

COLUMBIA COLLEGE



HOMESTAY PROGRAM

STUDENT HANDBOOK - 2023

LIVING IN HOMESTAY

Homestay allows the student to live with a Canadian family and experience the Canadian culture at an 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 with or without children, of all ages, and from economic backgrounds.

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

Each host family is carefully selected by our Homestay Coordinator. A qualifying host must provide important paperwork including valid criminal record check along with an extensive home interview. The family is re-visited every two years thereafter.

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 form friendships with the host family and other students living in the home. Students will share their culture while adjusting to the Canadian way.

Host families will provide each student:

Their own furnished bedroom, bedding, linens, desk or wardrobe, meals (if requested), laundry facilities, wireless internet and a house key. (Laundry soap and toilet paper are included in the homestay fee).

The student should notify the Homestay Coordinator if the host family is not meeting these expectations or if the student does not feel safe in their homestay.

SUCCEEDING IN HOMESTAY

Living in homestay can be both exciting and overwhelming, especially if it is the student's first time away from home. Our host families are here to help! They will assist the student with challenges they may encounter.

Below are the expectations when staying in homestay.

- **Communication is extremely important. Get to know the host family by emailing them prior to arriving. Natural parents also welcome to contact the host family at this time.**
- **Be polite and respectful towards the host family. Manners are a must!**
- **Have an open-mind to Canadian food. It is very different. Being demanding stating the foods they want to eat can hinder the relationship between the student and host. The student may be asked to leave homestay.**
- **Speak English in the presence of the host family.**
- **Follow the host families' rules in the home. Ask questions.**
- **Respect the rights, privacy and beliefs of the host family and of any other student in the home.**
- **Absolutely NO smoking; cigarettes, marijuana, vaping or drinking alcohol if under the age of 19.**
- **No hot plates, kettles, candles, or incense allowed in the student's room.**
- **The student will be given a house key. Do not lose it! The entire lock (not just the key) may be replaced at the student's expense. This is costly.**
- **Always lock the door when leaving or returning home. Double check it is locked.**
- **Do NOT borrow items in the home without permission or go into any other bedrooms uninvited.**
- **Bedroom windows should be closed and portable heaters off (if given) when leaving the home. Be prepared to experience colder temperatures. Ask for extra blankets, or a portable heater, and wear weather appropriate clothing. Slippers are highly recommended.**

- Ask if friends can come over before inviting them. Overnight guests may or may not be permitted and should be discussed with the host beforehand.
- No relations with other homestay students living in the same homestay.
- In Canada pets are part of the family. Be nice to them! Keep your bedroom door closed to avoid them entering.
- Custodianship students have a curfew (when to be home). If curfew is not followed, natural parents are notified and the student may be asked to leave the homestay program.
- Quiet time in the home is between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Do not speak loudly when talking to family back home during quiet time.
- Ask how to use household appliances to avoid any damages. The student is responsible to pay for damages such as bedding, household appliances, furniture, re-keying of locks, exterminator, fire or flood damage, etc.
- Downloading or the usage of any pornographic sites is prohibited.
- Host families MAY go into the student's bedroom with little or no notice to ensure the student is respecting their home.

Homestay is not a hotel! The student has requested to live with a Canadian host family. Please treat them with courtesy and respect.

HELPFUL HINTS

- Complete the Homestay Application in full when applying. It can avoid being placed with a family that will not accommodate requests, such as food.
- Canadian breakfast is usually cold or continental style, and 'help yourself'. It may include; cereal, toast, fruit, yogurt. Some hosts may prepare a hot breakfast on the weekend.
- Lunch is prepared by either the student or host. It can consist of food from the dinner before (leftovers) or a sandwich with a piece of fruit.

- Dinner is prepared by the host. It is our biggest meal of the day. Students should communicate their dinner plans and if they will not be home. Food is very expensive in Canada and we do not waste it.
- Speak to the Homestay Coordinator if there are any food concerns.

WHAT TO BRING

- Toiletries; body soap, deodorant, shampoo, hair dryer, lap top, cell phone/cell phone charger, etc.
- Appropriate clothing. The host family will assist where to purchase seasonal clothing at affordable prices.
- Slippers and/or flip flops for showering (optional). Most student bedrooms are located in the above-ground basement. They are cool in the summer and winter months.
- 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), taxi, Compass card, SIM card, snacks.

MOVE IN DATE

BEFORE booking the flight contact the host family to determine if the room will be ready at that time.

If the student moves in before the 1st of the month, they are responsible to pay in cash, directly to the host family, \$50 per night for all remaining nights left in that month. Be prepared and have Canadian funds upon arriving or pay the host family shortly after moving in.

If the student moves into homestay 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.

Homestay is reserved for Columbia College students who are registered and currently studying at the College. If the student is no longer studying at the College, they **MUST** leave homestay.

All students; adult or custodial are required to stay in homestay for a minimum of two months.

LEAVING OR CHANGING HOMESTAYS

When leaving the homestay program contact the Homestay Coordinator 30 days before wanting to move. A Notice of Termination form will be completed by the student and host. If sufficient notice is not given the student will be penalized an additional ½ month to the host family.

Host families realize 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 homestay; their host family understands and will not be hurt!

CUSTODIANSHIP STUDENTS

Students who require custodianship will be appointed a custodian by Columbia College while studying at Columbia College and living in homestay ONLY. The host family will take on this role after a short time the student is living with them. 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 and the host family has taken on this role, but now wish to leave homestay, or have been asked to leave homestay, 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 Colleges' 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.

HOMESTAY FEES / OPTIONS

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 \$2200 per month.

Below are the homestay options we provide:

Note: Full homestay fees are required prior to the student being placed in homestay. Do not wait until their visa is approved to apply or pay fees. Placement is not guaranteed past the due date or without full payment made.

Adult

1. Long-term → **\$2,875** with airport pick-up **\$2,775** without airport pick-up) Adult students – mandatory two month stay in homestay
 - Homestay placement fee of \$375 (non-refundable)
 - Homestay rent of \$2,400 (\$1,200 per month)
 - Airport pick-up fee of \$100
2. Long-term → **Dinner Only; upon availability** → **\$2,475** with airport pick-up **\$2,375** without airport pick-up) Adult students – mandatory two month stay in homestay
 - Homestay placement fee of \$375 (non-refundable)
 - Homestay rent of \$2,000 (\$1,000 per month)
 - Airport pick-up fee of \$100
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3. Long-term → **Room Only; upon availability** → **\$2,275** with airport pick-up **\$2,175** without airport pick-up) Adult students – mandatory two month stay in homestay
 - Homestay placement fee of \$375 (non-refundable)
 - Homestay rent of \$1,800 (\$900 per month)
 - Airport pick-up fee of \$100

Adult or Non-Custodial students; Homestay fees are paid directly to the host family on the 1st of every month in cash, after their first initial month in homestay.

- Adult students prepay two months of homestay fees prior to be placed in homestay. The College pays 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 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, or if any damages have been made by the student while staying in the home.

Custodianship

1 Long-term → \$7,350 with airport pick-up \$7,250 without airport pick-up) Custodianship students

- Homestay placement fee of \$375 (non-refundable)
- Homestay rent of \$5,200 (\$1,300 per month)
- Extra month in Homestay account – deposit (\$1,300)
- Custodianship of \$325 (initial – one-time set-up fee)
- Monitoring fee per semester \$50
- Airport pick-up fee of \$100

2 Long-term → Dinner Only; upon availability → \$6,350 with airport pick-up \$6,250 without airport pick-up) Custodianship students – mandatory two month stay in homestay

- Homestay placement fee of \$375 (non-refundable)
- 5 months Homestay rent of \$5,500 w custodian
- Custodianship of \$325 (initial – one-time set-up fee)
- Monitoring Fee \$50
- Airport pick-up fee of \$100

3 Long-term → Room Only; upon availability → \$5,850 with airport pick-up \$5,750 without airport pick-up) Custodianship students – mandatory two month stay in homestay

- Homestay placement fee of \$375 (non-refundable)
- 5 months Homestay rent of \$5,000 w custodian
- Custodianship of \$325 (initial – one-time set-up fee)
- Monitoring Fee \$50
- Airport pick-up fee of \$100

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

A homestay invoice will be provided to the student 6 weeks prior to the semester ending indicating when homestay fees 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: (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.

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

PARTICIPATE

The College offers student activities, many of which are free. To enrich their College and homestay experience, we highly recommend to get involved. Time goes by quickly! It is a great way to make new friends and feel part of a community.

SUPPORT

The College offers an abundance of emotional support for our students. If at any time, the student feels lonely, anxious, unsafe, or need to talk for any reason, they should reach out to the Homestay Coordinator, their host family or any staff member at the College. We also have experienced well-qualified Mental Health counsellors on site, along with two school nurses who are available to meet with our students at any time.

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.