



Host Families Information Package

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1. About



Welcome To Homestay Plus

We are happy to have you as part of our family!

There are so many benefits to becoming a host family. It is a unique opportunity to broaden your horizons and share your knowledge and passion for Australian culture, whilst meeting people from all over the world and earning an additional income for the family at the same time.

You will have the chance to assist overseas students achieve their study goals by providing them with a supportive and encouraging place to learn, whilst also learning about a different culture.

This information package is going to guide you through your journey as an Australian homestay provider giving you all the information you may need and helping you have the best experience possible.

About us

HomeStay Plus offers a truly Australian experience, providing students with the opportunity to feel what it is really like to live in an Australian family. While living with the homestay family, students have the chance to speak English in a natural, social environment and learn about everyday Australian culture as they are immersed into the experience.

Our Mission

To find Australian families interested in sharing their home and their culture with international students, so that they will have an enriching and enjoyable experience during their time in Australia.

Our Goal

Our goal is to become the leader in the Australian homestay market by continually improving our team, products and services and exceeding customers' and partners' expectations with professionalism, honesty and leadership.

Our team is fully trained and have years of experience in providing quality student accommodation for international students. They are approachable and professional and always ready to assist you with any questions you may have.

Homestay Plus staff is here to assist you throughout the homestay experience. Our team is available from **9am – 5pm Monday – Friday** via our mobile phone service. In the event of an emergency arising outside these hours, please call **1300 852 254** (emergency numbers).



2. Programme







What's Involved

Homestay Programme

These are the key elements that need to be provided. Please make sure you read and understand all of them.

- 
BILLS
 Bills are included (which means the students do not need to pay any extra for electricity, gas or water).
- 
BATHROOM
 A bathroom (it can be shared, and students must bring their own toiletries, except for towels and soap).
- 
ACCOMODATION
 A furnished, clean and airy bedroom, which includes a bed, desk, chair, lamp and a place to store student's clothes and belongings.
- 
LAUNDRY FACILITIES
 You will need to provide laundry detergent, but students are expected to do their own washing and ironing. However, you must instruct them on how to use the washing machine etc.
- 
COMFORT
 Clean linen, pillow, blankets and towels, so students do not need to bring these items.
- 
TRANSPORT
 Easy access to public transport. Host families are expected to show the student how to get to and from their school using public transport and guide them in how to get public transport cards or tickets.
- 
FOOD
 Two meals a day on weekdays (breakfast and dinner, normally can be self-service). Three meals a day on weekends (breakfast, lunch and dinner).
- 
INTERNET
 Wireless Internet access. Although it needs to be available for the student, a fee can be charged. The fees can vary from \$AU5 to \$AU15 per week. Please let us know the fee in advance, so we can inform them before arrival.

Australia Homestay is committed to providing you with:

- 
EXPERIENCE
 An experienced team who is able to assist with cultural exchange.
- 
SECURITY
 Homestay house insurance.
- 
COMMUNICATION
 Multi-lingual student service.
- 
CONFIDENTIALITY
 All information received will be kept confidential and for office use only.



3. Placements

Placements

Our team will contact you as soon as the student's arrival details are finalised. The students will be carefully matched to a compatible homestay family. Suitability will be determined according to the information provided on the application form and your preferences regarding: gender, age and nationality. Prior to the arrival of new students our team will send an email with the student profile where you will find important information such as, full name, gender, date of arrival/departure, school location and airport transfer information.

Also a reminder will be sent by email and text message closer to the student's arrival date.

Extensions/ Placement Cancellation

Please give at least 2 weeks' notice if your current student would like to extend his or her stay. You can either extend directly with the student, or you can advise him or her to contact the agent and extend through us. Please note if you come to a common agreement with the student and decide not to notify us, we will not be able to assist in regard to payments or future problems as this arrangement will be outside our responsibility. If you need to cancel any placement already confirmed, we need at least 1 week's notice in order to find another family.

Cancellation

Sometimes there may be a delay in the arrival of a student due to the length of time taken to obtain a visa. Please let the Homestay Plus team know how long you are willing to keep the placement available.

FOR CANCELLATIONS DUE TO VISA REFUSAL AND CHANGE OF DATE:

- Cancellations made at least 24 hours prior to student's arrival; no money will be paid to the family.
- Cancellations made within 24 hours prior to student's arrival; one week's accommodation will be paid to the family.
- In both cases, the Homestay Plus team will do their best to replace the student according to the number of bookings.

FOR GENERAL CANCELLATION

A student is to be given 2 weeks' paid notice of having to move out of the host premises or as otherwise indicated by Homestay Plus, unless he or she is moving due to unforeseen problems between him and the host, in which case the student will be entitled to a refund of any unused fees.

Feedback and photos from students

We highly value your comments regarding your experience hosting our students, as they enable us to make improvements where necessary. Feedbacks and comments are welcomed at any time. Feel free to use whatever medium you are comfortable with: email, telephone, personal visit or letter. We encourage our families to send as many photos, letters, testimonials as you have with and from our students. Please be aware that our marketing team may publish them on social media vehicles.

IMPORTANT

Your point of contact regarding any issues or concerns is the Homestay Plus team. In order to keep a record of all the messages exchanged, use email as the main communication channel.

Please note the team will do their best to guarantee successful management of placements according to the number of rooms you have available. Sometimes placements will rely on the season and students' specific requests. The team will do their best to be fair to all the host families especially during low season and will count on the understanding of the families to accomplish this.



4. Arrivals

Welcome to Australia

Students Arrival



Airport Pick Up & Drop Off

Homestay Plus is part of the 2Stay Accommodation Group, which provides airport transfer to and from the airport.

If the student chooses to use 2Stay's airport transfer, our representative will wait for the student at the airport for 2 hours from the flight arrival time. They will call you to inform you when they are leaving the airport with or without the student, in case they cannot find the student.

They will head to your house and if on the way there is an unexpected problem, they will call or text you again to notify you. Please note that 2Stay's representative can be identified by their uniform and when dropping the student at your house, will introduce him or her to you and your family and also check your house and the student's room with you.

If the student doesn't book the airport transfer, he or she is instructed to take a taxi directly to your house and let you know when he or she is on his or her way.

Guidelines

We are committed to help you make your homestay experience fun and memorable, so it is important for you to understand your student, and for he or she to understand you, in order to create a healthy and relaxed environment.

COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY TO SOLVING MANY PROBLEMS

Please remember to communicate as clearly as possible with students, so that they can understand the rules of the house and try to cooperate during their stay. Language may be an obstacle, but remember that they are here to learn and improve their language skills, so please be patient: it will certainly get better with time.

STUDENT ARRIVALS

Please treat the student's bedroom as their personal and private space. If you have other children, let them know that the student's room is private, and they must ask the student permission to enter. Let the student know from the beginning your rules and expectations. This gives them a sense of security and clarity.

JET LAG

Most students are exhausted when they arrive due to different time zones, long flights, the stress of the new experience and different food and weather. This can cause some minor symptoms such as headaches, stomach upsets and/ or moodiness, which can be present for the first days until they fully recover and feel more orientated and energetic. If the minor symptoms continue, please contact us.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Please inform students about public transport options available in your neighbourhood. It would be very beneficial for them to receive a map, if possible, and some information about some key locations in the city, as well as their school location and how to get there.

If possible, please take them to and from the school from your home before classes begin, especially if they do not speak English yet.

TOILETRIES

Towels, toilet paper and soap are to be provided by you. Other items, such as toothpaste, shampoo and conditioner, for example, are the responsibility of students.

Welcome to Australia

Students Arrival

ORIENTATION

Show how things work and remember that toilets, showers, faucets and appliances sometimes function differently in other countries. In a central place, post the family schedule including work schedules, sport and hobby times, mealtime and family curfews. Teach your student how to use the 000 Emergency Service.

Introduce your students to important places in the community (see the list below) and give them details on things such as how to get to and from their school.

- Bank
- Chemist / Convenience store / Supermarket
- Bus Stop / Train Station
- Medical clinic / Medical centre

PETS

Many Australian households have pets. Different cultures view pets in many different ways. Some cultures view man's best friend, a dog, as unclean (some religious codes prohibit them from being touched) while other cultures view them as a food source. Some cultures fear cats (especially the eyes) as being superstitious links to the unknown (eyes of darkness). Do not be insulted if your student shows genuine fear or discomfort to be around the family pets. Quite often it just takes time and patience for the student to adjust. Therefore, limit the exposure, at first, of your pet to the student.

HOMESTAY RULES

Every house and family have different rules, and it is your responsibility to make sure the student abides by them in order to live in harmony with you and your family. If the student cannot follow them and an uncomfortable situation arises, please let us know, and we will arrange the best solution for both parties.

MOVING OUT

Students must give a minimum of 2 weeks' notice before leaving the homestay if they decide to leave at any time other than the date originally agreed upon.

INTERNET AND TELEPHONE

Although Internet access needs to be available to the student, an extra cost can be charged if you wish. The fee can vary from \$AU5 to \$AU15 per week, and the student should pay you directly. Before using the telephone, students need to ask for permission. Even so, they must be responsible for paying for their calls, both local and international. We strongly recommend the students to purchase a pre-paid USB for the Internet, and telephone cards, so that they can have control over their usage.





LANGUAGE

English levels will vary, but most students arrive with basic skills and choose homestay to improve them. Communication requires patience, curiosity, kindness, and respect, especially early on.

Adjusting to an English-speaking environment can be exhausting and frustrating. Be patient, use clear “yes” or “no” questions, and avoid negative phrasing like “Are you not hungry?” which can cause confusion. Students may not understand every word but will grasp key ideas.

Keep statements simple to reduce anxiety and allow extra time for responses. Avoid rushing them or using negative body language. A bilingual dictionary or drawings can help with communication.

Mistakes are normal, even when corrected. Focus on errors that may cause embarrassment outside the home and ignore minor ones. Students may say they understand when they don’t—ask them to repeat key points.

Provide a list of house rules in their room and review it together. Check back after they settle in to clarify any questions.

CLEANING

Students are expected to keep their room clean and tidy at all times, as well as cleaning up after themselves in the bathroom and kitchen. It is important to accept students’ help if it is offered; this way, they will feel like part of the family.

MEALS

Serve two meals per day on weekdays (breakfast and dinner) and three on weekends (breakfast, lunch, and dinner). If you’ll be absent for a meal, notify students and leave food ready to heat.

When dining as a family, let others serve themselves first so the student can observe portions and etiquette. Some meals, like assembling a quesadilla or eating sushi, may be new to them.

SMOKING AND DRINKING

Cigarettes are not allowed inside the homestay, unless agreed otherwise by you and the student. Alcoholic beverages are only permitted if students are over 18 years of age in Australia, but even if this is the case, families need to make sure that they feel comfortable with students drinking inside their homes. If you don’t feel comfortable, please advise your student. In addition to this rule, the use of illicit drugs and drug trafficking is illegal in Australia and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

LAUNDRY

Washing facilities must be available for all students. Students are expected to do their own washing and ironing, but washing detergent must be provided by you. Also, it is the host family’s responsibility to explain how to use and manage the laundry facilities.

CULTURE

Be open to learning about your student, their culture, and their food preferences.

Culture shock happens when familiar behaviors and assumptions no longer apply. Students may face challenges adapting to new expectations, language, and social norms. It can occur at any point during their stay and may happen more than once.

PLEASE NOTE THAT

Some cultures chew with their mouths open or make slurping sounds to show appreciation for a meal. If this bothers you, gently explain that eating habits have different meanings in your culture.

Some students may not use verbal manners regularly. Teaching phrases like "Please pass the..." or "Thank you for the..." can help them fit in. They may also be quiet during meals, as speaking English can be stressful or mealtime conversation may not be common in their culture.

Your student may choose not to try certain foods, even if they're a family favorite. Dietary choices can be influenced by religion, social values, allergies, or personal taste. Respect their preferences and remember it's not personal.

SYMPTOMS OF CULTURE SHOCK MAY OCCUR IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS:

- Difficulty in carrying on normal conversations;
- Withdrawing or becoming moody and irritable, ignoring rules and describing confusing situations as "stupid;"
- Spending hours in the bedroom, crying and isolating themselves from others;
- Changes in appetite and sleeping patterns or depression.

SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP DURING THIS STAGE INCLUDE:

- Acknowledge that the feelings are normal and temporary;
- Remind yourself that the student's cultural shock is not a reflection of your hosting ability or a sign of rejection; it is a normal stage many students experience;
- Allow the student time to be alone.

WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

Even in the best host families, conflicts can happen due to personality differences. If you and your student can't find a solution, contact us for assistance. Don't wait until the problem grows harder to manage.



5. FAQ.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. DO I HAVE TO TAKE MY STUDENTS TO AND FROM SCHOOL?

A. It would be a nice gesture if you could take your students to and from school on their first day, just so they become more familiar with the location and learn where to take public transport.

However, if you are not available on the first day, please make sure you show them where to take public transport and explain how the transport system works before classes start, so that they are well prepared and not flustered on their first day at school. It would also be a good idea to give them a map and point out some important landmarks in the city.

Q. HOW DOES THE PAYMENT WORK?

A. The payment is made the following Wednesday after the student's arrival date, and it is an initial payment for a two or four week period. This may vary in the case of cancellations and extensions. Please note that the income from homestay is tax free for up to two students.

Q. SHOULD I GIVE A COPY OF MY KEYS TO MY STUDENTS?

A. Yes, you should (or the code/ password if applicable).

Q. WHO ARE THE STUDENTS AND WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

A. Our students mostly come to Australia to improve their language skills or are tertiary education students who are here to study in a degree programme or on a vocational course. There are also high-school students, interns, older professionals and study tours. These students come from all over the world; however, people from Asia and South America are the most common at the moment.

Q. DO I JUST BUY THE FOOD OR DO I HAVE TO PREPARE A MEAL?

A. Generally, breakfast and lunch (on weekends) are self-service and dinners will be prepared and served at home. Be clear with the student which food is theirs and which you would prefer they do not use.

Q. CAN I REQUEST CERTAIN NATIONALITIES OR A CERTAIN GENDER?

A. Yes. Our homestay team will always provide you this information before confirming any placement. However, we invite you to challenge some of your thoughts or assumptions and try different people. You are never obliged to host.

Q. DO I TAKE MY GUEST OUT TO DINNER ON EXCURSIONS AND ON FAMILY TRIPS?

A. You are not obliged to include them in everything although it is important that the student doesn't feel left out. If you do not want to cover the costs of an excursion, talk to the student and ask them if they want to get involved and pay for their own expenses. Sharing with the students can be highly rewarding; try to give them a great experience to remember.

Q. IS IT OK FOR ME TO GO INTO THE STUDENT'S ROOM WHEN THEY ARE NOT THERE?

A. Privacy is important. The student's room should be their private space during their stay with you. If you plan to clean the room, then let the student know when you will do this.

Q. ARE STUDENTS ALLOWED TO HAVE OVERNIGHT GUESTS?

A. You make the rules for your house and assuming they are reasonable, your guest is expected to do their best to honour your rules. Most hosts would not want additional overnight guests. If overnight guests are welcome in your house, you can negotiate the specifics with your guest so that it works for you.

Q. AM I RESPONSIBLE FOR HELPING TO GET A MOBILE PHONE? WHAT ABOUT CO-SIGNING ON A BANK ACCOUNT?

A. It is nice to help them to get a mobile phone or a bank account when they first arrive. Hosts should help students understand options, contracts and commitments but never co-sign or pay for services for them.

Q. AM I ALLOWED TO HAVE A CURFEW FOR THE STUDENT?

A. Of course. You are sharing your home and you are responsible for setting and communicating the rules of your house. Remember that you are usually hosting young adults, and they will appreciate flexibility as they explore this new place and adventure. Try to balance your needs and expectations with theirs as you work together to agree to house rules. If you are hosting a student under 18, this would be approached differently.

6. Benefits



Benefits of being a host family

This is the opportunity to have a new member in your family. You can build lifelong friendships. Often, hosts and students stay in touch for many years.

This experience can build your desire to travel to other countries you have never thought about before. That's why sometimes students and host families see each other again, and the roles invert, when students host their former host family in their own country. It's also a great opportunity to share the many attractions that your suburb, town or region has to offer. You may be quite surprised at what is on offer on your own doorstep. You may notice that you see activities, attractions, flora and fauna that are often taken for granted, in a new light.

You and your family can also learn another language, as well as becoming part of a global community of international host families, with networks in many cultures.

This is a wonderful opportunity to share your Australian culture and also learn a bit more about other cultures from all around the world. You may be surprised just how much you can learn about yourself and your own culture while hosting your student. It is much more than providing accommodation and support; it is your opportunity to connect to the world!

PLEASE KEEP IN MIND:

- Please read the Host Family Accommodation Agreement carefully as it explains the policies and regulations
- Remember that each time that you refer a successful new host family Homestay Plus will reward you with a \$50 Voucher!
- We value and care about our host families, and we want you to enjoy a rewarding experience. Please talk to us if you need any support.
- Students are very important for agencies and schools, our main client, so their feedback and experience will always be important. Please do your best to make it memorable.



