in another culture, then you may experience some culture shock yourselves.
- Jet lag: most students have traveled through several time zones to reach Mission. They may suffer from the effects of jet lag for up to two weeks, including sleeping problems, drowsiness at the wrong time of day, loss of appetite, general fatigue, and disorientation.
- Homesickness: many students have left their family, friends and pets for the first time, and they are far away. Natural feelings of homesickness may be further exacerbated by culture shock.
- Loneliness: students may feel very alone in this strange new situation. They may feel like outsiders in the community, in the school, even in your home; limited English ability may contribute to their feelings of isolation.
- Teenage mood swings: even though they come from another country, they are still teenagers dealing with the physical and emotional changes that all teenagers go through.

All of the above may be exhibited in any of the following ways: quiet, unresponsive, withdrawn behaviour, crying spells, isolation from the family (long periods alone in the bedroom), lack of appetite, despondent behaviour, depression, anger, anxiety, moodiness, lethargy, stress related headaches or stomach upset.

**Suggestions:**

- *If you suspect that your student is suffering from any of the above conditions, talk about it, explaining that it is perfectly normal, that it will get better in time, and that you would like to help.*
- *Plan some outings or activities together.*
- *Encourage your student to phone or skype or email their parents.*
- *Ask about the family and life in the home country.*
- *Look at photographs together.*
- *Plan topics of evening conversations.*
- *Develop the habit of watching a weekly TV show together or taking walks together.*
- *Help the student build an active and busy life in this community.*
- *Help her/him develop friendships with people of a similar age.*
- *Talking through difficult times can lead to a closer and more caring relationship.*
- *Card games or Board games are a great way to engage your student in an activity where she must speak English*
- *Your student will receive a comprehensive Orientation Package which will outline information they will need about medical issues, manners, Canadian culture, how to survive in a host family. Ask to see the Student Orientation package and go over it with them to ensure that they understand. There is a lot of information, so you may want to do it slowly, over several weeks.*

## 6. What kinds of rules should I have for the student?

The student should be expected to follow whatever rules you have for other members of your household. The following are suggestions, **some of which you may choose to adjust for the age of your student.**

### Students Should:

- Be at home at a reasonable time on school nights, unless participating in an organized activity e.g. swimming lessons, study groups, etc. ISP Program guideline for curfew Sunday-Thursday is 10pm.
- Obey an age-appropriate curfew for weekend nights – ISP Program guideline for curfew is 12am Friday and Saturday. (If you haven't had experience parenting a teen and need some guidelines, contact the Homestay Coordinator.)
- Let you know where they are at all times.
- Respect your rules regarding smoking.
- Never buy or use drugs or alcohol; this includes beer, wine, or cannabis, as well as hard liquor or drugs.
- Attend school every day that school is in session unless they are ill.
- Assist with some duties in the home. Many students are not used to doing chores. They may often come from families that hire household help. You will need to demonstrate the tasks that you would like them to do. For example, if you wish your student to do their own laundry, you will need to demonstrate how to use your machines.
- Ask ahead of time if they need rides to special events, or if they wish to have friends overnight, etc.
- For travel out of the Mission School District, complete and submit an "Out of District Travel Form", available from the International Program office or online: [www.studyinmission.ca](http://www.studyinmission.ca)

**Please Note: Students will NOT be given permission to go away together for overnight trips without appropriate adult supervision.**

### Homestay Parents Should:

- Feel free to limit the number of overnight" sleep-overs," or camping trip, which are so popular as weekend activities. **Never allow your student to attend these events without checking that there will be adequate supervision by adults, and age appropriate activities.**
- Never leave the student alone overnight; appropriate adult supervision must be arranged if you are away. Check with the Homestay Coordinator if you plan to be away.
- Never allow students to leave the community overnight without carefully checking to ensure where the student is going and what adult supervision will be provided. Ensure that the 'Out of District' travel form is completed 5 days prior to the event.
- Never allow students to drive the family car.
- Provide additional guidelines as necessary: showers/bathing, table manners, other manners, use of household appliances, laundry, bringing friends home, etc.

### Suggestions:

- *Discuss your rules early and often, making sure that the student understands.*
- *Deal with a few rules at a time.*
- *Reach mutual agreement about as many rules as possible.*
- *Explain the reasons for your rules.*
- *Enforce your rules...do not let the student get away with breaking them.*
- *Be fair and firm. Establish reasonable consequences for breaking rules.*

## **7. What about food/manners?**

Canadian food can be a problem for international students at first. Certainly, the food you serve in your home will be different from the food they are used to. People worldwide derive great comfort from the familiar and favourite foods. Eating times, table manners, and methods of serving and presenting food will also be different for the student. Most students adjust quickly to a Canadian diet but some take longer than others. Also, table manners can vary greatly in other cultures. If your student displays manners inappropriate to your expectations, you will need to explain and demonstrate the proper Canadian behaviour.

### ***Suggestions:***

- *Give your student a tour of the kitchen and the refrigerator, naming items, explaining what they are.*
- *Ask the student what different items are found in the cupboard and refrigerator at home. Talk about favourite foods and what is eaten at mealtimes at home.*
- *Take the student food shopping with you, especially to a large food store where various ethnic foods are available.*
- *Ask the student what he would like to take to school for lunch.*
- *Encourage the student to prepare a favourite dish so that you can try it and learn to cook it.*
- *Have a good variety of fresh fruits and vegetables on hand.*
- *Rice and noodles are an important part of Asian diets. If your student wants rice or noodles every day, please make the items available, even for breakfast.*
- *If you want your student to make their own lunch, then you will have to demonstrate how to make a sandwich, pack the leftovers, and show them any other items that they may include in their lunch.*

## **8. What if my student gets sick?** Please refer to the section on *Medical Insurance*.

- Inform the school if the student is ill.

### ***Suggestions:***

- *Students on Guard.Me® StudentGuard® insurance can use your family doctor, or the Cedar Care Clinic, 32423 Lougheed Hwy. (corner of Lougheed Hwy. and Cedar Valley Connector)*
- *Discuss illness with the student in one of your early conversations.*
- *Ask the student what kinds of medical problems have occurred in the past and what the usual treatments are.*
- *Explain your approach to treatment of common illnesses.*
- *Please note: students will often bring with them, non-prescription medication for common ailments, such as headaches, stomach upset, etc. If students want to use meds from their home country, it's o.k.*
- *If problems persist, they should consult a physician. If a student needs a translator for a medical issue, please contact the Home Stay Coordinator or International Program Director to arrange this support.*

## **9. How can I best prepare my family and myself for the homestay experience?**

It's a good idea to discuss the expectations of all family members before the student arrives. Children may think that the student will be like a new brother or sister or that they will become best friends. In fact, this often doesn't happen. Sharing the same home does not guarantee that your own children and the student will have anything in common with each other. An honest discussion about the difficulties of forming a cross-cultural friendship, with the added barrier of language, can avoid disappointment. The more you learn about the country and culture that your student comes from, the better able you will be to understand and support them. You should, at the very least, have an idea of where the country is and what kind of an environment your student likely comes from.

**Suggestions:**

- **Prepare a welcome for your student: a sign, a gift, flowers, or any small gesture of welcome.**
- Visit the library and take out some books about the country your student comes from.
- If you have the books on hand when the student arrives they can be the basis of conversation about the country.
- Make a list of things to talk about and things to do during the first few days and weeks. Talk to an experienced homestay parent.

**10. What should I do during the first few days?**

- Take the time to learn the correct pronunciation of your student's name.
- Keep the student busy but also arrange for some time alone to compensate for jet lag fatigue.
- Encourage a phone call home soon after arrival.
- Speak to the parents yourself saying how pleased you are to have their son or daughter with you; even if they don't understand English, they will appreciate the gesture. Learn their parents' names.
- Introduce your student to extended family members, neighbours and close friends.
- Write down names to help him remember them.
- Discuss how you would like the student to address you and other family members.
- Teach your student the phone number, how to use the phone and phone book, how to use a pay phone and how to call home collect, and give them your emergency numbers.
- Help arrange for a pay-as-you-go cell phone. Do not sign students up for cell phone contracts, and do not purchase a cell phone contract on behalf of the student.
- Take your student to the post office and explain how to buy stamps and send packages.
- Take the student to the bank rather than have them carrying too much money or leaving it at home. If your student has a debit card, help them learn how to use it and be sure to impress the importance of never telling anyone the PIN number.
- Show girls where they can buy personal supplies and discuss how you would like them to dispose of sanitary items in your home.
- Visit local points of interest and make sure the student knows the route from your home to school.
- Go over school information and discuss the plans and the times for getting to school.
- Ask the student what they would like to do.
- Provide the student with a transit schedule and go over it with them.
- Take the student on a bus ride yourself to show them the route in your neighborhood.
- Relax! Focus on making the student comfortable and your own feelings of nervousness and anxiety will disappear.
- Celebrate small milestones right away (the end of the first week, the first month, etc.).
- Establish a pattern of daily conversation. Have the student help to make a list of conversation topics to get through the first few weeks.

## CONDUCT WITH RESPECT TO HOSTING STUDENTS

A homestay family is an integral part of the life of an international student. The family provides more than just room and board; you provide a home away from home. Caring supervision and parenting on the part of the homestay family are an essential part of the international student's growth and development.

International students are teenagers, and just like Canadian teenagers, they exhibit varying degrees of confidence and doubt, responsibility and forgetfulness, industriousness and laziness. However, unlike their Canadian counterparts, international students are dealing with these issues far from their parents, in a culture that is very different and in a foreign language. The keys to success with international students, as with all teenagers, are patience, clarity, consistency, flexibility, trust, and good communication.

As host parents, you are the responsible adult, NOT the best friend of the student. You are expected to act "in a kind and judicious" manner with respect to your dealings with your student.

Physical discipline is not permitted under any circumstances. Some international students come from cultures where physical punishment is allowed and common in their homes and in their classrooms. Some students may expect this type of punishment if they disobey our rules in the host family or in their class. However, just as it is forbidden and unlawful to use any type of corporal punishment on a child by a teacher, the same rules apply to host parents of an international student in any situation.

A primary responsibility of the host parent is to care for the student and to keep the International Program staff informed about the welfare of the student. That includes informing us of behaviour of other students which may impact on your student, as well as making us aware of potentially dangerous or inappropriate personal relationships.

Issues with respect to hosting students include:

### **Safety**

1. As host parents, you must be aware that safety is key. Students must be properly supervised at all times. Students should not be left alone overnight for any reason. We will arrange for care of your student in situations where an emergency arises. If you plan to be away, make certain your student stays with an adult who has been approved by this Program.
2. Do not allow your student to be 'wandering at large' at night, especially alone. The key is to make certain you know where your student is at all times.
3. If a student asks to participate in a 'sleep over', make certain to check the particulars with the adult supervisors at the other home ... always.

### **Relationship protocols**

As you know, different cultures have different protocols about personal space. We ask you to "be smart". For your own protection, take a very careful approach to hugging, touching or showing affection to your student. Actions are easily misinterpreted by young people and others around you.

### **Examples:**

- Japanese students rarely have a warm, physically demonstrative relationship with their natural parents. Therefore, be cautious in demonstrating physical affection until you are sure of your relationship with the student.



- Latin students are very demonstrative, as a general rule. Again, you must take a cautious approach.
- Some European and Latin American students often greet each other with hugs and kisses on the cheek; this is normal. In fact, many of these students consider Canadians 'cold' because they do not demonstrate this open affection. (Do not misinterpret overt signs of friendliness as being any more than that.)
- If we receive any kind of information about 'inappropriate conduct' by anyone, adult or student, in relation to an International Program student, then we must investigate immediately. **This is a legal requirement.**

**Please note these points:**

- Adults should remember to dress appropriately while in the company of students.
- Adults should not use 'sexually suggestive' language or tell off-colour jokes in front of students.
- Overt or excessive displays of affection in public are completely inappropriate.
- Some older teenagers may want a warm family relationship with their host family.
- Some students may just want room and board and personal privacy. Asian students, in particular, often do not want anything other than a 'formal' relationship with their host family.
- There are always exceptions, and the attitude varies with each individual. Don't take it personally if your student prefers the more formal relationship. Each student is different.
- **Under no circumstances** serve alcoholic beverages to your International student in your home. Sometimes, we may serve our own older teens a drink on special occasions such as Christmas dinner. Your international student **cannot** be offered this "adult" privilege. This rule is for your own protection. It's not legal to provide any kind of alcoholic beverage, to your student, even in your own homes.

If you have any questions or concerns, we encourage you to seek answers or advice from the Program Director or the Homestay Coordinator.

## **HELPFUL IDEAS AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES**

Here are a few suggestions when helping your new students at homework time.

### **WRITTEN WORK**

Let them work on their own unless they request help. In other words, help them if they ask.

Don't correct too much of their written work. ***The teachers need to see their mistakes because the lessons are often based on what they need to know.*** If their work comes in with no mistakes, then the teachers have no knowledge of the student's real skill level in the subject area or written English.

If they ask you how to say a certain expression, by all means tell them, but don't go through and correct their whole paper/assignment.

If they ask how to spell a word you have two choices:

1. Give them the first 3 letters and have them look it up in a dictionary.
2. Tell them how to spell it.

(Use method #1 only some of the time. It can be very frustrating.)

Don't write on their work. If you want to demonstrate a word, do it on scrap paper.

Students should do their own work ... they should have done 99% of written work themselves. Keep an eye out for plagiarism. This is a serious offense and students can fail the course or be sent home for plagiarism.

Encourage students to write thank you notes to anyone who has done something special for them; perhaps someone who has taken them to see a movie or boating for a day.

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT**

**Watch a television program together and discuss it. Watching the same program every week is a good idea. In this way, the students hear consistent language. Here are examples of questions to ask for discussion:**

What did you think of Sam? Why?  
What do you think Sam should have done?  
When might someone in (Korea, Japan, China, etc.) do this?  
What might someone in (Korea, Japan, China, etc.) have done?  
When is it not good to do this?  
What do you think he meant by that?  
What did he mean?  
How is this the same as ...?  
What causes this?  
What do you think will happen next?  
What is going to happen next?  
Why did she do that?

**Watch the evening news together and discuss it. Ask questions which require more than yes or no for an answer. Examples of open-ended questions are:**

What do you think about ...?  
How does .... work?  
What is the reason for ...?  
Tell me about .... ?  
Why do you think ... acted that way?  
What would you do if .... ?  
Please explain that to me.

### **OTHER IDEAS FOR HELPING YOUR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT**

1. Try to talk to students as much as possible at the dinner table or after supper before homework time. Please speak slowly and clearly.
2. Engage in open-ended conversations. Try to encourage more than “yes” and “no” answers.
3. Encourage students to have a study time each evening. (New students should have a minimum of one hour of homework per night.) If you find your student has no homework, check with their teachers. Sometimes students don't understand the assignment, or it's too difficult for them. All teachers are available by email: [firstname.lastname@mpsd.ca](mailto:firstname.lastname@mpsd.ca)

4. Students who have little English language ability are enrolled in a program of studies that will include electives, such as art or drama, where there may be no homework. In this case, encourage the student to do some extra vocabulary development by encouraging them to read magazines, comic books, watch English-language television, etc.
5. Encourage them to talk to Canadian students/people as much as possible.
6. Be open and non-judgmental in discussions. This attitude encourages students to express their point of view.

### **TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

The student's native country

The student's family

Canada

One province of Canada

A TV sitcom

A movie

Festivals in the student's country

Holidays and special celebrations here

Teenagers

Education

Sports (choose a specific one)

Music

Hobbies

Favourite pastimes

Economics of the student's country

Politics of the student's country

Food, beverages, meals

Customs

Leisure activities particular to B.C. (hiking, kayaking, canoeing, camping, hockey, skating)

### **TUTORS, ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE & TRANSLATION SERVICES**

During the school year, your student may request or require the assistance of an academic tutor.

Do not employ a tutor who can not provide a recent 'Criminal Record' check. The Mission Public School District Teachers' Association may be able to provide you with an updated list of available tutors. You can also contact the counselor or International Support teacher or the International program staff to assist you.

If you need to use an interpreter or native language tutor, check with the Homestay Coordinator for these services. You may require this support in emergency situations, or for a difficult host family issue.

## HOST PARENTS' CHECK LIST

This list may help you deal with some of the issues you will face as you welcome a student into your home.

Please make sure you complete this list and that you contact the office if you have concerns.

- I have given my student an orientation to the neighbourhood and the community.
- Bus routes and schedules have been explained. Bus passes can be purchased at the library or the Leisure Centre
- A bank account is set up; be aware that sometimes students have difficulty accessing funds when they arrive; help them sort out their banking issues
- Curfew rules have been discussed
- Information about security in the home (students require a key/or other form of access to home)
- Safety issues discussed, 911, Emergency numbers ...
- Emergency contacts provided; post on door of fridge and/or beside front door
- House 'rules' discussed and understood
- Leisure opportunities have been outlined; Leisure Centre, family activities, etc.
- Travel rules discussed
- Health insurance discussed
- Medical procedures discussed
- Telephone and e-mail rules discussed
- Food concerns discussed
- School schedules and concerns addressed

*Thank you again for welcoming our international students into your home and your family!*

## Student/Host Family "HOMEWORK"

Student name \_\_\_\_\_

(Student, please tell your host family how to say your name correctly.)

Family name \_\_\_\_\_

(Family, please tell your student what they should call each person in your home.)

Student: Please ask these questions of your homestay family and write the answer in the space provided. After that, please keep it handy at your homestay.

1. What time should I get up?  
Will you wake me or should I use an alarm clock?
2. Do I make my own breakfast or will you make it for me?  
This is what I eat for breakfast in my home:  
What may I have for breakfast in my homestay?
3. I need a lunch for school each day.  
Do I make my own lunch or will you make it for me?  
This is what I usually eat for lunch during the school week:  
What foods may I have for my school lunch?
4. Please tell me and show me how I will get to and from school.  
What time do you want me to come home from school?
5. What time do we eat dinner? I am used to eating at this time:  
What can I do to help you to prepare dinner or to clean up after?  
These are the foods that I like to eat:  
These are the foods that I do not like to eat:  
These are foods that I cannot eat:  
May I come with you when you shop for groceries?  
May I prepare a meal for your family sometime?
6. Who does the laundry?  
When?  
How?  
Where can I hang wet clothes?
7. When may I shower or take a bath?  
Which bathroom do I use?  
How long may I take for my shower or bath?  
Please show me how to use the shower/bath and where to place bathroom garbage and wet towels.

8. Please tell me about using the telephone.  
Which phone should I use for local calls?  
When may I make calls?  
When may I receive calls?  
How long may I stay on the line?  
Will you please take me to buy a prepaid phone card to make long distance calls?
9. What time does everyone go to bed?  
What time do you expect me to go to bed?
10. What chores (house work) would you like me to do?
11. Are there any special rules for your home?
12. Could you please show me your home on a map?  
Could you please show me where my friends live in homestay?
13. Where can I buy:
  - postage stamps?
  - personal items?
  - gifts to take home?
14. Where can I do my banking, etc.?
15. May I use your computer?
  - to play games?
  - to send and receive e-mail?
  - to do homework?
16. May I invite my friends over?  
When may I go to visit friends?
17. I would like you to know this about me:
18. Is there anything else that you would like to know about me?
19. Is there anything that you would like to tell me about you or your family?
20. I would like to know this about you or your family:

Thank you ☺