



**SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 34 (ABBOTSFORD)  
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION**

**HOMESTAY PROGRAM GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS**

**Welcome to Canada and our community!** For some of you this may be the first time that you are away from home. While homestay can be a challenging experience as students struggle to understand a new culture, language, and adjust to a new family, we will do our best to help you adapt to your Canadian home.

Our staff is experienced, professional, and committed to providing excellent service to homestay students and families. If problems do arise, our staff will provide counseling and support to help you resolve the issue. In most cases, problems can be solved through open communication and discussion between student and host family.

**Our Host Families**

Our host families are carefully selected and are:

- interested in hosting an international student
- friendly
- English-speaking
- willing to include the student in their activities

**As a homestay student, you will:**

- be provided with information about your host family prior to arrival
- receive pre-arrival information to help prepare you for your homestay experience
- attend a homestay orientation meeting after arrival
- have access to on-going advice and support from Homestay staff
- have a 24 hour emergency contact number

**Here are some guidelines that will assist you to enjoy your stay in Canada.**

**ADJUSTMENT TIME - Clear and open communication is very important on the part of the student and the host.**

Sometimes it may not be easy for you to move in with a strange family, and it is similar for a family to have a stranger move in with them. Hosts will provide a clear explanation of family schedules, customs, habits, house rules and expectations while you are living in their home. Students are expected to be open and honest with the family about their needs, likes and dislikes, as well as anything that is bothering them. **IT IS MUCH EASIER TO DEAL WITH A SMALL MISUNDERSTANDING THAN A LARGE PROBLEM.** Please discuss your problem with your host first, then your International Assistant if you do not understand. If the misunderstanding is because of a language problem your International Assistant will help you with translation.

**SCHEDULES, Habits, and Customs**

Your host family will do their best to make you as comfortable as possible. You will be treated as a member of the family. You will need to pick up after yourself and keep your room tidy. If there is something that you don't understand, ask your hosts. They will be happy to help you adjust to living in their home. The customs of your host family will be different from your home. You will need to learn what your homestay schedule is. For example, what time should you go to bed, what time you should get up in the morning and what time do you leave for school.

## **MEALS**

You will be provided with three meals a day and snacks seven days a week while in Homestay. If you have been invited to have dinner with another host you must ask your host if you can go. If you wish to invite a friend home for a meal, you must ask your host first. Hosts will tell you what is available for snacks and to eat between meals, and where it is kept. Meal time is a time for you to participate in the family chores. Your host will show you how to set and clear the table and how to help clean up after dinner. Your host may let you prepare your lunch after they have shown you where to find the supplies for your lunch.

When you arrive your host may take you shopping for groceries. They will ask you what you like to eat. If you are having a difficult time adjusting to the food and are hungry, let your host know. They don't want you to be hungry and will try to find something that you like to eat. Canadian meals can be different in each homestay. It is good manners to try the food but you can also tell your host when you do not like something.

## **BATHROOMS - WATER (HOT AND COLD)**

If you are sharing a bathroom, schedule your shower or bath to fit in with the host family members. Canadians normally bathe or shower only once per day, and Canadians are very water conserving. Using too much hot water for a bath or shower is inconsiderate, and may mean that there is none left in the tank for the next person. You need to clean up after yourself in the bathroom.

## **HEAT AND ELECTRICITY**

Canada is not a hot climate. Because energy costs are so high, Canadians normally do not keep their houses warmer than 70 - 72 degrees F. (20 degrees C.) In winter, most Canadians wear warm sweaters and socks or slippers on their feet, even in the house. If you find you are cold, the first thing to do is to put on more clothes in the daytime (a sweater, or a pair of socks), or more bedclothes at night. If you are still cold discuss this with your host.

## **STUDENTS WILL FOLLOW THEIR HOSTS "HOUSE RULES"**

- Always make sure that your host knows where you are. They are responsible for your safety and must know where you are at all times.
- Always pick up after yourself. Do not leave a mess for your host to clean up. You can participate in family chores such as doing dishes after a meal or helping prepare a meal with your host.
- Ask your hosts who will do the laundry. If you want to do your own laundry, you need to find out how to operate the washing machine and dryer. If you want to hang your clothes to dry ask where you can do this. Do not hang wet clothes in your closet.
- If you do not understand any of the house rules, please ask your host to explain them.

## **TELEPHONE**

If you want to make a phone call to your parents overseas ask your host to help you. You can place a collect call, reversing the charges or you can buy a phone card which prepays for your call.

**If you have any further questions or concerns, ask your host to explain. Share your culture with your family as both you and your host family are learning about a different culture and family system. We want this homestay experience to be a positive and rewarding exchange of cultures.**