

# COLUMBIA COLLEGE



## HOMESTAY PROGRAM STUDENT HANDBOOK

## LIVING WITH A CANADIAN FAMILY

Homestay allows the student to live with a Canadian family and experience the Canadian culture at an affordable price.

Vancouver is very multicultural. Therefore, our families come from very diverse ethnic backgrounds. Some have been born and raised in Canada while others have immigrated to Canada many years ago. They are all Canadian.

A typical host family can consist of a single person, couples (married or not), with or without children, of all ages, and from economic backgrounds.

Although each home is different, all our hosts are kind, caring and curious about people from other countries. They are happy to share lives as respected and active members of the household.

Each host family has been visited and carefully selected by a College representative, usually the Homestay Coordinator.

### Our families will:

Provide a safe environment, nutritional meals, and fond memories of the student's time spent in Canada.

### Homestay with a Canadian family will:

Allow the student to make Canadian friends while in the home, and from other parts of the world as most of our families will host more than one student at a time. Students will share their culture, learn about Canadian culture plus improve their English.

Host families will provide each student: their own furnished room with a bed, bedding, towels, a desk, a wardrobe and three healthy meals a day. They will also have use of the living room, television, laundry and wireless internet.

Laundry soap and toilet paper are included in the homestay fee. If over usage is a concern they may be asked to pay additional fees.

It is very important the student contacts the Homestay Coordinator if our hosts are not meeting these expectations!

## SUCCEEDING IN HOMESTAY

Living in homestay can be both exciting and overwhelming. Below are some helpful hints that will assist the student in succeeding in homestay.

- **Communication is extremely important. The student should get to know their host family and ask questions before they arrive in homestay.**
- **Canadian food is very different. Students should be willing to try new foods while in homestay. Be open-minded and don't expect families to make special meals for you.**
- **The student should speak English at all time.**
- **The student should be respectful towards the host family. Being polite and using manners is necessary.**
- **The student is expected to follow the host families' rules in the home. Each family will have different rules that the student will be made aware.**
- **In Canada it is common to take your shoes off when entering the home. Please respect this custom.**
- **Absolutely no smoking, hot plates, kettles, candles, incense are allowed in the student's room.**
- **The student will be given a house key. Do not lose it! Some hosts may request the student replace the entire lock (not just the key) at the student's expense.**
- **The door should always be locked when the student leaves and returns home. Check to ensure the door is locked when leaving.**
- **Respect the rights, privacy and beliefs of the host family and of any other students in the home.**
- **The student should NOT go into any other bedrooms uninvited.**
- **Bedroom windows should be closed and bedroom heaters off when the student leaves the home. If the student is cold ask for extra blankets, a heater, or wear slippers.**

- The student should ask the host family if they can have friends over before they invite anyone. Overnight guests may or may not be permitted and should be discussed with the host.
- Host families may sometimes provide rides for their student, this is not an expectation. The student should familiarize themselves with public transit.
- The host family may have pets. Be nice to them! They are important to the host family. If the student does not like pets, keep the bedroom door closed so that the animals do not enter.
- Columbia College has implemented a curfew for custodianship students (when to be home). Depending on the student's age will determine their curfew.
- The home environment is quiet between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- The student is responsible to pay for any damages they make while living in the home such as bedding, household appliances, furniture, etc.
- Absolutely no drugs or alcohol in the homestay at any time.
- Downloading or the usage of any pornographic sites is prohibited.
- The student should be mindful when downloading movies and watching videos. Not all host families have unlimited internet access and the student may be asked to pay additional fees if the internet bill has increased since they moved in.
- Host families may go into the student's bedroom with little or no notice to ensure their home is treated with respect. They will not look through personal belonging.

Every homestay will have small household chores they expect the student to take part in such as; keeping their room clean, doing their own laundry, or making their own lunch. The host family will go over these chores when the student arrives.

**Remember homestay is not a hotel, and the members of the family are not there to serve the student. Please treat them with courtesy and respect.**

## HOMESTAY INCLUDES

- Private bedroom, dresser and/or closet, desk, lamp and/or adequate lighting and heat. Bedding and towels included.
- Three meals a day; breakfast, lunch and dinner. A variety of breakfast items such as cold cereal, toast, fruit, yogurt. Canadians typically do not eat a hot breakfast during the week and the student ‘helps themselves’. Lunch is either prepared by the student or by the host and consists of EITHER left overs from the dinner the night before or one sandwich, one piece of fruit and vegetables or something sweet. Dinner is prepared by the host family. It is our biggest meal of the day. If the student is not getting enough food then please speak to the Homestay Coordinator.
- Wireless internet, house key and laundry. Laundry soap is supplied by the host.

**It is very important to have an open-mind when staying in homestay. Homestay is completely different than home. Part of the student’s experience is to become an independent adult with the safety and security of a family that cares for them. Being demanding, having high expectations will only hinder your experience in homestay.**

## WHAT TO BRING

- The student should bring their own toiletries such as body soap, deodorant, shampoo, hair dryer, etc.
- Depending on the time of year, it is advised to research our weather to ensure the student arrives with proper clothing. The host family will assist students on where to purchase clothing at affordable prices.
- Slippers in the winter and flip flops for the shower are optional.
- An umbrella! Vancouver has wet days all year long – be prepared.
- Small amount of Canadian currency to pay for incidentals such as extra days in homestay (if arriving early), compass card, SIM card, snacks.

## HOMESTAY FEES

The homestay fee is \$825.00 per month for adult or non custodianship students 19 and older. The homestay fee is \$900.00 for students who require custodianship while in Canada.

The College will pay the homestay fee to the host family for both adult and custodianship students for the first and last month of homestay which have been prepaid.

Students who request to change homestays (after their first initial home) will be charged a \$100 moving fee.

Custodianship students prepay their homestay fees to the college for one full semester prior to registration. The college will then administer all homestay fees to the host family during that semester.

Adult students are responsible to pay their host family directly after the first initial month of homestay. Homestay is due on the first of every month.

**Please note: Even though adult students have prepaid for two months of homestay the host family is NOT paid for two consecutive months. Host families are paid for only the first and last month of homestay from the college.**

## MOVE IN DATE

Homestay can be available up to 3 days prior to Orientation starting which is the previous month the student is studying. If the student arrives before the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month, they are responsible to pay the host family directly for the remaining nights left in the month at \$30 per night.

If a student arrives after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month (they are studying), the host family will be paid for the full month as they have 'reserved' the room.

If the room is not available until after the 1<sup>st</sup>, the host will be paid for only the nights the student is staying in the home at \$30 per night.

***All adult or non-custodianship students are required to stay in homestay for a minimum of two months, unless homestay is previously arranged on a single month stay.***

## **LEAVING OR CHANGING HOMESTAYS**

Students who leave the homestay program must contact the Homestay Coordinator and complete a Termination Notice form. This form is to be given to their host family 30 days prior to them moving to avoid paying any extra fees.

Host families understand that students will move for various reasons; going back to their country, moving to an apartment with friends, or wanting to live with another Canadian family. Students should not be afraid to leave the homestay, they won't be hurt!

## **CUSTODIANSHIP STUDENTS**

Students who require custodianship will be appointed a custodian from Columbia College while studying at Columbia College. The host family will then take on this role after a short time living with the family. The student must then remain in our Homestay Program until they turn 19, leave Columbia College or obtain a private custodian. Students who are enrolled in our High School or ESL program MUST live with their private custodian if they chose to leave the homestay program.

## **SUPPORT**

### **FEELINGS**

If the student is feeling lonely, homesick or need to talk for any reason, please approach their host family or any staff member at the College. There are many people who care about their well-being and are here to help!

### **SPEAK ENGLISH**

Even if the student is not studying English at the College they should always speak it in front of their host family. It is considered rude to speak another language in front of people who do not understand.

## **PARTICIPATE**

**Time goes by quickly. We suggest that the student takes part in many College and host family activities.**

## **EMERGENCY NUMBER**

**Out of office emergency number (used for emergencies only) 604-671-8525**

**If the student has any questions or concerns regarding their homestay, it is advised that they contact the Homestay Coordinator, Rosemary Mooney at [rmooney@columbiacollege.ca](mailto:rmooney@columbiacollege.ca) Rosemary can assist in resolving any concerns and guide the student when making decisions.**