



# HOME STAY STUDENT GUIDELINES

## Welcome

For many international students living with a homestay family is a highlight of their stay in New Zealand. Often they find a new 'family' away from home and form lifelong friendships.

We hope that living with your homestay family will be an important part of your stay in New Zealand and a positive experience.

This booklet gives you information about living with a New Zealand family – what you can expect and what's expected of you. If there is something you do not understand then please ask your homestay family to explain.

### **Contact**

We will be in regular contact with you and your host family to make sure that everything is OK and to answer any questions or concerns. Please remember though that it often takes two to three weeks for everyone to settle in.

### **What's included in your homestay**

- Single room (unless you have agreed to share), bedding, desk, reading light
- All meals (sandwich lunch or similar), fruit, snacks etc.
- Laundry services
- Basic toiletries (soap, toilet paper). You provide all other toiletries including toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo etc.

### **What's not included in your homestay**

- Please DO NOT pay any money directly to the family.
- Please DO NOT ask your family to act as guarantor for you to buy any items like stereos, computers, mobile phones etc.

We also ask that you do not lend money to anyone.

### **Rules and regulations**

You are not permitted to:

- drink alcohol
- gamble
- own or drive a car
- smoke
- take drugs.

You must agree and keep to the rules of Lake Panorama Student Homestays, the school and the host family.

If you are unwell and are not able to go to school, you must tell your host mother or father as early as possible so they can let the school know.

### **Time with your homestay family**

Although you will need to spend time studying in your room, it is polite to spend some time each evening with your homestay family.

When you go to your bedroom for the night say make sure you say 'goodnight' to your homestay family and say 'good morning' when you first see them in the morning. This is polite and is an important ritual in New Zealand. Remember to say 'please' and 'thank you' too when something is done for you.

### **Participation in family life**

Where possible join in with family activities such as outings to the beach or a BBQ with friends. It's a good way for you to meet new people, make friends and practise your English. You should pay your own way on outings with the family (for example a trip to the cinema or zoo) unless your family chooses to pay for you.

Ensure you spend at least 20-30 minutes every day talking in English to your host family.

### **Study**

Your primary purpose in coming to New Zealand is to study and learn English. If you are having any problems at school then please let us know and we'll try to resolve them.

### **Telephone and internet**

Most students purchase a telephone calling card to phone home. This is much cheaper than using the homestay phone. There are various cards available, check which one is cheapest for your home country. Some homes have limits on the length of time and how late at night you can use the phone. Talk to your host family about these. If the home has call waiting, your host parents will explain to you how this works.

Many homes have wireless broadband which you can access if you have your own computer or smartphone. Sometimes you will have to pay a small charge each month (about \$20 per month). DO NOT leave your computer on when you are not using it and turn it off at night. You cannot download movies or music as this uses up a lot of the family's monthly internet allowance. If you wish to do this then you will have to get your own internet access. Please discuss this with us first.

### **Going out**

From Monday to Thursday you are expected to be home by 5.30-6pm for dinner. If you have sporting activities or something on after school then talk to your host parents and sort out a time. Also make sure that you talk to them about how you will be getting home from these activities. On Fridays and Saturdays students are allowed to stay out later.

### **Our recommendations of the times that you should be home by at the weekend are:**

- **18 years and over – 11pm to midnight**
- **17 years – 10.30 to 11.00pm**
- **16 years and under – 9.30 to 10.30pm.**

**These are only recommendations and sometimes your school / agent or your host family may decide on an earlier time for you.**

Make sure that you leave a contact name and number with your family and an estimated time of return. If the family is out remember to leave a note with the details. The host family must know where you are at all times. Give your host family your mobile number or if you do not have one give them a friend's mobile number.

### **Helping out and chores**

You must not treat your host family as a housemaid or taxi service. You will be asked to help around the house by:

- keeping your bedroom clean and tidy
- making your bed daily
- helping with minor chores such as setting and clearing the dinner table, and doing the dishes after meals.

In New Zealand families everyone has jobs to help out around the house. In some families you may also be expected to do other chores such as putting out the rubbish once a week, helping to prepare the dinner, vacuuming your bedroom, changing your bed sheets weekly or folding the washing.

Students must always ask permission from the host mother before inviting a friend for a meal or to stay the night.

### **Food/meals**

Find out what time meals are in your home and if you are going to be late, call or text your host mum.

Your family will teach you to help yourself to breakfast and lunch; remember though to clean up after yourself. Please speak to your family about what food you like and don't like, and anything you can't eat (for religious, cultural or medical reasons). If you are having a meal out with your friends let your host mother know in plenty

of time. It's also a good idea to go food shopping with your host mother when you first arrive. You will recognise things that you like.

### **Health**

All students must have medical insurance. Some schools arrange their own medical insurance. Please check with us if you have any queries about doctor/hospital visits and prescriptions charges.

If you are sad or homesick your school can arrange for you to see a trained full-time Guidance Counsellor.

### **Bathroom/showering**

New Zealand's bathroom and toileting habits may be very different from what you are used to. Here toilet paper is flushed down the toilet and not put in a basket. Your host family will show you how to use the shower and where to put your towels. **Do not** hang your towel or wet underwear in the wardrobe.

Please keep your showers short; you should spend only 5-10 minutes in the shower. This is to ensure there is enough hot water for everyone in the home.

You are not allowed to dye your hair in the homestay family house.

### **Bedrooms/bedding**

If you are not sure about the bedding talk to your host family and get them to show you. They will help you when changing the sheets and pillow cases for the first few times. If you are cold tell your host mother and she will give you extra blankets.

### **Clothes washing**

In most families clothes washing is done once or twice a week. Please ensure you give your mum your washing or put it in the laundry basket. If you are running out of clothes and need something washed urgently please speak to your host mum.

### **Transport**

Your family will take you to and from school on the first day and help you get used to the buses and trains. Get a timetable from the bus company and make sure you understand it. For the first few weeks we will pair you up with another international student buddy who will help you get to and from school.

### **Changing homestay**

Sometimes things just don't work out. Please tell us if you are unhappy so that we can help you. Usually you have to give two weeks' notice if you need to move. Sometimes there is a charge. Talk to us and we will explain it to you.

### **PASSPORT**

**It's important that you keep your passport in a safe place at all times – do not carry it around with you.**

We are here to help so please ring us and if we are out, leave a message and we will contact you. Or you can talk to the International Office at your school and they will contact us for you.