



ACT Government Education Directorate
International Education Unit

**Guidelines for participants in the Homestay Program for
International Fee Paying Students**

1. Visa Requirement

- 1.1 Students under the age of 18 are required to live with homestay families or hosts registered with the ACT Government Education Directorate International Education Unit (IEU).
- 1.2 To be registered as a homestay host, all members of the household over the age of 18 must undergo a Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) check. These checks must be completed every 3 years, and Self Disclosure forms must be completed and returned every 12 months.
- 1.3 Students must stay in homestay for at least the first 6 months after their arrival regardless of age.
- 1.4 The IEU must always be notified of any change to a student's address within seven working days.
- 1.5 Students must have Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) for the duration of their visa.

2. Welfare and Contact Details

The IEU is available to Homestay families and international students during business hours on 6205 9194 or at Monique.bush@act.gov.au for assistance.

For all urgent issues outside of business hours, the emergency help line is **1800 682 175**.

2.1 Student's Role

- 2.1.1 Students must follow house rules when living in homestay. When students are leaving the house it is important that the homestay is told where they are going and when they expect to be home. If there are any changes to these plans the student must contact the homestay. On Sunday to Thursday evenings, students must arrive home no later than 6pm. Later times on Friday and Saturday evenings may be negotiated with the homestay host.
- 2.1.2 Students should not bring friends into the house without the homestay's knowledge or permission.
- 2.1.3 Students are required to sleep in homestay every evening. Students may request to sleep over only in the home of another homestay family. Students should discuss any changes in accommodation arrangements with their homestay family first, who then must seek approval from the Homestay Manager via email. The Homestay Manager will confirm approval in writing.
- 2.1.4 Students must notify the IEU, school and homestay of any changes to mobile phone number and contact details. This also includes changes in parents contact details in student's home country.
- 2.1.5 For students under the age of 18, travel outside the ACT is not permitted unless accompanied by an adult over 21 years of age. Permission must be given by the parents and the IEU, and the Travelling Confirmation for International Students Under 18 Years form must be completed. Students should ask the International Private Student (IPS) Coordinator at their school for a copy of this form.

2.1.6 The IEU considers homestay the most appropriate place for a student to be living whilst completing their secondary school education in Canberra. However, once students have turned 18 and been in homestay for at least six months, students may apply to move out of homestay. Students must complete and submit to the IEU an Application for Independent Living form. Once approved, the student will be notified and asked to give the homestay two weeks' notice.

2.2 Homestay Role

2.2.1 In line with ACT Government policy and in adherence with the Australian Government School International Homestay Standards, it is mandatory for all homestay host families to attend one training session per year.

2.2.2 Homestay parents will require knowledge and understanding of the needs of young adolescents and have realistic expectations of cultural, linguistic and religious differences. Homestay hosts also require an awareness of the emotional needs of young people who are away from their home environment and support networks. Such issues and other concerns are addressed fully as part of the mandatory homestay training sessions.

2.2.3 A stable living environment with an Australian family plays a very important part in helping students to adapt to Australian society and improve their English.

2.2.4 Homestay parents will perform "in loco parentis" functions such as signing permission notes. Should there be any concerns regarding medical history, please refer any issues to the Homestay Manager.

2.2.5 Students are required to sleep in homestay every evening. Students may request to sleep over only in the home of another homestay family. Students should discuss any changes in accommodation arrangements with their homestay family first, who then must seek approval from the Homestay Manager via email. The Homestay Manager will confirm approval in writing.

2.2.6 Homestay parents will accompany their student on their first day of school where they will meet with the international student coordinator.

2.2.7 Homestay parents must make suitable arrangements for the student returning home after their first day of school. It will be necessary to orient students to the Canberra bus system, particularly in regard to travelling to and from school.

2.2.8 Homestay parents should demonstrate a firm but flexible approach to matters of welfare, discipline, house rules, meals and cooperative living. House rules and expectations should be clearly explained to the student upon arrival. It is highly recommended that the student is given a written version of these. The IEU will provide sample house rules to all new homestay hosts.

2.2.9 It is not permitted for student's parents and extended families to reside in homestay accommodation on the student's initial arrival in Canberra. It is vital that the homestay host family and the student be given the time and space required to ensure a successful transition without the pressure added by the presence of parents in the house. After the student has been in homestay accommodation for six months, homestay families are very welcome to host student's families should they wish.

2.2.10 The IEU and the school must be notified of any changes in residential address, phone numbers or the family members residing in the homestay.

2.3 Resolution

2.3.1 No arrangements for changing homestay are to be made between a homestay and student. All such requests should be referred to the IEU.

2.3.2 Students and homestay families should contact the Homestay Manager if there are concerns that arise that are not able to be resolved.

2.4 Medical Issues

2.4.1 Prior to student arrival the IEU arranges Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC), provided by Allianz Global Assistance. Students will receive information about how to access Allianz online services at their first orientation session.

2.4.2 If a student becomes ill and requires medical care, the homestay hosts are required to arrange medical appointments. Students need to pay at the time of consultation and seek reimbursement online through Allianz Global Assistance. The refund can be accessed over the internet or with the claim forms provided in the student welcome package.

2.4.3 If an ambulance is required, or it is necessary to visit the hospital in an emergency situation, the hospital will require OSHC details. The IEU must be contacted immediately if such a situation arises.

2.5 Meals

2.5.1 The homestay family will supply breakfast, lunch and dinner. After the first six months in homestay accommodation, students have the option of purchasing their own lunches and snacks on weekdays and reduce their homestay payment.

2.5.2 A typical breakfast usually includes juice, cereal, milk, toast, jam, tea or coffee. Lunch is usually a sandwich and fruit. Dinner is normally a cooked meal.

2.5.3 It is important for students to discuss the food they like to eat with the homestay family. Homestay host's will expect students to indicate if they do not like various foods, and provided this is done politely, the homestay host will appreciate openness and honesty.

2.5.4 Students and homestay families are expected to share the evening meal together, as this is the ideal opportunity for English conversation and building relationships. Students must advise the homestay family in a timely manner if they are running late or will not be coming home for a meal.

2.5.5 Snacks between meals need to be negotiated between the student and the homestay family. Students should not take food or drink from the homestay family without their consent. Students must not eat or drink in their bedrooms and should discuss with their homestay family in which rooms food is allowed to be eaten.

3. Accommodation

3.1 Requirements

3.1.1 Students will be supplied with:

- a single bedroom, with bed, bed linen and blankets
- beds must have mattress protectors
- a desk/study area with chair
- adequate light for studying
- adequate heating in the student's room
- a cupboard suitable for storing clothes

3.1.2 Australian Government School International Homestay Standards were implemented in 2014 and the ACT Government complies fully with these standards. Carpets must be clean, rooms repainted when required; window covers clean and intact and all bedroom furnishings must be clean and in good working order. The Homestay Coordinator will view each room on inspection and advise of any repairs/cleaning that is required.

3.1.3 The student must be given a key to the home. It is the student's responsibility to keep the key in a safe place so that it is not misplaced. If the key is lost then students are liable for rekeying the entire house for security purposes.

3.1.4 Male and female international students must not reside in the same homestay. Exceptions may be made for siblings and other related students (e.g. cousins) if requested by the students' parents and pending availability.

3.1.5 Students must not be accommodated in the home of any staff working at the school they attend.

3.2 Student's Role

3.2.1 Students are expected to share household chores as is customary in Australian families. Students will be expected to keep their rooms tidy and clean the kitchen and bathroom/toilet after use. The homestay should make their expectations clear to the student, including demonstrating the use of the vacuum cleaner, the dishwasher and how to complete simple tasks like making the bed.

3.2.2 Valuables, such as large sums of money or jewellery, should not be left in the bedroom. Students should make use of their student bank accounts and only withdraw small amounts of money at any given time.

3.2.3 If any damage is caused, the student must advise the homestay immediately.

3.3 Homestay Role

3.3.1 The homestay will discuss with the student the family routine around the washing and ironing of clothes.

3.3.2 The homestay will outline clearly which electrical equipment may be used by the student such as the television, computer, stereo, and any restrictions on their usage.

3.3.3 Many students lack experience in having responsibility for household chores. It is reasonable to expect that students will keep their rooms tidy and the kitchen and bathroom/toilet clean after use.

3.3.4 Any damage should be reported immediately to the IEU in writing outlining the circumstances leading to the cause of any damage. Homestay hosts must not negotiate with students regarding payment for alleged damage and no money should be withheld from students for cleaning or repairs. The IEU will determine remuneration where appropriate. Homestay host families must ensure that their house and contents are adequately insured. If an item is damaged and a replacement is required, the Homestay Coordinator will determine the appropriate compensation based on the condition and age of the item. For major damage, the student will pay the insurance excess for any claim.

4. Fees

4.1 Payments

To be paid 2 weeks in advance. Students have the option of:

- \$300.00 per week, full board, three meals per day and snacks.

OR

- \$280.00 per week, 5 weekday lunches and daytime snacks not included. ***(Please note: this option is NOT available to students until after they have been enrolled in an ACT public school for at least six months)***

Deposit of \$600.00 to be used only as payment for the last two weeks homestay fees, this is not a bond and cannot be retained for any damage.

First payment of \$1200.00 to be paid upon arrival, this includes the deposit and two weeks homestay fees. **(Please write separate receipts for the deposit and the first two weeks homestay fees)**

Second payment of \$600.00 to be paid at the end of the second full week in homestay accommodation.

Payments will continue on a fortnightly basis until approval is given by the IEU to move out of homestay accommodation.

Two weeks' notice must be given by either party for the student to move out.

The following charges will apply when the student is away from their homestay:

Holiday Holding fee (when applicable)

Anytime a student is away from homestay for 4 or more nights, \$10.00 per night is to be paid before departure (for periods less than 4 night's full homestay rate applies). This typically only occurs during holiday periods where a student's belongings are left in the bedroom and the room is not used.

Temporary Placement Fees (when applicable)

Anytime a student is re-located for a short period of time (this typically only occurs when the regular homestay family is away for a period of time and requests their student stay with a different homestay for the duration of their absence) the following payments will apply.

For temporary stays of less than a week:

Number of nights away	\$300.00 (all meals provided)	\$280.00 (weekday lunches not provided)
1	\$43.00	\$40.00
2	\$86.00	\$80.00
3	\$129.00	\$120.00
4	\$171.00	\$160.00
5	\$214.00	\$200.00
6	\$257.00	\$240.00

For temporary stays of one week or more the full homestay fee will apply (\$300.00 or \$280.00) for each full week, plus the relevant amount from the above table for any additional nights.

4.2 Student's Role

4.2.1 Students must pay homestay fees every two weeks. Students should keep a calendar or set up a reminder to ensure that payment is never late.

4.2.2 Students must not pay their homestay any more than the fortnightly amount, except for the initial payment which will include the deposit.

4.2.3 Students must make sure they receive and keep receipts for all homestay payments.

4.2.4 If students do not give the required two weeks' notice, the deposit will not be returned.

4.2.5 If a student is asked to leave the homestay without two weeks' notice due to misbehaviour, or has to leave Canberra due to a breach in their student visa conditions, the deposit will not be returned.

4.3 Homestay Role

4.3.1 The homestay must give the student a receipt for payment indicating the period for which the payment has been made. In the case of payment disputes the IEU will request receipts.

4.3.2 Any variation to the amount or frequency of student homestay payments is not permissible.

4.3.3 The deposit cannot be withheld for any reason other than payment of the last two weeks homestay fees. Should a homestay host be unable to give two weeks' notice then the homestay is required to return the deposit in full. The amount of the deposit must be calculated using the initial payment made by the student upon arrival.

5. Internet and Phone

5.1 Internet

5.1.1 All students must purchase their own wireless broadband USB modem and ensure the usage is pre paid. Students must not access or share homestay internet facilities.

5.1.2 Students must not enter into any contracts or plans with internet providers but purchase prepaid only. These can be purchased through most mobile phone companies. Homestay hosts should assist students to purchase wireless broadband USB to ensure that the company has coverage in their particular suburb. Alternatively, students can purchase mobile phone data and access the internet on their electronic devices via their phone hotspot.

5.1.3 Under no circumstances should homestay hosts and students be sharing internet costs.

5.2 Phone

5.2.1 Use of the telephone for incoming calls at a reasonable time of the day should be allowed. Students must ensure that they are only making and receiving mobile phone calls prior to 10pm.

5.2.2 When permission is asked, reasonable access must be given to the student in order to make phone calls from the landline. Students should purchase international telephone cards to ensure that a local call is the maximum cost borne by the homestay.

5.2.3 Students are required to pay for all national and international phone calls they make. Itemised phone bills provide an accurate record of telephone use.