



Hope Lutheran Christian School  
International Student Program

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# Homestay Program Guide

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Lisa Olding  
International Program and Homestay Coordinator

## School Mission Statement

*Equipping each child to impact the world for Christ's glory.*

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## Statement of Philosophical Foundation

At Hope Lutheran Christian School, we value diversity and welcome non-resident students to our International Student Program in order to provide a rich education and cultural experience for all our students. We believe providing non-resident students a Christian homestay can have a long-term impact on faith development. The International Student Program and the Homestay Program align well and is seen as an extension of the School's missional focus.

## Goal of the Homestay Program

The goal of the HLCS Homestay Program is to provide a safe, supportive, English-speaking, Christian, 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.

An excellent homestay environment allows students to improve their English skills within a positive, family environment. It also gives students an opportunity to experience Canadian culture and traditions. It is our prayer that students will have a rich experience and that they will see Christ both in the family and at school.

We believe that these guidelines encourage excellent communication and understanding between homestay parents and their students. We also realize that difficulties and differences will be a part of this process and we are committed to supporting host families and international students with issues that may arise.

## Becoming a Host Family at HLCS

Becoming a host family in the HLCS International Program requires the following:

- living in a way that reflects a belief in the Triune God
- completing the Homestay Application Form available on the website
- receiving an initial home inspection and interview by the Homestay Coordinator
- submitting a current criminal record check for each adult living in the home; the fees for this are to be paid by host family
- submitting a current drivers abstract for each person living in the home who could potentially be transporting the student; the fees for this are to be paid by host family
- receiving bi-annual home visits by the Homestay Coordinator

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.

It is strongly recommended that anyone wanting to apply to become a host family should read, share and discuss all the details of this document with all members of the family and extended

family to avoid potential conflicts that may arise from having an international student living with them.

## How Students Are Placed

International students are asked to complete a Homestay Information Form and write a short letter of introduction to their prospective host family. As much as possible, their requests are taken into consideration when the Homestay Coordinator determines placement. However, even if requested, it will not always be possible to match a student with a host family having children in the same age range as the student. In every case, the Homestay Coordinator will make every effort to provide the best situation for the student.

Ordinarily, we do not place more than one student per home. Where there is an exception, students must be of the same sex and have a different first language. A host family is not permitted to have more than two students. If a host family has a student placement through another agency, the Homestay Coordinator must be informed.

## 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, which should include 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.

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.

## Daily Life – What to Expect

These are some important items to review with your homestay student upon arrival.

## *Inside the Home*

### Bathroom Use

Canadian bathroom routines can be very different. Some of the main differences are that Canadians typically:

- prefer taking showers to baths
- often shower in the morning
- bathe inside the bathtub
- drain and clean the tub after use
- have no drain in the bathroom floor
- keep the bathroom floor dry
- shower once per day

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.
- Students shouldn't be required to wait until their host parents have showered before taking their shower or bath. 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.

### Celebrations

Living in a Canadian homestay allows students to gain an understanding of Canadian celebrations and traditions. Students are encouraged to share in their host family and extended family's celebrations.

### Chores

It is reasonable to ask the student, as a member of the family, 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 garden work
- cooking meals (unless they offer to do so)

### Church Attendance

Students are expected to attend church with their host family regularly. 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 a different church (e.g. with friends, or with services in their first language). Although this is acceptable, it should not take the place of regular attendance at the host family's church.

### 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. It is appropriate to expect homestay students to follow established house rules regarding bedtime and technology.

### Damaged Property

Host parents should review their home insurance policy with respect to liability and coverage. In the process of normal living, household accidents may occur that do damage to household property. If a homestay student is involved in a household accident that is deemed to be an accident, but results in property damage, then the following should be considered:

- What would you charge your own child – the entire amount, the insurance deductible, or some amount in-between or lower?
- If the damage is a result of negligent or destructive behavior, the student may be expected to pay the deductible up to \$500.00.
- The host family will not be held responsible for loss of property or physical harm incurred except in the case where Canadian Law has been breached.
- The host family will not hold the employees and board of the school responsible for any inconvenience or property damage, or physical harm incurred and received by the student.

### Food

The host family is expected to provide three meals a day, as well as snacks. Typical meals may include:

- Breakfast: usually a light, quick meal: bread with jam, honey or peanut butter; muffins; cereal with milk; fruit; yogurt. Sometimes, often on weekends or holidays, host families may prepare larger breakfasts of eggs, bacon, pancakes or waffles.
- Lunch: Canadian students often prepare their own lunches. This may include a sandwich, bun or bagel with meat or cheese, fruit, yogurt, raw vegetables, and cookies.
- Supper: usually some combination of any of the following foods – soup, meat, cooked vegetables, salad, and rice, pasta or potatoes.

#### Further Thoughts about Food:

- 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. Be sure that everyone understands what reasonable is.
- Host families may begin supper by praying, talk while they are eating, and close the meal time by reading from the Bible or a devotional.

#### Homestay Fees and Miscellaneous Fees

Unless other arrangements have been made, a monthly homestay fee of \$900 is due at the beginning of each month. In most cases, the fee is paid directly from the student to the homestay. The monthly fee enables host families to recover the costs of housing and feeding an additional person. No prepaid lump sum payments are permitted. Homestay parents may not charge students for additional expenses unless the Homestay Coordinator has been notified and agrees to the expense.

#### Fees recognize the cost of:

- food
- daily transportation to school, including school events and early morning or after school classes
- utilities
- preparing a comfortable bedroom that meets requirements

If a student leaves the homestay for more than 5 consecutive nights, the homestay rate is pro-rated and reduced to \$15 per night during their absence. If the student returns to their home

country during the summer, they should pack up their belongings and clean their room so that the homestay can use their room. The host family will find a location where the student can store these belongings. In this scenario, the student will *not* be expected to pay the reduced rate. If the student insists that their room be left “as is”, and this is agreeable to the host family, the student will be required to pay the \$15 per night rate for the duration of the summer.

Host families may not charge any additional fees other than those outlined above. If requests are made for things beyond the scope of the homestay’s responsibilities, please check with the International Program Coordinator regarding appropriate charges.

If conflicts arise between a student and members of the host family and the situation is deemed unresolvable, a student will be allowed to change homestay. A minimum notice of two weeks is required. Normally, if a student requests a homestay replacement, the student will be charged \$250.00. If the host family requests a change, the replacement fee will be paid by the host family.

### 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 their feelings and needs
- use questions and verification techniques to facilitate communication

Problems of a more sensitive nature should be communicated to the Homestay Coordinator. Re-placing students is not the first response when problems arise between host families and international students. The Homestay Coordinator and/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 conflicts appear unresolvable that students will be placed in a new home.

### Telephone and Internet

We live in a digital age. At Hope Lutheran Christian School, 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 actually turn them into their host parents at an arranged time.



## *Outside the Home*

### Academic Support

Academic standards at HLCS are high and, as a result, students will require help at home with assignments from time to time. International Program coordinators and staff are in constant communication with students' teachers and will decide, based on student marks, attitude and ability, if additional tutoring outside of school time would be beneficial. Additional adult tutoring may be arranged at an additional cost to the student. Staff will work with host families to find times and places that are convenient for all.

Community service and daily physical activity is a requirement for graduation and may require host parent support.

### Driver's Licenses and Ownership of Vehicles

While in the HLCS homestay program, international students are only permitted to get their driver's license and drive a vehicle with the permission of the parents, the host parents, and the International Program Coordinator. It is advisable that students take a formal drivers training course.

### 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. Host families are expected to remunerate substitute families at the rate of \$30 per night. The International Program Coordinator must be informed in advance and approve of all alternate arrangements.

If you plan to travel to the USA, please ensure that that your student has the appropriate travel visa.

### Medical Insurance

All long term students are registered in the BC Medical Services Plan. Each student, after a waiting period, receives a Care Card. Interim Insurance is provided by the student's family until the Medical Services Plan takes effect. When accessing health services the Care Card should be presented to the health care provider.

### 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 visit a nearby city on the weekend, they are required to obtain permission from their host families, notify the International Program 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. This information must be provided to the International Program Coordinator using the *Out of Town Permission Form* at least three days before their intended travel day. Students are not permitted to travel until the International Program Coordinator has approved the request.
- 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.

All school policies must be adhered to. Drinking, drug use, and any other illegal or immoral activity is absolutely prohibited and may result in suspension or expulsion. Incomplete school work or a poor disciplinary record at school could be reasons for denying a request for going on an outing.

Direct permission from the student's parent's is required if students go on a non-school trip in which they:

- travel further than a two hour drive
- stay away for more than three nights
- stay somewhere overnight unsupervised by an adult

In these cases, the school will:

- arrange for a phone call to the parents.
- require a letter from the parents authorizing their child to travel under these circumstances.

### Restaurants

Host families may enjoy dining out from time to time. If this 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.

### 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.

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

With the exception of meal expenses, host families are not expected to cover the costs of school trips. Waiver forms and/or permission slips should be wired to and signed by the parents. There are occasions where these forms can be signed by the Homestay Coordinator 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 activities at the school, church, or in the community. 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. Except in emergency situations, host families should not expect their students to take a taxi.

It is reasonable for students to expect their host family to drive them to and pick them up from the airport, ferry, or bus terminal.

NOTE: Nowhere is the guideline "What would you do for your own children?" more relevant than in the area of transportation.

### Miscellaneous

Students may not make significant purchases over \$200 CAD without the permission of the host family, the Homestay Coordinator and/or the International Program Coordinator. The International Program Coordinator reserves the right to decline permission to make the requested purchase.

Host families are expected to cover costs incurred as a result of students being involved in a family activity (for example, going to a movie). The host family is not expected to pay similar costs when the student goes out with friends.

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.

If students invite guests to their homestay, it should be done with the knowledge and permission of the host family.

### Behaviours to Avoid

In Canada it is a criminal offense to:

- use alcohol under the age of 19,
- smoke under the age of 18
- 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 studying at a pre-university/college level are not permitted to have a paying job in Canada.

Host families must 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 school 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.

If the student ever feels unsafe in the home or at school, they can phone the BC Children's Helpline (310-1234), which operates twenty-four hours a day, year round.

### Final Words

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.



Homestay Parent Expectations Agreement

At Hope Lutheran Christian School (HLCS), the importance of a stable homestay environment for students, where safety, love, and care is provided, is seen as a critical component for our International students' success. It is the homestay parents' responsibility to look out for their student's best interests and help them stay safe and healthy, in addition to encouraging them in their schoolwork and guiding them as they grow as children of God. As a general guideline, homestay families are expected to treat their students as they would one of their own children.

As the homestay parent(s) of \_\_\_\_\_ and during his/her stay in Canada from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_, HLCS expects that you will provide the home life and daily care that supports his/her growth and development.

By signing below I, \_\_\_\_\_ acknowledge that I have read and agree with the expectations, requirements, and policies contained within the Hope Lutheran Christian School International Student Program Homestay Program Guide, and outlined above, and agree to comply with them.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Homestay parent (printed)      Signature      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Homestay parent (printed)      Signature      Date

Acknowledgement of Custodian(s) (if different from Homestay parent(s)):

By signing below I, \_\_\_\_\_, as the Custodian of \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that I have read and agree with the expectations, requirements, and policies contained within the Hope Lutheran Christian School International Student Program Homestay Program Guide, and outlined above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Custodian (printed)      Signature      Date

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Acknowledgement of Parents:

By signing below I, \_\_\_\_\_, as the Custodian of \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that I have read and agree with the expectations, requirements, and policies contained within the Hope Lutheran Christian School International Student Program Homestay Program Guide, and outlined above.

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Name of mother (printed)

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Signature

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Date

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Name of father (printed)

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Signature

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Date