



White Rock Christian Academy

WRCA Long Term Homestay Guidelines and Rules





WELCOME TO WHITE ROCK CHRISTIAN ACADEMY HOMESTAY PROGRAM



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HOMESTAY STUDENTS AND THEIR PARENTS AS WELL AS HOST FAMILIES MUST HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE FOLLOWING RULES AND GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

Long-term Homestay is at least 10 months, beginning of September to end of June of the following school year.

Students, parents, and host families may also wish to access the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care Homestay Guidelines, at [BC for High School – Government of British Columbia.](#)

The goal of the WRCA Homestay Program is to provide a safe, supportive, English-speaking, local, family environment for international students attending the school. Our goal is to select host families who meet these criteria. Parents of international students, together with host parents, are encouraged to provide consistency between the home and school so that the vision of the school is supported and advanced.

The way to make the most of the homestay experience is for everyone to come with an open mind and understanding heart. Students should come prepared to participate in family life and share in the responsibilities of being a family member. Hosts should be ready to welcome the student into the family and encourage them to be involved in the life of the family. Mutual understanding, sensitivity and trust will go a long way to ensuring a positive experience for everyone.

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BECOMING A HOST FAMILY AT WRCA

Becoming a host family at WRCA requires the following:

- Living in a way that reflects a belief in the Triune God
- Accurately completing the Homestay Application Form.
- Receiving a home inspection by the Homestay Coordinator as well as scheduled home visits.
- Ensuring that home insurance policy adequately covers liability and student belongings (\$2 Million minimum) and auto insurance policy (minimum \$5 Million 3rd party liability) cover for the student(s) residing within the home.
- Ensuring that home and auto insurance policies adequately cover the student(s) residing within the home
- Submitting a current criminal record checks for all adults (19 and over) living in the home; the fees for this are to be paid by host family
- Upon request, attendance at Homestay Orientation Meetings
- Host parents should be 25 years of age or older

Homestay families should be cautioned against depending on income from homestay fees in order to balance their family budget. The school is not obliged to place or replace a student or reimburse fees for perceived lost income.



HOW STUDENTS ARE PLACED

As much as possible, the requests of international students are taken into consideration when the Homestay Coordinator determines placement. WRCA will inform the homestay of any special requirements and relevant medical or behavioural background for potential students.

For long-term homestay placements, WRCA does not place more than one student per home. BC Homestay guidelines do not permit more than two students in one home. WRCA will only permit a placement in a home that is hosting another student if that student is: from a different country/language background as the WRCA student (except for short-term students); the same sex as the WRCA student; a high-school student, not an adult student. If a host family is planning a student placement through another agency, consent must be given by the Homestay Coordinator. If an unreported double placement comes to the attention of the homestay coordinator, the WRCA student may be withdrawn from that homestay.



FAMILY LIFE – WHAT TO EXPECT

Our host families want to host students because they are interested in other cultures and want students to be a part of their family; the experience should not be just room and board. Host parents look out for the students' best interests and will help them stay safe and healthy, encourage them in their schoolwork, and guide them as they grow as children of God.

As a general guideline, host families are asked to treat their students as they would one of their children. Using this guideline helps families determine not only what they would expect of the student, but also what the student should expect of them.

Students must have their own room and access to an adequate study area. The room should be supplied with a bed, dresser, closet, mattress, pillow, bed linens, lamp, chair, desk, and internet access. Host families should respect the privacy of the student's room and everyone in the household should respect each other's property. Under certain circumstances, the host parents may access the student's bedroom.

Students should be able to have access entry into the home like any other member of the family (e.g. house key and/or alarm code).

Students should have access to a bathroom and laundry facilities.



Students and host parents will need to talk about how much time they will want to spend alone. It's important to find a good balance between respecting each other's privacy and spending too much time alone. It would be impolite and unwise for students to spend too much of their time behind closed doors writing or talking in their own language at the cost of taking part in family life, getting to know others and improving their English skills.

English should be spoken whenever the student is present.

Students and their parents should stay in regular contact with one another. Parents should continue to be involved in their children's lives even over long distances.

If students invite guests to their homestay, it should be done with the appropriate notice and permission of the host family. Students may not bring friends of the opposite gender into their bedroom. It is expected that during July and August, the student will return to their home country. During these months, students are asked to pack up all their belongings and clean their room so that it can be used by the homestay family. The homestay family will find a place in their home or garage to store a reasonable amount of the student's belongings during this time away. Students are not expected to pay a fee for this. If it has been arranged that the student is not returning to live with that homestay after the summer, the student should not expect the homestay to store their belongings over July and August.



DAILY LIFE – WHAT TO EXPECT

INSIDE THE HOME

Bathroom Use

Canadian bathroom routines can be very different. One example is that Canadians typically have no drain in the bathroom floor and keep the bathroom floor dry, while other cultures do not.

Some important bathroom related things to keep in mind:

- There should be clear expectations concerning who can shower or bathe when and for how long.
- Leaving enough hot water for other people in the family is important.
- Showers should not be taken late in the evening if it disturbs the host family.
- Toilet paper, soap and towels will be provided by the host family. Students need to supply their own personal items such as toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner and moisturizing cream. The student's personal items should not be used by other members of the host family without permission.
- A host parent should talk to the student about what can and can't be flushed down the toilet.
- Although it might be embarrassing, a plugged toilet is something to report, not something to hide. Students should never attempt to fix problems in the bathroom.
- The bathroom should be clean and dry after every use.

Telephone and Internet

We live in a digital age. At WRCA, we try to teach students how to be responsible with their digital devices. International students are required to follow the guidelines their host family has in place regarding use of the internet. It is recommended that a time in the evening is set when all digital devices are turned off. It is reasonable that students would be required to bring all devices down to a designated spot or turn them in to their host parents at an arranged time.

Chores

As members of the family, it is reasonable to ask the student to clean and vacuum his/her room as well as clean the bathroom after using it. In addition, it is reasonable to ask students to assist with small daily chores like:

- setting or clearing the table
- washing dishes or tidying the kitchen
- taking out the garbage or recycling
- picking up personal items and keeping them in the bedroom
- doing their personal laundry
- making their own breakfast and lunch

It is not reasonable to expect students to help with

- babysitting
- doing heavy cleaning or yard work
- cooking meals (unless they offer to do so)



Curfew

Curfews are dependent on age and at the discretion of the host family. It's important that both the student and the host parents negotiate reasonable expectations in this area.

Normally, evenings are meant for studying, spending time with the host family or participating in school, church or community events.

Bedtime is exactly that – time for bed and time to sleep. Bedtime does not mean time to use devices for gaming or connecting with family and friends.



Damaged Property

Host parents should review their home insurance policy with respect to liability and coverage with a homestay student living in the home.

As with one's own children, in the process of normal living, household accidents may occur that do damage to household property. Should costly damage occur to the host family's property, they should discuss with the homestay coordinator the use of the student's damage deposit to pay for the damage.



Food

The host family is expected to provide three meals a day, as well as snacks. The following points should be considered:

- It is recommended that host families take their students grocery shopping in order to learn their likes and dislikes. Host families may invite their student to share their culture by preparing a meal or dish for their family.
- Students should not be permitted to eat meals in their bedroom. Be sure that it is clear where food may or may not be eaten.
- Students may want to buy their own snacks. Discuss where they should store their food.
- Students are encouraged to be honest about the amount

of food they receive, and host parents are wise to ask whether the student has had enough. In Canada, it is very acceptable to have second helpings.

- Students should be adventurous about trying unfamiliar foods. Host families should not insist that students eat food they dislike.
- Students are expected to be at home in the evenings to eat with their host families. If the student is going to be away, a reasonable notice should be given to the host family.
- WRCA provides a hot lunch option. Students wanting to participate do so at their own expense.

Resolving Conflicts

Living with others can present problems. Problems and conflicts happen in all families and can be solved when everyone commits to understanding each other's expectations and needs. Communication is key to sorting out misunderstandings whether caused by cultural differences, communication difficulties, or other conflicting personal traits.

In most cases, if you have a problem or a misunderstanding with one another, you should:

- tell each other about how you feel
- tell each other what you need
- encourage each other to express your feelings and needs
- use questions and verification techniques to facilitate communication

Problems of a more sensitive nature should be communicated to the Homestay Coordinator.

Changing homestay is not the first response when problems arise between host families and international students. The Homestay Coordinator or the International Program Coordinator will always insist that host families and students engage in open and honest conversation. A facilitated meeting may be arranged so that issues can be discussed. It is only when the school deems that a conflict is unresolvable that students will be placed in a new home.



OUTSIDE THE HOME

Church Attendance

Students are expected to regularly attend church with their host family. It's also great to encourage them (but not require them) to become involved in youth group activities. There may be times when a student wants to attend an ethnic church. Although this is acceptable, it should not take the place of regular attendance at the host family's church

Family Holiday or Travel

If a host family wants to include their student in a family holiday they should get permission from the student's parents. Clear expectations about who pays the student's travel expenses should be communicated to the student's parents. If a decision is made not to include the student in the activity, it is the responsibility of the host family to make alternate arrangements that are acceptable to everyone. The International Program Coordinator must be informed about all trips and alternate arrangements.

If you plan to travel to the USA, please ensure that that you have an appropriate travel visa and health insurance.

Restaurants

If eating out replaces a regular mealtime, the host family should include the student and pay for the meal.

In a special circumstance where a host family may be unable to invite the student to join a restaurant meal or pay for it, it is critical to clearly communicate with the student about the reason why. In these cases, there must be an option for the student to remain at home and have a prepared meal provided.

If the student chooses to go out to eat when a meal at home is available, the student is responsible to pay for the restaurant bill. 12

Outings

International students must inform their host families when making plans to go out on a free day or afternoon. The student must make sure the host family knows where he/she is at all times. If a student is staying overnight at a friend or family's place, the host family needs to have the name, address and phone number of the friend's parents. A host family may refuse permission for their student to participate in some activities. Reasons for their refusal could include concern for safety, conflict with family plans, or the amount of homework a student has.

If students choose to travel further than a two-hour drive or stay away for more than three nights, they are required to obtain permission from their host families, biological parents, and the Homestay Coordinator, and meet the following requirements:

- Provide all contact information of where they will be going, how long they are planning to be away, who they will be travelling with, what they are planning on doing while they are away, and what mode of transportation they will be using to get to and from their destination. Students are not permitted to travel until their request has been approved by their parents, their host families, and the Homestay Program Coordinator
- Stay with a relative or another responsible adult. Students are not permitted to stay in hotels or to stay in homes with students of the opposite gender.
- Carry a cell phone and emergency contact numbers in case of problems.

The school reserves the right to decline these travel requests. Incomplete schoolwork or a poor discipline record at school could be reasons a request for an outing to be denied.

Academic Support

Academic standards at WRCA are high and, as a result, students may require help at home with assignments from time to time. Additional adult tutoring may be arranged by the student's parents at their own cost. Community service and physical activity is a requirement for graduation and require parental support.



School Absences

If sick, students must have permission from their host parent to be absent from school. Host parents must notify the school when the student is ill. If the illness is severe, host parents should determine if it is necessary for a host parent to stay home with a student or if the student should visit a clinic.

In the case of any severe illness or injury, the student's parents

and the homestay coordinator should be informed and consulted.

Students should not miss school for vacations. When booking flights home for holidays, students should refer to the school calendar to avoid missing instructional days.

School Trips

Host families are not expected to cover the costs of school trips, this includes the meals they need to buy during the trip.

Waiver forms and/or permission slips may be scanned to and signed by the parents. There are occasions where these forms can be signed by or the Custodian.



Transportation

Host families will ensure that students have transportation to and from school. It is reasonable to expect students to walk to school if the home is two kilometres or less from school.

If the student needs to take the city or school bus to school, the host family is responsible for arranging and paying for the bus pass.

Host parents should be available to drive students to school, church or community-related activities. It is important to make polite requests in a reasonable amount of time. It is unreasonable for students to expect their host families to drive them everywhere.

Public transportation (city bus) or bicycles are acceptable options. 15

In some situations, it may be convenient for homestay students to use a taxi or uber at their own expense.

It is reasonable for students to ask their host family to drive them to or from the airport, ferry or bus terminal. The host family should be willing to do this, but if they are unable, they should arrange with the student, the student's parents, and/or the homestay coordinator for alternative transportation to be provided.

Homestay students may not drive their homestay families' vehicles. Homestay students need to privately arrange and pay for driving lessons with a registered driving school. Homestay students need to receive permission from their homestay family before purchasing a vehicle.



Medical Insurance

Each long-term student is enrolled in BC's Medical Services Plan by WRCA. In the three-month waiting period before the student's MSP is activated, WRCA will purchase insurance for the student from a private provider.

If a student turns 19 after beginning at WRCA, they must pay for the MSP premiums themselves beginning the month following their 19th birthday.

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Miscellaneous

The WRCA custodianship service package will terminate upon the students' 19th birthday.

Students will have some petty cash from their parents for covering their small purchases. It's the students' responsibility to take care of this cash account and be mindful to keep a good bank record for study permit renewal purposes.

Host families are expected to cover costs incurred as a result of students being involved in a family activity up to \$25 (for example, going to a movie). If the cost is above \$25 and the student is expected to pay, the student should be informed beforehand of the cost and given the option not to attend.

The host family is not expected to pay any activity's costs when the student goes out with friends.

Students and host families should not lend or borrow money to or from each other.

Host families must inform the Homestay Coordinator of all residents and pets in the household. Please notify the Homestay Coordinator of all changes to the household.

Support for the Student

WRCA will appoint a legal custodian (usually the Homestay Coordinator or a WRCA staff member).

WRCA will provide a 24-hour emergency contact (usually the Homestay Coordinator) for the student and host family who should be called in the case of a medical emergency.

Due to being away from home and navigating an unfamiliar culture, International Students can often be under a lot of stress, thereby experiencing anxiety and/or depression. Homestay families are required to report to the school immediately if they hear anything that might be concerning to a student's mental or physical health. In addition, if the student is taking mood altering drugs like anti-depression or anti-anxiety medication, this must be reported to the school.

Students experiencing mental health difficulties are encouraged to seek help from the school's counsellors. In addition, please note the following resources:

- A. BC Helpline for Children (1-800-663-9122) – 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 your concern to the child welfare worker.
- B. Kids Help Phone (1-800-668-6868) – Counselling and mental health support.
- C. Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre (keltymentalhealth.ca) – Resources regarding mental health issues, substance use, medications and healthy living.



Behaviours to Avoid

In BC it is a criminal offense to:

- use alcohol under the age of 19,
- smoke under the age of 19,
- use cannabis under the age of 19,
- use illegal drugs at any time

If students commit any of these offences, they will be dealt with by the RCMP and/or Immigration Canada. Homestay parents are not held accountable for offences committed by students.

International students must not engage in inappropriate sexual conduct or other types of immoral activity.

International students studying at a pre-university/college level are not permitted to have a paying job in Canada.

Host families will have reasonable guidelines in place to direct the behaviour of all members of the household. If, after repeated warnings, students continue to disobey the homestay guidelines, they may be asked by the school to withdraw from the program.

If the student believes that the host family is asking them to do something unreasonable, inappropriate or uncomfortable, they should contact the Homestay Coordinator.

Based on pre-conceived cultural norms in most student's home countries, our homestay program has a no cannabis use policy for all members of the host family.

Homestay of any age may not consume alcohol under any circumstances. Homestay students 19 or older may not use or store cannabis, drugs or cigarettes on the homestay premises.

