

Homestay Guidelines for Students

Your time studying in Australia will be an exciting and memorable period in your life. The information in this document has been designed to help you to enjoy life in Australia living with Australian families. Please read it carefully and ask questions to make sure you understand it all.

Living in Australia

The Australian Family

A family in Australia can mean many things. A family can comprise: a mother, father and children; a single mother or father with or without children; an older couple or an older single person whose children are grown up and have moved away. Consequently, your Homestay Host (HH) may be different from the one you are used to in your home country.

Respect

Australia is generally a relaxed and friendly nation and its people believe in respect for each other. Most Australians - children, parents, students and teachers - call each other by their first names. This is considered a sign of friendship, not lack of respect. It is polite to always say "please" and "thank you" whenever asking for or receiving anything.

Equality

In Australia, men and women are equal and are considered with equal respect. In Australian Homestays, the cleaning of the home, washing of dishes, clothes etc., are often shared among all members of the family.

Freedom of Expression

Freedom of expression is a right of all Australians and you will generally find people of all ages are very open in expressing their thoughts and feelings, whilst also respecting the thoughts and feelings of others.

Religion

Primarily a Christian nation, Australians practice their religions freely and openly and, whatever their beliefs, live harmoniously.

Living in a Homestay

Meals

HH generally provide all meals - breakfast, lunch, dinner and some healthy snack food - seven days a week.

Breakfast and packed lunch are provided on a self-serve basis. Both parties can make other arrangements subject to agreement.

Always ask what time dinner will be served. If you will not be home until late, or if you will be missing a meal, always advise your HH a few hours beforehand.

Daily Routine

Good sleeping patterns are very important for the health and welfare of adolescents. Patterns of late nights with excessive use of internet or video or study can escalate into poor sleep habits and be damaging for academic progress. At the same time, this should be balanced with positive social activity and appropriate sleeping-in on weekends and holidays. Below are our recommended times.

Sunday to Thursday (Friday & Saturday ½ hour later)

Years 7 – 8	9.00pm	Preparation for bed and next day	9.30pm	Lights out
Years 9 – 10	9.30pm	“ “	10.00pm	“ “
Year 11	10.00pm	“ “	10.30pm	“ “
Year 12	10.00pm	“ “	11.00pm	“ “

Heaters

Heating is expensive and should be used with care. If you are cold, tell your HH. If you want to turn on the heating system for the whole household, you need to discuss it with your HH first.

Laundry

The HH provides laundry facilities and, unless otherwise agreed, you are expected to wash and iron your own clothes. It is important to remember that water supply in Victoria is limited and should be used with care. Only full loads should be washed in washing machines. Hand washing should be done in the laundry, never the bathroom. Wet clothes should never be hung in bedrooms.

Household duties

In most Australian homes, young people are expected to perform one or two light duties such as washing dishes, preparing the table for meals, cleaning or ironing, hanging out laundry or taking it off the clothes line. The HH may request your assistance with these tasks. There are no servants in Australian homes and duties are shared in a spirit of cooperation.

You are required to keep your bedroom clean and tidy at all times, as well as other areas of the home that you use.

Television and other entertainment

Some households place restrictions on the amount of television watched. For the sake of your studies, you should ensure that you do not watch too much television. However, watching some television is an excellent way of learning English, so a balance should be maintained. You need to ensure that you do not spend too much time watching movies from your home country, instead of doing your homework or watching English speaking movies.

Toiletries

You are expected to supply your own personal toiletries eg soap, shampoo etc.

Bathrooms

Do not be too long in the shower or bath. Five minutes is long enough and one shower per day is considered acceptable. Because of water restrictions in Melbourne, many households place a bucket in their showers in order to save excess water. So you may be asked to do this also so that the water can be used on the garden. Remember to wipe down the sink and bathroom floor after use. Leave the room tidy for others.

Telephone

You are expected to pay for calls you make with the home landline phone. You should ask before using the telephone and 15 minutes is the longest you should spend on the home landline phone.

If you use the landline for international calls, we recommend the use of phonecards.

Travelling to and from the College

Your HH will be able to provide directions for you to travel by public transport to the College or other destinations. After the first day of school, you are expected to find your own way to the College. If travelling to school with your HH, be ready early and try not to make them wait. If they are a little late, be patient.

Always inform your HH if you will be home later than normal. It is important for your HH to know your whereabouts AT ALL TIMES and how to contact you should there be an emergency. It is very important that you have your mobile phone with you, fully charged, with plenty of credit and always turned on, when away from home.

Privacy

Privacy is important to Australians. Expect to have your privacy respected and do not enter the bedrooms of other members of the family unless you have been invited. It is normal in Australia for rooms not to have locks or bolts.

Friends

If you wish to bring friends home, it is polite to ask permission. Do not let them stay too late and if you wish them to stay overnight, ask permission from your HH family beforehand.

Log Book

Your HH will use a log book to record details of your movements and contact details. You are expected to record these details so that your safety can be supported.

Staying away from your Homestay

Students may only stay overnight at other places with approval of parents and the HH. Any overnight stay needs to be carefully checked by the HH and full contact details maintained in the Log Book.

Part-time Employment

The College has no objection to limited part-time employment, providing it does not interfere with your studies or causes the HH undue inconvenience. Up to 6 hours a week of part-time employment would be acceptable. Do not agree to work for cash-in-hand as this can be in breach of your visa.

The Administrator – International Program must receive written approval from parents before supporting any employment arrangements. It is essential that you inform your HH of your intention to find part-time work so that any arrangements can be agreed upon before you apply for the job. **Remember you are not permitted to travel alone on public transport after dark.**

It is important that you are aware of your legal entitlements as a worker. For details, visit <http://www.fairwork.gov.au/employment/international-students/pages/default.aspx>

Moving Homestay

Even though you may develop a close friendship with another student, this is not sufficient reason to move Homestay.

You are regarded as part of the Homestay unit and you should understand it is not normal to change Homestay according to friendships. If a student and / or HH develop irreconcilable differences then either party may request a change of Homestay. It should be made clear that within all families differences of opinion arise between parents and young people, and that moving a student is a decision not to be taken lightly or suddenly. All parties will be counseled and if the problem can be resolved then every effort must be made to do so.

Payments

The Homestay fee is set by Mater Christi College and is reviewed regularly.

- The minimum length for Homestay is four weeks with a four weeks notice of termination
- A weekly Homestay fee of \$300 is payable directly to HH. Mater Christi recommends that payments be made every four weeks in advance. Payment must also be made for periods of non-residence due to late return or early departure for holidays.
- A holding fee of \$300 is payable for the summer vacation period to reserve a room
- A holding fee of \$150 per week is payable if a student is absent for a week or more

Homestay Host Responsibilities

It is important for you to understand the rights and responsibilities of the HH so that you understand any requests made of you. The College has significant responsibilities for the welfare of international students and this responsibility is in turn delegated to HH for the times that the student is not at school.

Specifically the HH has the authority and responsibility to

- advise and assist with making the appropriate decisions in the event of an emergency
 - *contact with the College is essential in these circumstances*
- liaise with the College regarding attendance, homework, behaviour and discipline, and other matters relevant to the enrolment of the student
 - *sign on behalf of parents for permission notes etc*
- support the academic progress of the student, attend interviews as required and liaise with parents as requested by the College
 - *monitor quantity and quality of study and lifestyle balance*
 - *provide appropriate study environment*
- ensure the maintenance of the student's safety and security
 - *do not leave the students at home alone overnight*
 - *ensure safe travel practices especially at night*
 - *promote an awareness of unsafe situations*
 - *know the whereabouts of the student at all times*
 - *ensure the student's phone is switched on when they are out*
 - *ensure the student has relevant emergency contacts in her mobile phone*
 - *maintain records of student contacts and movements*
- support the health and medical well being of the student and promote her social and emotional welfare
 - *encourage appropriate sleep patterns*
 - *promote and provide for healthy eating*
 - *arrange appropriate medical appointments and transport*
 - *advise the College of any concerns*
 - *enable occasional sleep-over with friends*
- assist the student with practical functions eg. banking, budgeting and money management, travel and transport arrangements, telephone and computer requirements, shopping, securing valuables, the local environment, safety and other daily needs
 - *providing transport to and from the station or bus stop if it is more than a 15—20 minute walk*
 - *providing transport to and from the airport when students go home. Students are expected to discuss suitable flight dates with their HHs. The College encourages HH to liaise with other families to coordinate airport trips. There is no obligation to provide transport when a student travels outside the scheduled term breaks.*
- provide opportunities for the student to experience Australian culture and lifestyle and to practice English conversation in the home
- ensure that the student is aware of relevant Australian/Victorian laws
 - *any employment is within visa conditions*
 - *appropriate fare payment on public transport*
- be available on call for the student or family, 24 hours a day,
 - *this could include via voicemail and email*

Homestay Student Responsibilities

Living in Homestay should be a happy and memorable time that will contribute to your learning experience in Australia. It is more likely to be a successful experience if your actions are based on three basic principles:

1. **Respect yourself – care for your own health, safety and learning**
2. **Respect others – care for other’s welfare and understand their rights and responsibilities**
3. **Respect your environment – care for resources, cleanliness and hygiene**

The following expectations of Mater Christi Homestay students come from these principles of respect. You are expected to...

- Communicate politely with greetings and courtesies (good morning, goodbye, please, thank-you etc.)
- Tell your HH full details of your out-of-school activities – times, places and contact details
- Advise your HH if you will unexpectedly be late
- Ask permission from your HH if you wish to invite a friend into your home, to visit, have a meal or to stay the night
- Follow directions given by your HH regarding bed-times, study, social and recreational activity
- Keep your room and bathroom clean and tidy
- Promptly clean and tidy all equipment and areas that you use
- Be considerate of others in your use of shared facilities eg telephone, bathroom
- Provide reasonable assistance with light household duties
- Establish an agreement on telephone and internet usage
- Make relevant Homestay payments on the agreed date
- Be organised to pay for your own medical, pharmaceutical and other personal costs
- Use water and energy resources with care
- Negotiate all transport arrangements prior to applying for part-time employment
- Discuss any concerns you may have with your HH conditions openly and calmly
- Report any unresolved matters to the College Homestay Coordinator

If you have any questions about your Homestay please do not hesitate to contact the Homestay Coordinator, Saskia van Schie.

M: 0400 666 371 E: vanschie_s@materchristi.edu.au

Student Declaration

I have read, understand and agree to the conditions of living in a Homestay as set by Mater Christi College.

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature _____