

Together We Learn



**Central Okanagan
Public Schools**

International Education



HOMESTAY MANUAL

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Message to Host Families

Welcome to the
Central Okanagan Public Schools International Education

HOMESTAY PROGRAM

We are pleased that you have chosen to become part of the approximately 350 host families who open their homes to international students every year.

The Central Okanagan International Education Homestay Department was established to promote and support the best possible homestay experience for international students attending schools in our district. As such we follow the Ministry of Education and Child Care provincial [K–12 International Student Homestay Guidelines](#).

Our Program takes great care to treat all international students and host families as unique, and to offer support that best suits the needs of both parties. We hope that our program will help to create relationships between host families and students that will last a lifetime.

Our Program strives to place students with host families who will provide a safe, nurturing home for their study abroad experience, to offer ongoing support to students and host families regarding all aspects of life in Canada, and to ensure that both host families and students have a rewarding experience while learning about other cultures.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a resource that will assist you in your role as a homestay parent to provide the best possible living and learning experience for the international students while they are here. Please use this handbook and the resources listed in it as your first source of information.

You have been selected as a homestay parent because we believe that you will be able to provide a welcoming, nurturing family environment for a student from another country. This is a significant responsibility, and one that we know you will take seriously.

Thank you for being at the heart of our program! We hope that you will find this experience enriching and rewarding for all members of your family, and we look forward to working with you during the year.

Sincerely,
Central Okanagan International Education Team

Program Contact Information

International Education

Central Okanagan Public Schools
1040 Hollywood Road S
Kelowna, BC, Canada
V1X 4N2

P: 1-250-470-3258

E: international.education@sd23.bc.ca

W: www.internationaleducation.ca

Instagram: @okgn23world



Emergency Phone Line

250-801-5684

Monitored 24/7 by one of our staff members

District Program Team

Program Managers		
Carolina Moreno carolina.morenopelaez@sd23.bc.ca 250-860-9729 ext. 6194		GES George Elliot Secondary
Lori McPhail lori.mcphail@sd23.bc.ca 250-860-9729 ext. 7249		MBS Mount Boucherie Secondary
Masao Matsubara masao.matsubara@sd23.bc.ca 250-860-9729 ext. 5390		OKM Okanagan Mission Secondary
Nathalie Messent nathalie.messent@sd23.bc.ca 250-860-9729 ext. 8233		KSS Kelowna Secondary
Wendy Burrridge wendy.burrridge@sd23.bc.ca 250-860-9729 ext. 8549		RSS Rutland Secondary
Sherry Rainville Sherry.rainville@sd23.bc.ca 250-860-9729		Homestay Coordinator
Program Administrator		
Steve Cann steve.cann@sd23.bc.ca 250-212-2974		District Principal <i>(Legal Custodian to students in homestay)</i>
Program Office Team		
Julie Melia julie.melia@sd23.bc.ca		Administrative Assistant Report Cards & Homestay
Wendy Lu wendy.lu@sd23.bc.ca		Administrative Assistant Admissions
Debbie Friesen Debbie.friesen@sd23.bc.ca		International Education Finance Clerk

Student Situations – When & Who to Contact

SITUATION		WHEN	WHO
	Fatality	<i>Immediately</i>	Emergency Phone Line 250-801-5684 District Principal 250-801-3335
	Arrest	<i>Immediately</i>	Emergency Phone Line 250-801-5684 <i>IMPORTANT</i> The District Principal is the custodian for students in homestay and therefore is the one with legal authority to make decisions regarding students. As such, it is mandatory that the Program is notified immediately in these types of situations.
	Serious injury (i.e., head injury or potential surgery required)		
	Physical injury, or health concern	The next business day	Program Manager
	Drug/alcohol use, or illegal activity		
	Developing wellness concerns	Within current business week	Program Manager
	Continued disregard for house rules		
	Academic or attendance concern	Within current business week	International Teacher at the school
	Mediation	Within current business week	Program Manager
	Student move		
	Travel	At least 2 weeks before travel	Travel Request eForm (link on website) Inquiries directed to homestay@sd23.bc.ca
	General questions	Website 24/7 Business hours	www.internationaleducation.ca Program Main Office 250-470-3258

Student Wellness Resources



Ministry of
Education and
Child Care

The Ministry of Education and Childcare outline the following resources regarding child health and safety:

B.C. Helpline for Children

Phone: 310- 1234

- May be called to report when a child or youth under 19 years of age is being abused or neglected
- There is a legal duty to report concerns to a child welfare worker

Kids Help Phone

Phone: 1-800-668-6868

- Provides counselling and mental health support

Kelty Mental Health Resource Center

<http://keltymentalhealth.ca>

- Resources regarding mental health issues, substance use, medications and healthy living

HealthLink BC 8-1-1 Services

Phone: 811

- Free-of-charge provincial health information and advice phone line available in B.C.

Suicide Crisis Helpline

Text/ Phone: 988

<https://988.ca>

- Confidential, free, 24-hour access to responders trained in suicide prevention

Circle of Support – For the Student



Student Responsibilities

International students are expected to:

1. Abide by all rules/guidelines established by the international program while staying with a host family in Canada.
 - a. This includes following all municipal, provincial and federal laws.
2. Respect and abide by the host family's expectations and rules.
3. Engage with host family and the school and seek opportunities to become involved in family life and the school.
4. Communicate regularly with host parents, including their whereabouts when not in the home.
5. Respect and be responsible toward their homestay house and property and pay for any damage to the homestay house/property if found to be responsible for the damage.
6. Understand that there are resources regarding child health and safety (p. 8).
7. Communicate significant issues of concern to host family, Program Manager, international Teacher, Custodian, or Parents/Guardians.
 - a. If unsure who to speak to, ask their program manager
8. Apply themselves to their studies to the best of their ability, attend school regularly and be punctual, and follow the district and school code of conduct.
9. Understand that the international student program may require a student to move homestays or withdraw from the international student program in cases where the student's behavior in the home is unreasonable or unacceptable, or if the student fails to comply with program/provider regulations and guidelines.

Homestay Responsibilities

Host parents are expected to act on behalf of the program with the best interests of the student and program in mind. Experience has shown that failure to report when students break the rules of the program to "protect the student" or "preserve the relationship" between the host parent and student often complicates issues down the road. A strong working partnership between host families and the program is important.

To promote the best possible homestay experience for international students, host parents are expected to:

Wellbeing

1. Provide a caring, nurturing, and supportive environment for your student.
2. Provide a home free from discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, nationality, language, religion, and culture or cultural heritage.
3. Monitor and support the physical and emotional well-being of the student, seek medical attention when necessary, and report significant medical or mental health issues to the international program.
4. Provide a clean and tidy home with a private, adequately furnished bedroom.
5. Provide food for regular, nutritious meals and snacks.
6. Inform the international program if the student exhibits mental health issues.
7. Inform the international program immediately if the student:
 - A. Has an injury that requires medical attention (i.e., involving a head injury or potential surgery).
 - B. Is in a vehicle accident, regardless of injury.

Safety

8. Agree to scheduled in-home inspections by the international education program and criminal record checks for anyone living in the home who is 19 years or older.
9. Ensure that all residents, longer-term guests (i.e., those who stay for a week or more), and frequent visitors to the home who are 19 years or older clear a Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Check.
10. Ensure the house is safe and complies with the BC Building Code and local building bylaws and with the BC Fire Code and local fire protection bylaws.
11. Ensure the home and auto insurance policies adequately cover international students residing within the home.
12. Ensure the home security system, in particular camera and video recording, is explained to the student during the home orientation, complies with privacy requirements, and does not invade the student's reasonable expectation of privacy.

Connection

13. Abide by all rules/guidelines established by the district when hosting a student.
14. Maintain contact with our program regarding concerns with student wellness, behavior, academic progress, or attendance.
15. Keep emergent student issues confidential and communicate emergency (p. 7) and other situations (p. 34) to our program staff in a timely manner.
16. Inform the international program regarding all serious offenses, including, but not limited to:
 - A. Alcohol consumption.
 - B. Possession or use of non-prescribed (legal or illegal) drugs.
 - C. Breaking a law of BC or Canada.
 - D. Participation in dangerous or irresponsible behavior.
17. Ensure the student regularly attends school and is punctual to class.
 - A. Report student illness to the school if they are unwell.
18. Promote strong connections between an international student and their parents, schools, and communities by:
 - A. Using English in the home.
 - B. Imposing reasonable limits on the student's personal use of the internet (i.e., number of hours/day and appropriate times of day).
 - C. Negotiating and enforcing appropriate and reasonable house rules for the student.
 - D. Assisting the student in seeking extra-curricular activities and sports.
 - E. Attending district orientation for host families and other educational or cultural events offered

Program (District) Responsibilities

To promote the best possible homestay experience for international K-12 students, program managers and district administration will:

1. Maintain a homestay screening process for host families and international students to determine suitability and monitor homestay quality.
2. Gather appropriate and up-to-date personal records and contact information for the students, parents, custodian, and host families.
3. Provide training for new host families to ensure familiarity with best practices and ongoing training and updates for existing host families.
4. Determine the best placements for international students with host families.
5. Offer support in the form of conflict resolution, problem solving, cross-cultural understanding, and parental guidance.
6. Liaise with the students, schools, host families, parents, and agents
7. Offer conflict resolution services (and the opportunity to reach consensus) to both the host family and the international student. Provide each with ongoing support.
8. Communicate with international students and host families on a regular basis.
9. Provide a 24-hour emergency contact for international students and homestay families.
10. Share medical and mental health concerns that arise during the time an international student is staying with the host family, the custodian, the agent, or the student's parents/guardians as appropriate.
11. Chaperone and supervise program-organized activities.
12. Support host families with conflict resolution procedures and processes to resolve various issues that may arise during the homestay.

Natural Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Natural Parents/Guardians communicate with agents, not directly with International Student Program staff or school staff.

1. Accurately complete the application and intake materials and disclose all the student's relevant information, including medical conditions and medications, exceptional learning needs, and behavioral or other concerns, to the program.
 - a. This is essential so that the program is fully able to support and inform the host family regarding care for the student when in homestay.
2. Be familiar with the rules/guidelines established by the program regarding homestay placement and help ensure the student abides by those expectations.
3. Stay in regular touch with the student to monitor that the student is coping well with the pressures and stresses that come with living and studying in a new country and learning a new language, while giving them the space they need to adapt to new routines.
4. Report significant concerns to the agents so the program can be informed.
5. Understand that the international student program may require a student to move homestays or withdraw from the international student program in cases where the:
 - a. Student fails to comply with program rules and guidelines.
 - b. Behavior of the student in the home is unreasonable or unacceptable.
6. Parents may be responsible for bearing the costs of the move or program withdrawal.
7. Understand that there are resources regarding child health and safety.

Agent Responsibilities

Agents communicate only with International Program administration and staff, not directly with homestays.

1. Provide support to international student programs and international students
2. Help students to understand and abide by all rules/guidelines established by the program when staying with a host family.
3. Communicate with the natural parent/guardian if and when requested by the international student program.
4. Be familiar with the provincial K-12 International Student Homestay Guidelines and the best practices and expectations of the homestay sector in British Columbia.

Student Homesickness

Culture shock and student adjustment can take many forms. Homesickness is quite common as students settle into their new culture and routines. Please be conscious of the following behaviors and let your program manager know about any of these issues as soon as possible.

Thank you in advance for your caring assistance in helping to keep our students healthy.

- Low mood or frequent crying.
- Limited food intake.
 - Eating may be reduced initially as students adjust to different food options from their home country. However, a student must have enough food to support their health, growth, and development.
 - A student needs support if they eat very little for an extended period.
- Weight loss or gain.
- Isolating behaviors such as:
 - Spending excessive time in their room.
 - Not interacting with family members.
- Excessive technology use or gaming.

If you have concerns about your students' wellness, please consider the Student Wellness Resources (p. 8) identified by the provincial government and inform your Program Manager.

Student Medical Insurance and Treatment

General Information about Student Medical Insurance

Students registered in the Central Okanagan Public Schools International Program will receive medical insurance through StudyInsured™. The medical insurance policy provides comprehensive medical coverage.

- For students in a 5-month program, their StudyInsured™ remains valid for the duration of their study program in Canada.
- For those students in a study program for 6+ months, provincial regulations require that international students enroll in MSP coverage.
 - Our program completes this application process for students.
 - Once enrolled in MSP, the student receives a BC Services card
 - At that time, their StudyInsured™ coverage becomes their extended health coverage until the end of their study program.
- All students are given their medical insurance information upon arrival, including their StudyInsured™ policy number and expiration date.
 - Students should always have this information with them.
- If requiring medical treatment, the student can go to a local clinic, visit the family physician or the hospital, or use the mobile doctor and counselling services available through StudyInsured™.
 - The StudyInsured™ policy offers virtual health services, which have licensed doctors available by secure video chat.
 - Students can also access Stay Healthy at School through their policy. This service provides mental health counselling offered in person, by video, or by phone, available in 190 languages.
- If a student receives treatment from a medical provider that does not direct bill to StudyInsured™ and the student has not provided an MSP number at the time of treatment (i.e., either a 5-month student or not yet enrolled in MSP), it is important that a StudyInsured™ file is opened immediately after treatment (within 24 hours).
 - Failure to open a StudyInsured™ file within this time period may result in a future claim being rejected by StudyInsured™, and the student would be required to pay for services out of pocket instead.
- For more information about services available to students, contact your program manager or refer to our website.
- If your student needs a policy number or additional information regarding medical coverage, please phone our office or communicate with your program manager.

StudyInsured™ Coverage and Claims

- Please consult with our international staff before you or your students pay, or agree to pay, for any medical procedure.
 - Surgery, except for that deemed a true emergency, requires our Program (on behalf of the student) to communicate with our medical insurance provider before any procedure.
- If a student is required to undergo follow-up care such as physiotherapy, massage therapy, chiropractic work, etc., a doctor's note is required for a claim.
- Should a student need to visit a dentist for a dental emergency, families are asked to request that their family practitioner accept the student as a patient.
 - Any other dental concern should be discussed with your program manager.
- Please note that orthodontic care is not covered through a student's medical coverage.

The screenshot displays the StudyInsured website. At the top, there are logos for 'Together We Learn', 'Central Okanagan Public Schools International Education', and 'studyinsured™'. Navigation links include 'Student Portal', 'Dashboard', and language options 'English | Français'. A prominent banner reads 'NEED TO SEE A DOCTOR? CLICK HERE'. Below this, a blue bar encourages students to register. The main navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Products -', 'Submit a Claim', 'Resources -', and 'Contact -'. The left sidebar lists 'Comprehensive+ Plan' with a 'Plan Details' button, and 'Your Insurance Documents' including 'Policy Wording', 'Summary of Benefits', 'Claim Form - Medical', and 'Claim Form - Third Party Liability', each with a download icon. A 'Summary of Benefits' section features a language dropdown and a 'View' button. The central content area has a large image of orange sneakers with the text 'Extending your stay? Click below to add extra days to your insurance coverage' and a 'BUY NOW' button. The bottom section, titled 'Services', contains three columns: 'Find a Doctor' (with a description and a 'Learn more' button), 'Submit a Claim' (with a description and a 'Learn more' button), and 'Insurance 101' (with a description and a 'Learn more' button).

Who Supports When Medical Treatment is Needed?

The District Principal is the legal custodian for international students in homestay. As such, any medical decisions involving serious injury or illness can only be made by the District Principal. It is vital that the program is informed immediately of these situations. Refer to p. 7 for a guide about when and who to contact in various situations.

Although the program administration has legal responsibility for decisions regarding an international student, we highly value and rely on the role host parents play when a student needs medical attention.

Host parents have a responsibility to support a student who needs medical attention in both emergencies and less urgent circumstances. This includes taking the student to see a doctor, dentist, or other medical professional. Host parents also need to be aware of provincially recommended available resources on p. 8 that can be accessed for various wellness situations.

- If a student needs to be hospitalized, it is the responsibility of the host family to remain with them at the hospital.
 - Host parents are one of the student's greatest supports in Canada, and it is important the student has their 'Canadian parents' with them during a time when they are unwell, and likely frightened.
- If your student has a pre-existing chronic medical condition, please contact the international program prior to seeking medical attention (only in **non-urgent** situations).
 - There may be specific arrangements for treatment for the student.
- If your student is not in urgent need of medical attention but you feel a visit to a walk-in clinic is needed, please refer to StudyInsured™ section of our website to find a local clinic that has direct billing.
 - If you visit a clinic that does not direct bill, StudyInsured™ has an online claim form that can be completed.
- For StudyInsured™ insurance claim purposes, students are required to obtain medical notes from the attending doctor at the clinic or the hospital emergency room.
 - Please request this documentation from the treating doctor/clinic so a copy of it can be passed along to the program.

Program Information & Guidelines

Stay Connected about Program Information

- Ensure to inform the program if any of your contact information changes.
- Important program information is sent to host families through
 - Email listed in family profile
- The District Principal is the legal custodian for the student. As such, it is essential that the program is notified immediately in a situation where a student:
 - is missing.
 - has sustained an injury to the head or an illness/injury that may require surgery.
 - has been involved in a vehicle accident, regardless of injury.
 - has been apprehended by the police.
- Reach out to your program manager anytime that you feel that you need guidance, support, or feedback.
- We also highly value hearing about positive events, stories, and experiences.

Setting Expectations for Interacting in Your Home

Many international students will be away from their family for the very first time. Others will be seasoned travelers or homestay students. Regardless, each student will deal with and experience arriving in Canada and to your home differently. Therefore, it is important to:

- Understand that every family – theirs back home, and yours in Canada – has individual preferences, habits, expectations, and requirements.
- Remember that the student is part of your family while they are staying with you.
- Recognize that everyone will have needs and wants, and it is important to work together so everyone has a positive experience:
 - This includes host parents, any host siblings, and, if there is more than one student living in the home, each international student.
- Have open conversations about what is needed:
 - Clearly and directly express family expectations and to ask for things that are needed.
 - Phrase requests and expectations in a positive manner; this typically results in a more successful outcome.
 - Encourage your student to feel free and comfortable to ask questions and communicate their needs.

- If you experience some difficulty communicating:
 - Speaking slowly and clearly, this strategy helps when communicating. Just speaking more loudly does not help someone gain understanding.
 - Be supportive and patient with your student. Give your student time to respond.
 - Write things down; many students are more proficient with written English than spoken English when they arrive.
- Understand that people of different cultures present themselves in various ways.
 - What may be taken in Canadian culture as indifference, coolness, procrastination, thoughtlessness, or rudeness by the student may just be a misunderstanding of responses or signals.
 - Be patient.
 - Keep conversations friendly and welcoming.
 - By getting to know your student, misunderstandings will decrease, and potential positive connections will increase.
- Respect each student's personal space and social boundaries.
 - Depending on their culture, some students will seem very open to outward affection.
 - Others will exhibit what may be considered shyness and affection, such as hugging, which is generally embarrassing to them.
- As Canadians, we encourage the use of humor because of the positive benefits it provides us. However, it is important to understand that some types of humor are very culturally specific.
 - Realize that the use of humor may not be understood or may be misinterpreted by a student.
 - This does not mean that humor cannot be used in your home or around a student, however, be sensitive to discomforts or difficulties individuals from another culture may have with humor.
- If you are having difficulties with interactions in your home, please contact your program manager sooner rather than later so both you and your student can be supported.

Student Phone Use

Host parents are encouraged to establish phone use expectations in the home and communicate them clearly.

- It is reasonable that students DO NOT:
 - Have their phones at the dinner table
 - Spend most of their time isolated in their room on their devices
 - Regularly spend time on their phone late into the night if they have school the next day.
- Some students may need support in this area if they want to connect with family and friends in their home country.
- Encourage healthy patterns by discussing alternate options with the student.

Keeping in Contact with your Student

Students need to be able to access 911 and our emergency phone line. A Canadian phone number is required to be able to do this. It is also expected that host families and the program can contact a student as needed and at any time.

As such, students are expected to have a phone plan with a Canadian number to reach emergency services if necessary, and so they are reachable outside of areas with Wi-Fi.

- Students are required to provide their contact information to the program and their host parents.
- If there is any change to their contact information, students are expected to inform their host family and program manager immediately.
- It is expected that a student will answer host family and program texts/messages/calls.

Daily Use Purchases

- Host families are asked to provide:
 - Meals, including breakfast, a bag lunch, dinner, and access to healthy snacks.
 - Bedding & towels.
 - Soap, shampoo/conditioner, laundry detergent, cleaning supplies, etc.
- When the student accompanies their host family to a restaurant, the host parents should pay for the student as they would other members of the family.
- Students are responsible for paying for themselves:
 - Clothing
 - School supplies
 - City bus fares
 - Personal items such as toothbrush, toothpaste, specialty soaps, hair sprays, and cosmetics.
 - Specialized items & gifts
- If a student takes part in a school team/club trip the host family should provide a packed lunch or lunch money for the day.
- School field trips and extracurricular team/club fees are paid for by the student.
- If the student joins a community activity/sport, they are responsible for all associated fees.
- If a student is out with friends, they are responsible for paying for any food or entertainment costs.

Vacationing with Students

We encourage all homestays to consider their students when making vacation plans. If a host family goes on a vacation with their student, there are items that need to be considered.

The HOST FAMILY should:

- Provide accommodation, meals and transportation (excluding air travel).
- Have a conversation, in advance, with their student if additional costs are required.
- Confirm that the student has the necessary travel documents needed if traveling to another country (i.e., required visa or ESTA, etc.).

The STUDENT should:

- Pay for their own flights.
- Cover their own activity/excursion costs.
- Bring their own spending money.

Homestays should speak with their Program Manager if they have questions about who covers what costs before specific plans are discussed with their student.

House Rules & Expectations

The student should be treated as a family member with similar expectations to others living in your household. It will be helpful to both you and your student if you have a discussion of family rules and schedules shortly after arrival. Be sure they understand the rules and expectations and have a chance to discuss their requests. Ultimately, however, it is your decision how your household is run.

- Patience will be required in all your explanations to the student. Use simple language in your explanations. Encourage your student to ask questions.
- It is valuable to provide a written copy of the expectations of the house. A 'fill-in-the-blank' [House Rules & Expectations](#) form is available on our website for those who wish to use it.
 - The student often has a greater comprehension of written English than they of spoken English.
 - Having expectations and rules written will also allow the student to use a visual translator as well as review the information later.
- It is important that when your student arrives (and as needed), you spend time reviewing household expectations including family routines, meal routines, bathroom use, laundry practices, transportation expectations, school routines, etc.
- Set and discuss reasonable household rules for the student in the areas of social activities, how they need to stay connected with you about their whereabouts when away from the home, following curfew times, bringing guests into the home, etc.
- Ensure your student has your name, number and home address in their phone contacts.
- Our program provides an emergency card with a student's name and our emergency number and their StudyInsured™ medical insurance policy number.
 - Students are asked to always keep the emergency and medical insurance information safe place with them in case they need to ask for help, or they require medical assistance.
 - Please ensure you keep a copy of this information for your records also.

Bathrooms

The bathroom can be puzzling for international students because features and routines may differ from those in their home country.

- Discuss the schedule for bathroom use, especially if the student shares the bathroom with a host or international sibling:
 - When they can use the bathroom.
 - How long can they use the bathroom?
- Show your student how the shower works.
 - Routines should be explained clearly, such as typically taking a no-more-than-10-minute shower at a time to keep excess water use to a minimum.
 - Explain that the shower curtain needs to be inside the tub.
 - In some parts of the world, bathrooms are fully tiled and equipped with a drain on the floor, so containing water in the shower/tub is not typical practice.
 - Discuss bathroom fan use during showers.
 - If it is practiced in your home, demonstrate the removal of excessive water from shower walls using a squeegee.
- Demonstrate how to flush the toilet.
 - Flushing procedure.
 - Discussed that toilet paper can be flushed.
 - Not all countries have a plumbing system equipped to handle toilet paper being flushed.
 - Discuss what should **NOT** be flushed.
- Show your student the location of extra towels, face cloths, toilet paper, soap, and shampoo/conditioner.
- Discuss clean-up after use so the bathroom is ready for someone else.
- Discuss general cleaning of bathroom counters, shower, tub, toilet, etc. as it is appropriate to your household.

Laundry

As with other cultural practices and routines, laundry practices can differ around the world. For example, in some countries, individuals may own far fewer clothes compared to Canadians, and thus laundry is done daily and hung to dry.

Additionally, doing laundry may be a new experience for a student, and therefore they may need some teaching in this area.

- Explain the arrangements for laundry in your home to your student.
 - Some host families require a student to do their own laundry.
 - Other host families wish to do laundry for their students.
 - Students may want to do their own laundry.
- Ensure your student understands where to put dirty laundry.
- Explain any schedule your home has for laundry.
- Ensure your student understands their specific responsibilities with their own laundry.
- Remind your student to wash their towels and sheets weekly for hygiene purposes.

Transportation for School and in the Community

Our program shares transportation options in the Central Okanagan community with students. However, it is important that you also support your student in their understanding of how to safely travel when in our community and within Canada.

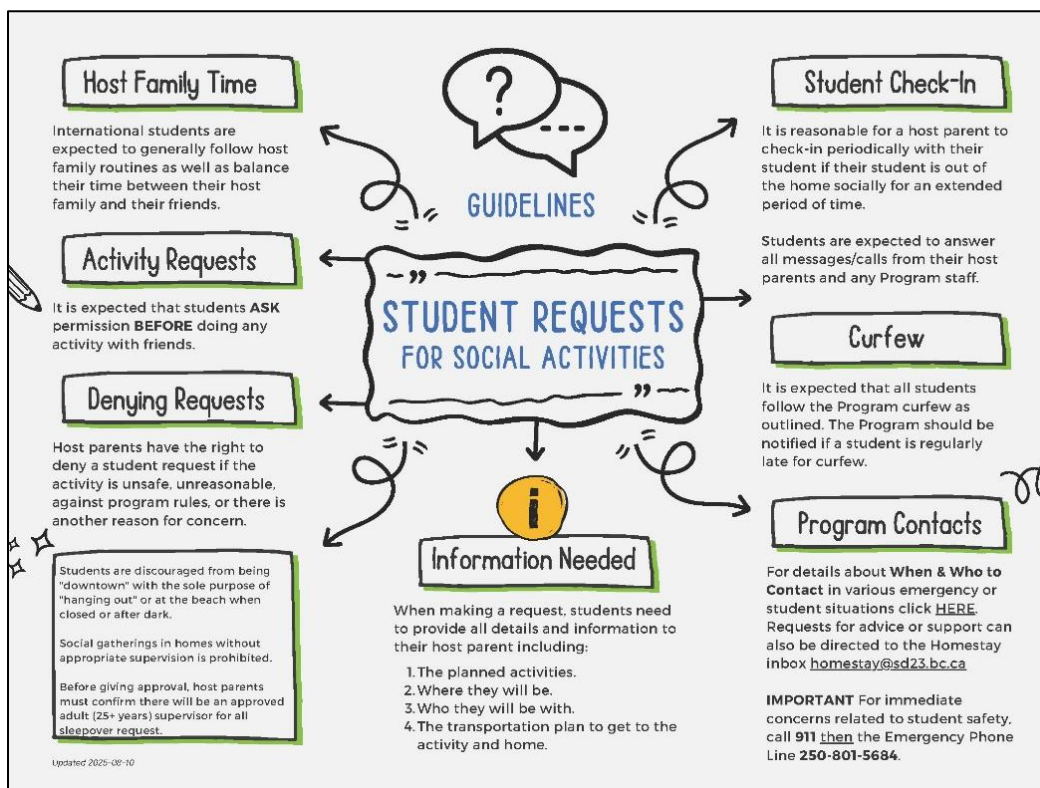
- Students will use either the school bus, the city bus, or private transportation to and from school.
- Your student should be driven to school if you drive your own children to the same school.
- We ask that you support your student when they need a ride before or after regular school hours when they are attending any program event.
- If your student joins an extracurricular activity, we ask that you help support their transportation needs to and from events (within reason).
- Ensure your student can navigate public transit in the Central Okanagan.
 - Help your student download the City Transit app, as well as rideshare apps.
 - We recommend that students use city transit in the daytime and early evening.
 - If your neighborhood has limited public transit options in the evenings or on weekends, please support your student with transportation
- Please review BC driving rules with your students.
 - Let your student know that by law, passengers in vehicles must wear seatbelts.
- Our program does NOT allow international students to:
 1. Drive any motorized vehicle at any time in Canada (i.e., vehicle, motorbike, boat, etc.) regardless of any licensing they may have in their home country.
 2. Ride in a vehicle with an "L" driver, regardless of the relationship the student has with the "L" driver (i.e., host sibling).
 3. Ride in a vehicle with an "N" driver outside the Central Okanagan school district area. Please note that Big White is outside the Central Okanagan school district area.
- BC driving regulations allow "N" drivers to have one passenger who is not a family member in the car.
 - International students are not considered family members under BC driving laws.
 - If your student is driving with an "N" driver, they should be the only non-family member in the car.
- According to school district Policy 401, student drivers CANNOT transport other student passengers to and from school activities during school hours.
- Student safety is our priority. If road conditions are not safe for a particular method of transportation, you do NOT have to give permission for your student to participate in that particular activity.

Reasonable Expectations for Student Behavior

International students need to abide by all expectations of the program and the district, as well as the School Codes of Conduct. Students are required to follow the program rules as a condition of remaining in the program.

Young people make mistakes. It is not because they are away from home; however, being away from home can make the impact of any mistake greater.

- The school Code of Conduct is available on the school website.
- There is not one single response to student misbehavior or bad judgment. When concerns arise relating to program and school rules and expectations, the actions of the student are considered in the context of the situation once all the information has been gathered.
- Possible consequences of a student's disregard or violation of program or school rules and expectations include the student:
 1. Receiving a school consequence such as a detention or suspension.
 2. Receiving a warning and letter of expectation for future behavior.
 3. Being dismissed from the program.
- More detailed information on the school website and the program website.
- Please do not hesitate to contact the program manager or, if it is urgent, call the emergency phone number to request support with any issues regarding student safety or behavior.



Social Activities

Friends are important to young people, and we encourage international students to make as many friends as possible. However, part of growing up is learning to make good judgments about friendships, and sometimes students need advice and support to do this.

The information below is intended to assist homestay families in supporting students in maintaining a safe and healthy social life while in Canada.

- The hours any student wishes to spend out of the house will vary between students.
 - It is expected that the student generally follows family routines.
 - Individual schedules to suit the needs of each family member, including the student, may vary.
- Students are permitted to spend time with friends outside the home, but it is expected that they ask permission and provide information to their host parents about:
 1. Who they will be with.
 2. Where will they be going and what activities will they be doing?
 3. Their plan for transportation to/from home.
- Host parents have the right to deny permission for a request if the student's request is:
 - Unsafe.
 - Unreasonable
 - Against program rules and expectations.
 - There is another concern the host parents have that deems the activity not appropriate for the student to participate in.
- It is reasonable for a host parent to connect with their student to check in periodically if the student is out socially for an extended period.
 - Students are expected to answer texts/messages/calls from their host parents and the program.
- We recommend that students spend time socially with friends who are close to their age, as we often find it problematic when a student has:
 - Friends who are 2 or more years older.
 - Friends who have already graduated from high school.
- Romantic relationships are discouraged because we find that this can lead to students:
 - Spending the majority of their time with only their romantic partner and not fully developing other friendships.
 - Experiencing significant difficulty if the romantic relationship breaks down.

Considerations for Requested Social Activities

- Our program values the role of our host parents, and as part of that role, it is expected that host parents use good judgement regarding the safety and well-being of students in their care.
- If a host parent needs support or has a question regarding a request from the student, they can contact their program manager for advice, or if it is urgent, they should call the emergency phone number for support.
- If your student knows that a law will be disregarded by anyone in attendance at a social gathering, we recommend they do not attend. Similarly, if they arrive at a gathering in which a law is being broken, it is advised that the student leave and spend time with friends doing activities that are within the law and program guidelines.
- Social gatherings in homes without appropriate supervision are prohibited.
 - It is important that host parents know where their student is spending time, and they confirm with the supervising adult that any planned activities will be safe and within the law.
- Generally, students are discouraged from being:
 - "Downtown" with the sole purpose of "hanging out".
 - Most businesses close before 10 pm, so keep this in mind when considering student requests.
 - Being at the beach if it is closed or if it is dark.
- If a host parent hears of a previously held or future social gathering that does not comply with the law or program rules, they need to inform their program manager.
 - The program will always endeavor to keep the names of those who report confidential; however, please know that student safety and well-being are always our first priority.

Thank you for your understanding and support in this area.

Curfew

Our Program sets the curfew for all international students. Curfews are directly communicated to students.

Students are expected to plan appropriately and always be home by curfew. This requires consideration of the bus schedule and travel time when planning.

For various reasons, a homestay may require an earlier curfew. Please speak with your Program Manager if you believe this is the case for your home. In special circumstances, curfew can be extended (i.e., school/ team event or a family outing).

With program set curfew, students still need to ask permission prior to doing any social activity, and it is expected that the student will inform their host parents of their whereabouts when out socially, regardless of curfew times.

Weekdays

Generally, the program recommends that on weekdays:

- Students are home for dinner most nights of the week, as this is a great opportunity to form connections between students and host families.
 - Exceptions to this may be in the evenings, when there are pre-planned team/club activities or events, school functions, etc.
- Students should not be out of the home more than twice a week (after dinner) for social reasons unrelated to school or program activities.

If a student has permission to be out after dinner on a weekday, their curfew is:

Grade	Weekday Curfew <i>(i.e., Sunday to Thursday)</i>
09	08:00 pm
10	09:30 pm
11	
12	

Weekends

Our program recommends students balance their time with their host family and their friends on weekends. If a student has permission to be out on the weekend, their curfew is:

Grade	Weekend Curfew <i>(i.e., Friday and Saturday)</i>
09	10:00 pm
10	11:30 pm
11	
12	

Sleepovers

With homestay permission, students may have sleepovers at a friend's homestay or have a friend sleep over at their homestay. However, some rules and practices must be followed to ensure the situation works for everyone involved.

Failure to abide by sleepover rules and expectations may result in a student losing the privilege.

1. Sleepovers should only occur on weekends when school attendance is not required the following day.
 2. Students must ask permission at least 48 hours in advance.
 - a. Students cannot make 'last-minute' requests (i.e., the evening of the requested sleepover).
 3. When asking for permission, students need to provide a sleepover plan to their host parents that includes:
 - a. Name and phone number of the host parent supervising.
 - b. Address of where they will be staying.
 - c. Travel arrangements to and from the sleepover.
- For safety reasons, both host parents must agree and confirm sleepover requests.
 - It is expected that the host parent of the student requesting to stay at a friend's homestay will confirm with the other homestay that there will be a program-approved adult (25+ years with a completed CRC on file with the Program) present and supervising.
 - Based on the circumstances surrounding the request, a host parent has the right to deny sleepover requests for their student to stay at another homestay, as well as requests for another student to stay at their home.
 - Sleepovers must be kept to 1-night. For sleepover plans that are 2-nights or more:
 - The program must be informed.
 - A different Travel Request e-Form must be completed.
 - Host families must speak to the program manager BEFORE a student is given permission to sleep over at the house of a family that is NOT part of the Central Okanagan Homestay Program.
 - Sleepover arrangements are not considered **Alternate Arrangements for Supervision of Students** outlined on p. 34, and as such, it is not necessary to compensate homestays in sleepover situations.

Supervision of Students

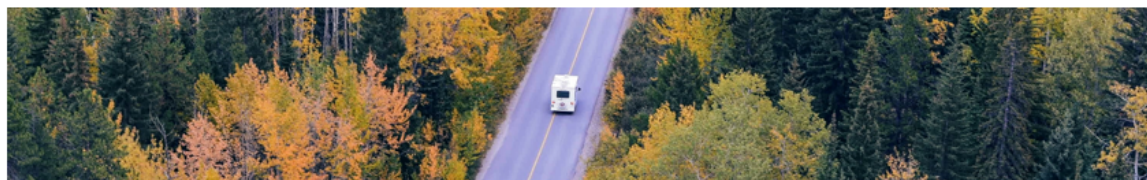
Student Travel Requirements and Approval

Travel forms may have to be completed by the student when requesting to travel.

The Travel Request e-Form is required for various requests, including if the student is:

- Travelling with host parents outside of British Columbia or Canada
- Travelling outside school district with any adult supervisor other than host parents.
- Travelling alone to meet natural parents
- Travelling with an approved adult 25 years or older who is not a member of the host family
- Travelling with a school trip outside of Canada or any Level 4/5 Field Trip.

The Travel Request e-Form is accessible on the 'Current Students' section of the Program website or scanning the QR code below.



TRAVEL DURING PROGRAM

NOTIFY PROGRAM

SITUATION	Notify the Program
OVERNIGHT TRIP IN BC WITH YOUR SD23 HOST FAMILY	At least 3 business days before trip Complete the Travel Form
You will only be contacted by the Program if there is concern with the information you provided	

PERMISSION NEEDED

SITUATION	Due Date for Travel Form Completion
OVERNIGHT TRIPS IN BC Without SD23 host family	At least 10 business days before trip Including overnight trips to Big White Including trips with natural parents and extended family, Canadian families, other 25+ years adult supervisors, etc.
TRIPS OUTSIDE BC OR CANADA With <u>or</u> without SD23 homestay	At least 10 business days before trip Including trips with natural parents and extended family, Canadian families, other 25+ years adult supervisors, etc.
SCHOOL TRIP OUTSIDE CANADA OR INVOLVING RISK (LEVEL 4 OR 5 FIELD TRIP)	At least 10 business days before trip Submit International Education travel form 10 days in advance AND have natural parents sign the field study permission form for the school.

For all above situations, you must complete the Travel Request form and wait to **receive approval from a Program Manager** before leaving on the trip or having the sleepover.

Alternate Arrangements for Supervision of Students

We understand that, at times, host parents may need to be away overnight from the home. However, international students must always have a program-approved adult (25+ years) supervising them.

- Should host parents need to be away from their student overnight, it is their responsibility to arrange for appropriate care and supervision of the student by:
 - An alternate host family in our Program.
 - Another program approved adult (25+ years with a complete CRC on file with our Program office).
- The student should NOT be expected to arrange their own alternate accommodation if their host parents are away.
- The program manager must be notified any time a host family will be away from their student overnight.
 - Host parents should plan for their absence and notify their program manager as early as possible.
 - If a host parent is unable to find an approved supervisor for their student, they should immediately contact the program manager so the program can arrange to have the student supervised.
- The host family is responsible for making payment to the alternate homestay for the nights they will be supervising the student prior to departure.
 - The current rate for student supervision in these situations is \$40 per night.

For program-organized or school trips, both Program and school staff meet the requirements of an approved supervisor.

School Permission Forms

Schools invite parents to events or meetings, and we encourage host parents to be as involved at your student's school as your time permits.

Additionally, permission forms are often sent home for host parents to sign, indicating permission to attend field studies, participate in team/club activities and travel, or to acknowledge course selection requests.

- Host parents can permit their student to participate in general school or extracurricular activities within the Central Okanagan area.
- The program **MUST** be informed about and provide permission for international students to participate in school and extracurricular activities that involve:
 1. The student is travelling outside the Central Okanagan school district boundary.
 - a. This includes travel to other provinces in Canada and other countries, as well as closer destinations such as Vernon, Penticton, Kamloops, or the Lower Mainland.
 2. High-risk activities included in Policy [525](#), [525A](#), and [525R](#), such as archery, scuba diving, extreme sports, etc. (see [Policy 525A](#) for the complete list)
- International Program-organized student activities do not require host parent permission because the District Principal is the legal custodian of students.
 - However, the Program will always communicate to host parents the details of any program-organized event.
- Schools often require parent signatures for permission forms, and we encourage host parents to sign these forms.
 - It is very helpful if host parents support and assist students in understanding requirements and expectations with the permission forms.

Expectations Regarding Study & School

Absence from School Due to Illness

Regular attendance at school is expected of international students and contributes to their success as study abroad students.

- Please contact the school if your student is ill and cannot attend classes.
 - Absence reporting processes vary from school to school.
 - If you are not familiar with the school's absence reporting process, please contact the school office for more information.
- If it appears that the illness the student is experiencing will last 3+ days, it is recommended that homework be requested from the school.
 - The Program needs to be informed of any extended absences or illnesses.
- Host families are asked to take their student to a clinic or their own family doctor if:
 - Their illness appears to be more than a cold or simple flu.
 - If the student has been absent from school due to illness for 3+ days.

Support in Schools

- Each school has several supports for international students.
 - As school-based teachers, the international teacher at the school is available to international students during school days.
 - Program managers meet individually with students at schools to support them when situations arise.
 - The school administrators support international students as needed, in collaboration with the international teacher and the District Principal.
- Host parents should feel free to contact classroom teachers at any time if they have concerns about their international student's progress.
- Program managers should be updated by host parents if they are contacted by the school regarding concerns about their student's academic progress or attendance.

Interim Reports & Teacher Conferences

- Teachers provide interim reports regularly or when a student is having trouble, failing to attend class, or not handing in homework.
- Host parents are free to contact the teacher if they need more information after receiving one of these reports. They can also discuss a specific action plan with the teacher to support the student.
 - The school can be contacted if a host parent is unsure about when interim reports are issued or whether a student has received one.
 - Interim report information is available on the school website.
 - Sometimes students are reluctant to share this information with their host parents; however, interims serve as an excellent first warning system for concerns before they become larger.
- Teacher conferences are typically held in October and February.
 - Meeting with one or more of a student's classroom teachers is a great way to build connection and learn more about the student.
 - Teachers also appreciate meeting host parents and hearing positive comments they may have that their student has shared about their class.
 - Parent conferences are also an excellent opportunity to meet the international teacher at the school.

Report Cards

- Report cards are issued several times a year.
 - Schools publish report card release dates in their school calendar.
- In addition to school staff and administrators, International Education staff and administrators also regularly review student academic achievement and progress.
- The Program sends student report cards to agents/natural parents.
- Host parents are encouraged to ask to see the report cards of their student.
 - This is a good way to identify any potential problems that might arise in the future.
 - It also allows host parents to better support students during their study abroad experience.
- If host parents have questions about the report or if it is unclear, feel free to enquire at the school. If questions remain, contact the Program office.

Secondary Schools Contact Information

George Elliot Secondary Grades 9-12		250-870-5102 ges.sd23.bc.ca 10241 Bottom Lake Road Lake Country
Kelowna Secondary Grades 10-12		250-870-5105 kss.sd23.bc.ca 1079 Raymer Avenue Kelowna
Mount Boucherie Secondary Grades 9-12		250-870-5101 mbs.sd23.bc.ca 2751 Cameron Road West Kelowna
Okanagan Mission Secondary Grades 9-12		250-870-5108 okm.sd23.bc.ca 4544 Gordon Drive Kelowna
Rutland Senior Secondary Grades 9-12	 *new logo being designed	250-870-5110 rss.sd23.bc.ca 705 Rutland Road Kelowna

Conflict between Student and Home Family

Matching students with host families is a complex process, and program managers work hard to determine positive matches.

- Therefore, both students and host families are expected to make every effort to contribute to a successful homestay experience.
- It is important to remember that an international student is still a youth.
 - As such, it is the Program's expectation that, as adults in the situation, host parents take a caring and supportive role to help guide the student towards adjustments and improvements in their behavior.
 - If the student brings forward a concern, host parents need to realize this may be difficult for the student to do. Therefore, an openness by the host parent to listen with the goal of understanding the student's perspective is greatly appreciated.
- History shows that problems that arise in homestays are usually a result of miscommunication or lack of communication.
 - If a host family is experiencing difficulties with their student, they should try to talk to their student directly about the issue.
 - It is important to try to deal with problems before they become too large to resolve.
- If there is a conflict that arises, the recommended steps for addressing the issue include:
 1. The host family and student sit down to discuss the concern.
 - Both parties share their perspectives and work to resolve the conflict.
 - An agreement is made for a plan of action moving forward to improve the situation.
 2. If the host family and student are unable to work out a solution together, or the initially agreed-upon action plan is not successful, the program manager can be consulted for assistance and support.
 - The program manager will try to help resolve the problem, which may include mediation between the host family and the student.
 3. If the situation does not improve, or if a solution cannot be found, the District Principal may move the student to a new homestay.
- It is always disruptive to move a student, but if a resolution cannot be found, we will find a new homestay placement for the student.

NOTE: *The District Principal has the right to move a student at any time, with or without notice to the host family.*

Student Moves

- Decisions regarding student homestay moves are made by the District Principal through a consultation process that may include the following individuals, as appropriate:
 - Host parents
 - The student
 - The agent and the natural parents
- If a student moves homestays, they are expected to pack up their belongings, clean their room and bathroom, and leave their family on friendly terms.
 - The program manager will:
 - Help the student move their belongings.
 - Support both the student and host family during the move.
- If the host family is requesting that a student be removed from the home for any reason, they will be asked to indicate in writing to the program managers their request for the move, including the reason, so the District Principal can be notified of the request.
- Please understand that move requests require time to find a suitable new homestay for the student.
- Depending on the reason for the move, the student:
 - May remain in the homestay for up to two weeks after the request is made.
 - May be removed from the homestay the day the request is made.

Thank you for your patience during the move process.

Homestay Payments

Homestay payments are intended to cover the expenses of having the student living in the home, such as accommodation, food, and basic transportation. The Program administers homestay payments to the host family on behalf of the international student.

- Payments to the homestay family are made monthly, at the end of the month.
- Homestay families will be reimbursed in monthly equal payments of \$1200 (current rate) for any month during which the student was in the homestay from the first day to the last day of the month.
 - Please note that the homestay payment is \$1200 per month, whether the month has 28, 29, 30 or 31 days.
- Homestay families will be reimbursed at a rate of \$40/day instead of the monthly rate when students are not staying from the first day until the last day of the month.
 - For example, this may apply to August, January, June, etc., depending on a specific student's arrival and departure dates from the homestay.
- If the student returns to their home country during Winter Break, Spring Break or other times during the regular school year, the homestay will still receive the full monthly homestay payment.
- No homestay fees are paid while a student is away from the Central Okanagan during Summer Break (July-August).
- There is no storage fee paid to the homestay for students' belongings remaining in the home during summer months (returning students) or other absences.
- If a homestay has general or specific questions regarding a homestay payment, please contact the program manager or the Program office to speak with the accounts clerk.

NOTE: *The District Principal will make final decisions regarding all disputes relating to homestay payments.*

Appendix A

Situations that must be reported to the program:

The following list is not exhaustive but includes situations that need to be reported to program personnel.

- If there is a serious, urgent event, such as a student going missing, being involved in an accident, or being apprehended by the police.
- If your student is seriously ill, especially where hospitalization or surgery is expected
- If the student or a member of the household contracts a communicable disease.
- If you believe your student may be seriously depressed or suicidal.
- If you suspect that your student may be experiencing a mental or emotional disorder.
- If you suspect that your student may have an eating disorder.
- If you suspect that your student is pregnant.
- If you notice a serious change in the pattern of behavior of your student.
- If your student has significant weight gain or loss.
- If you suspect that your student may be experiencing discrimination, harassment, threats, or inappropriate advances.
- If you suspect that your student may be involved in violent acts or acts of bullying, either as a victim or perpetrator.
- If you suspect or know that your student has been using drugs or consuming alcohol.
- If charges are laid by the police against a resident of your home.
- If there is a theft in your home.
- If your student causes damage to your home.
- If a resident of your home turns 19.
- If there will be a new resident in your home (student or otherwise).
- If your student is planning to leave the Central Okanagan without completing a travel application form.
- If your student wants to change schools or homestay
- If your student is planning on leaving the program or homestay.
- If you believe your student may be experiencing financial difficulty.
- If there is a change in the accommodation type that you are offering for the students.
- If you are planning to change residence or if your home is listed for sale.
- If there is a change in any of your contact information.
- If you are away from home overnight.
- If the school contacts you with serious attendance, academic, or behavioral concerns.

Appendix B

A fill in the blank” Homestay Rules and Expectations document is available in the hosting section of the International Education Website or by clicking on the following link.

[Fill in the blank homestay rules and expectations](#)



Homestay Rules & Expectations

Host Family _____

Parent 1 _____ Cell: _____

Parent 2 _____ Cell: _____

Home Address _____

The area of the city we live in is called _____

The closest city bus stop to our house is located _____

This stop has access to (route numbers/names) _____

Our work hours are typically _____

If you are out of the house and have a question when we are at work _____

Curfew [set by Program]

You need to plan appropriately and always be home by curfew. This requires you check the city bus schedule and include travel time when planning activities.

- Curfew on **school days** (i.e., Sunday to Thursday)
 - 9:30 pm for students in Grades 11 and 12
 - 8:30 pm for students in Grades 9 and 10
- Curfew on **non-school days** (i.e., Friday and Saturday)
 - 11:00 pm for students in Grades 11 and 12
 - 10:00 pm for students in Grades 9 and 10

Sleepovers [set by Program]

When **asking permission** to stay at a friend's house, you need to provide the contact number of the other host parent supervising the sleepover and give time for your host parent to confirm the arrangement.

A **TRAVEL REQUEST** must be completed at least 48 HOURS BEFORE the sleepover to notify the Program:

- You have permission from your host parents to have a sleepover.
- The address of the homestay you will be spending the night at.
- The name of the adult (25+ years) approved by the Program that will be supervising the sleepover.

Your Room

Do NOT overload electrical outlets. If unsure about what can be plugged into an electrical outlet, please ask.

We will ask to check that your room is cleaned

Other expectations for your room include

Bathroom

You must tidy the bathroom after every use.

Keep showers to a time limit of

Specific instructions when using the tub/shower

Specific instructions when using the toilet

Bathroom supplies (*toilet paper, soap, shampoo, etc.*) are kept

You must clean your bathroom every

The cleaning products are kept

Other expectations for bathroom use include

Laundry

Our family laundry routine is

The reasonable number of loads of clothing to wash per week is

You can do laundry on (day) between (time) and

You must wash your bed sheets every

You must wash your towels every

When using the washing machine, remember

When using the dryer, remember

The laundry supplies are kept

Other expectations for laundry include

Kitchen Use

You must clean/tidy the kitchen after every use.

Kitchen appliances you CAN use

Kitchen appliances you CANNOT use

Please do not prepare food before (time) or after (time)

House expectations for:

Preparing meals

Setting the table

Clearing the table

Loading the dishwasher

Emptying the dishwasher

Washing dishes in the sink

Taking out the garbage/recycling

Other expectations for the kitchen include

Meals & Snacks

Breakfast options include

Lunch options include

Snack options include

We typically eat dinner at (time)

At family mealtimes, you can expect

Expectations for phones/digital devices during dinner

Other expectations we have for meals/snacks include

Common Areas

You must tidy the common areas of the home after every use.

We spend time as a family usually in (room in house)

During family time spent together, you can expect

House Temperature (Heating/Cooling)

You must NOT cover or block baseboard heaters because this is a fire hazard.

Our house is heated by and is cooled by

Situations you can adjust the house/room temperature are

Situations you can leave a window open are

Other expectations about heating/cooling/windows include

Out-of-House Expectations

Every time you leave the house

Other expectations in the house include

If you need a ride, ask (when)

If you would like to go out with friends, ask (when)

Other expectations when out of the house include

IMPORTANT: *You must follow Program Rules and Expectations if you are going out with friends, this includes asking permission in advance. Your phone MUST always be charged and with you when out of the house.*

Technology Use

Expectations in our home regarding:

Phone use when you are at home

Phone use when you are in a vehicle

Phone use at night

Gaming

Other expectations for technology use include

Quiet Time

We typically get up in the morning at (time)

and go to bed at (time)

Noise should be limited before (time)

and after (time)

Other expectations for noise in the house include

School Days

Our school day morning routine starts at (time)

and includes

You need to be ready to leave for school by (time)

and you will get to school by (if school bus, list location of stop)

Other expectations for getting ready for school include

If you are sick and cannot go to school

Weekends

Our weekend routine typically starts at (time) and includes

Expectations we have for weekends include

Other Expectations in our Home

(Including any pet care or contribution to other household/yard tasks)

If you have any questions at any time, please let us know.

