

## Homestay Family Program

Horizon School Division #67  
6302-56 Street  
Taber, Alberta  
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## RULES AND INFORMATION

### OBJECTIVE

The Horizon School Division No. 67 will provide caring, nurturing Homestay placements for international students. Our families will strive to create a family environment in which students can achieve positive personal growth, as well as academic success.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF HOMESTAY PROVIDERS

As a Homestay family, use your caring and nurturing talents to make your international student feel accepted as a member of your family. You need to be aware of your student's emotional and physical wellness.

Your new family member deserves proper care – emotional and physical. He/she needs the same care you would give your own child. Your student also needs to feel that you genuinely care about him/her. If your student feels this, the bonding process will be much easier.

### PHYSICAL WELLBEING

Provide healthy, nutritious meals and snacks to ensure physical wellbeing. If you will not be home for dinner, try to prepare a meal that can be easily heated or micro waved. Encourage your student to exercise, get proper sleep and eat a balanced diet.

Most students like to be involved in physical activity – encourage your student to participate. Physical fitness will help them feel well and happy.

### EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Providing opportunities for your new family member to interact with other people will reduce boredom and improve emotional wellbeing. Include your student on your family activities, but as with any teenager, give him/her adequate time to spend with friends. Whenever possible, include your student in family discussions and decisions. Ask their opinion. It might be interesting to learn how another culture might handle certain situations.

## **SPIRITUAL WELLBEING**

Adequate time should be allotted for spiritual devotion, personal reflection and/or quiet time. If your student wants to go to a particular church other than your own, you should make this a possibility and a priority. You may even find another family with a child of the same religion that is interested in car pooling and spending time together.

## **ACADEMIC WELLBEING**

As you would for your own child, you may need to provide academic support for your student. Provide quiet opportunities for students to study.

## **COMMUNICATION**

This year will be a learning experience for you in many areas. There will be awkward moments and confusing situations. Strong communication skills will be a must! Sometimes communication is difficult and compromise is needed. Sometimes we need time to think things through. Difficult situations can usually be worked out if they are dealt with calmly and respectfully. **In cases where a mutually satisfactory outcome cannot be reached mediation is available through the Homestay Coordinator.** This will be a wonderful year for you but there will be lots of ups and downs. You will need to always be honest and open with your student. Try to be supportive. Whether your student is lonely or having trouble with school work, friends etc., your advice and reassurance is always welcome. While you cannot anticipate his/her every need, honesty and openness will provide a strong foundation for your relationship.

Your student is far from home and will likely go through culture shock and be homesick. Compassion is necessary to help your student feel accepted, secure and loved.

## **ADAPTING TO A NEW CULTURE**

Your new family member will experience many changes during his/her first few weeks. They may feel disoriented and may suffer physical side effects. This is normal under the circumstances. This should be a short time of discomfort. As your student grows accustomed to living in Canada they will relax and gradually feel better.

Special considerations may have to be given due to cultural differences. Your student may require certain things in their diet. This provides an excellent opportunity for your family to try new foods too! Seek out ethnic grocery stores and let your students share new food from their country with your family.

# **HOMESTAY REGULATIONS**

## **HOUSEHOLD DUTIES**

Your student is not a houseguest, but rather considered a member of your family unit. As a member of your family, they will be expected to work with your family to make the household run efficiently. Taking part in household chores such as sweeping and vacuuming floors, dusting, cleaning the bathtub after use, cleaning bathroom counters, helping with dishes and putting away groceries is just a few ways your student can help out. Students are expected to keep their room and study area neat and tidy. They are

responsible for their own laundry. Many students may not have done chores like these before. You may have to give proper instruction.

### **DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**

The use of drugs and alcohol is prohibited and may result in the student being sent home. In Canada it is illegal for people under 18 years to purchase cigarettes and illegal to purchase and consume alcohol. Illegal activity of any kind may result in criminal charges and the student being sent home. If you notice your student engaging in illegal activity contact the Program Director or Homestay Coordinator immediately.

### **RULES AND CURFEWS**

Homestay families will establish their own rules and curfews. Respect and courtesy for these guidelines is mandatory. Rules and curfews should be established according to age. Curfews should be fair, within reason, and livable for your household. Make sure your student has access to proper transportation home at night. Ensuring the safety of your new family member is your responsibility. You are your student's parents for the year and you are accountable for them.

### **PHONE AND INTERNET USAGE**

It is recommended that student's use their personal calling cards to make long distance calls. Canadian protocol dictates that no phone calls should come in after 10:00 pm and no calls on weekends before 9:00 am. Students should be asked to respect these quiet times in your household. We strongly recommend that computers with internet access are not provided in student bedrooms. Monitor student internet usage carefully. Excessive usage is strongly discouraged.

### **MONEY**

Homestay families are required to provide a home and nourishing food. Any clothing, extra school expenses, personal hygiene items and spending money are the responsibility of your student. You may want to inquire every few months regarding how their funds are holding out and remind them to ask their parents to send more funds when necessary to avoid running out. It is unwise to lend money.

### **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

Students are expected to attend all classes daily. Homestay parents are expected to contact the school if their student will be absent due to illness. In the event that the school contacts you and states that your student has missed classes contact the Program Director.

### **HELPFUL HINTS**

Family expectations, household responsibilities and rules should be established shortly after your student arrives in your home. It can be difficult and uncomfortable to try and establish routines after your student has been treated as a houseguest with no responsibilities and expectations.

Make a small itinerary to give to your student when he/she arrives. Provide information about your schedules of work, regular weekly activities, your home, business and cell numbers. It is very important you provide your student with a key to your home.

Respecting each others' need for privacy will give everyone a little down time to regroup. Please monitor this closely. If your student appears depressed and overly withdrawn, they may need someone to talk to about their feelings.

You are not expected to cater to your student's every whim. If your student needs to do something at a particular time, let them know that you will gladly help, but encourage them to ask with as much notice as possible to give you time to adjust your own schedule. Encourage your student to leave his or her belongings in their room. This will help your home from getting cluttered and help the student to avoid misplacing items.

Your student is here to experience life in a different culture. Help them to do so at every opportunity. For many, this is a once in a lifetime experience. Cherish your time with your new student. Take every chance you can to offer something new – food, cultural events, and sports activities that your student may never be able to experience in their own country. You are encouraged to learn as much as you can about your student's culture for your own personal growth.

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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