

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 a very affordable price.

Vancouver is multicultural and so are our host families. They come from very diverse ethnic backgrounds. Some families 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, all ages, and from economic backgrounds.

Each homestay is different, although all are kind, caring and curious people who enjoy learning about the different cultures from around the world. They are happy to share lives as respected and active members of the household.

Each host family has been visited and carefully selected our 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 in the home, and from other parts of the world, especially with many of our host families hosting more than one student in the home. Students will share their culture while learning about Canada, plus improve their English along the way.

Host families will provide each student:

Their own furnished bedroom, bedding, linens, desk or wardrobe, three healthy meals per day, laundry facilities and wireless internet. (Laundry soap and toilet paper are included in the homestay fee).

It is very important the student contacts the Homestay Coordinator if their homestay is not providing this.

SUCCEEDING IN HOMESTAY

Living in homestay can be both exciting and overwhelming, especially when this is likely the student's first time away from home. Our host families are well experienced and understand the challenges the student may encounter. They are here to help the student adjust to Canadian living.

Below are some helpful hints that will assist the student in adjusting in homestay.

- **Communication is extremely important. The student should get to know their host family before they arrive by emailing and introducing themselves. Asking questions about their family, the neighbourhood and life in Canada will better prepare themselves on what to expect. This will make their initial first-time meeting also less stressful. Natural parents are welcome to introduce themselves to the host family putting their minds at ease knowing their child will be well taken care of.**
- **Canadian food is very different. Students should be open minded to trying new foods, and not expect special meals to be prepared for them.**
- **The student should speak English at all time.**
- **The student should be respectful towards the host family. Being polite and using manners is a must!**
- **The student is expected to follow the host families' rules in the home. Each family will have a different set of rules the student will be made aware of.**
- **In Canada it is common to take off your shoes when entering the home. Please respect this custom.**
- **Absolutely no smoking, hot plates, kettles, candles, or 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. This is costly.**
- **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 borrow items in the home without permission or go into any other bedrooms uninvited.**
- **Bedroom windows should be locked and portable heaters off when the student leaves the home. Students who are not accustomed to our weather should be prepared for colder temperatures, especially during the night. Ask for extra blankets, or a portable heater and wear weather appropriate clothing. Slippers throughout the day are recommended.**
- **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 beforehand.**
- **Host families may provide rides to their student on occasion, 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 their 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. Students who consistently break curfew will be addressed, natural parents notified and may be asked to leave homestay.**
- **The home environment is quiet between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.**
- **The student should ask how to use household appliances to avoid any damages. The student is responsible to pay for any damages made while living in the home such as bedding, household appliances, furniture, re-keying of locks, exterminator, fire or flood damage, 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.**

- On occasion, host families may go into the student's bedroom with little or no notice. They will not look through personal belonging, instead be assured the student is respecting their home.

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.

Homestay is not a hotel! The host 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, heat, linens, laundry facilities, house key, internet and 3 meals.
- Listing the student's food likes and dislikes on their Homestay Application prior to being placed in homestay is important to avoid being placed with a family that will not accommodate their food requests.
- Breakfast is usually a cold or continental meal which may include; cereal, toast, fruit, yogurt. The student will 'help themselves' to breakfast during the week and/or on the weekend. Some hosts may prepare a hot breakfast on the weekend.
- Lunch is either prepared by the student or by the host, and will consists of food from the dinner before, or a sandwich, piece of fruit, vegetables or something sweet.
- Dinner is prepared by the host. It is our biggest meal of the day. The student should communicate to the host their dinner plans if they plan not to be home. Food is very expensive in Canada and we do not waste it.
- The student should speak to the Homestay Coordinator if they have any food concerns.

It is important to be adaptable when staying in homestay, it is completely different than the student's home. The student will grow into a confident, independent, person while having the safety and security of a host family. Being demanding, or having high expectations will hinder their relationship with their host family, and can lead to being asked to leave the home.

WHAT TO BRING

- The student should bring their own toiletries; body soap, deodorant, shampoo, hair dryer, lap top, cell phone/cell phone charger, etc.
- Research our weather to ensure the student arrives with proper clothing. The host family will assist the student on where to purchase seasonal clothing at affordable prices.
- Most homestay have the bedrooms located in the above-ground basement. They are cool in the summer and winter months. It is recommended the student pack slippers and flip flops for the shower (optional).
- An umbrella! Vancouver has wet days all year long – be prepared.
- Small amount of Canadian currency for incidentals such as extra nights in homestay (if arriving early), Compass card, SIM card, snacks.

HOMESTAY FEES

Vancouver is extremely expensive and living in homestay is the most economical way a student can live while studying abroad. A one-bedroom apartment without utilities, internet, laundry or food, can range upward of \$1800 per month.

Full homestay fees are required prior to the student being placed in homestay. Do not wait until their visa is approved before paying fees or applying for homestay.

Adult or Non-Custodial students; \$1000 per month. Homestay fees are paid directly to the host family on the 1st of every month in cash. A receipt from the host can be issued if necessary.

Adult students prepay two months of homestay fees prior to arriving. The College will pay the host family for the student's first initial month of homestay. From the second month onward, the student is responsible to pay their host directly \$1000 in cash, due on the 1st of every month.

The student's second month of prepaid homestay is used to pay the host family for the student's last month in homestay ONLY. When they are about to leave the homestay program altogether.

Custodianship students; \$1100.00 per month. The College will administer the prepaid homestay fee to the host family (every month) for the entire semester.

A homestay invoice will be prepared 6 weeks prior to the semester ending indicating the homestay fees that are due prior to the student registering for the following semester.

Moving Fee: Students who request to change homestays (after their first initial month) will be charged a \$200 moving fee per occurrence.

Private Bathroom: (Upon availability) The student will pay the host family directly \$100 per month in cash, on the 1st of every month.

Special Dietary Requests: (Upon availability) halal, gluten-free, lactose free, vegan. The student will pay the host family directly \$200 per month in cash, on the 1st of every month.

MOVE IN DATE

Homestay is available 3 days prior to Orientation starting for that semester. If the student arrives before the 1st of the month, they are responsible to pay the host family directly for the remaining nights left in the month at \$40 per night, in cash. The student should be prepared to have Canadian funds to pay their host when arriving.

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

The student must move out of homestay when they are no longer studying at the College.

All students; adult or custodial 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 plan to leave the homestay program must contact the Homestay Coordinator 30 days before wanting to move. A Notice of Termination form will be given to the student to complete with their host. Sufficient notice is required to avoid being charged additional fees.

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

CUSTODIANSHIP STUDENTS

Students who require custodianship will be appointed a custodian from Columbia College while studying at Columbia College and living in homestay. The host family will take on this role after a short time the student is living with the host family. The student must remain in the Homestay Program until they turn 19, leave Columbia College, or obtain a private custodian.

Columbia College does not obtain custodianship if the student does not live in a Columbia College homestay. They must obtain a private custodian outside of the homestay program.

PRIVATE CUSTODIAN

Students who arrive without a private custodian (the host family has become their custodian) and wish to leave homestay, or have been asked to leave homestay, are under 19, **must** obtain a private custodian. A family member or friend can take on this role.

The requirements of a private custodian include, being a Canadian citizen, or having (PR) Permanent Residency status, residing in the lower mainland, 25 years or older, and able to speak English fluently. This new appointed private custodian will be the College's point of contact while the student is studying at the college.

Students who arrive with a private custodian can stay in Homestay and are considered an adult student with adult homestay fees being applied.

SUPPORT

The college offers an abundance of support before and during the student is at the College. If the student is feeling lonely, anxious, homesick or need to talk for any reason, please approach their host family, the Homestay Coordinator, or any staff member at the College. There are many people who care about their well-being and are here to help!

SPEAK ENGLISH

Speaking English while your host family is present is respectful. It is considered rude if the student is speaking another language their host family cannot understand.

PARTICIPATE

Time goes by quickly. We highly suggest that the student takes part in many of the College's or host family's activities. It is a great way to make new friends and feel part of a community.

EMERGENCY NUMBER

In the event of an emergency only, please call 604-671-8525.

Any other inquiries, please contact the Homestay Coordinator, Rosemary Mooney via TEAMS or email rmooney@columbiacollege.ca.