



## **District Homestay Program**

### **Host Family**

#### **Guidelines, Policies and Procedures**





## Welcome to the Abbotsford District Homestay Program.

### International Program Staff Information

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General Inquiries

Homestay Payment Inquiries

Medical Inquiries

**International Student Liaison (ISL):** Contact information for International Student Liaisons will be provided at the beginning of each semester.

### Emergency Contact Information

**Emergency Contact information**

**24-hour International Program Emergency number: 604-217-1917**

**call 911 for Fire, Ambulance, or Police.**

If a student or host family calls 911 or has a personal emergency that they need to speak to someone about, also call 604-217-1917 to reach someone in the International Dept.

If a student is feeling unsafe, threatened, or is in serious doubt about a situation, call the International Program emergency number. They will direct your call to the appropriate person.

If you have an emergency during our regular office hours: 8:00am – 4:00pm, call someone in our International Department.



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## International Education Program

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### **Hospital ER visits for Abbotsford School District international students.**

All Abbotsford School District international students are covered for medical through Studyinsured private insurance or MSP, depending on their length of stay in Canada.

**Students that are covered by Studyinsured that need emergency medical attention do not have access to a credit card to pay for hospital services. Their caregiver cannot provide a credit card.**

The student should provide their passport for identification and provide the address where they are currently residing. The hospital, doctors and any medical service provider should either mail the bills to the student's current address or send them to our office. If they are sent to the student, the bills will be forwarded to our international office and the bills will be submitted to Studyinsured immediately for payment.

The medical provider could also send the bills directly to our office:

International Program - Abbotsford School District  
2790 Tims St. Abbotsford, B.C. V2T 4M7  
International office: 604-851-4585  
Fax: 604-504-7629  
Email: [international.medical@abbyschools.ca](mailto:international.medical@abbyschools.ca)

If the hospital or the service provider needs verification that this student is covered by Studyinsured, and bills will be submitted to Studyinsured promptly by our office, the hospital staff can call our 24-hour emergency number 604-217-1917.

**BC Government website: In an emergency, no one will be denied essential medical care.**

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Welcome to the Abbotsford School District Homestay Program. This booklet contains guidelines and expectations for making this international experience an enriching and enjoyable one, as well as answers questions commonly asked by host families, students, and home country parents. The homestay experience is the cornerstone of international education, allowing the student to have the adventure of living as a Canadian, while the host family is exposed to and learns about another culture. This is an opportunity for everyone to share a cultural experience together.

Parenting children from another family can be a challenging and rewarding experience. It is natural and common for problems to arise. Please contact the Homestay Coordinator for support or guidance at any time.

### **Homestay Family Responsibilities (Contractual Obligations):**

Homestay families undergo a thorough screening process for approval to be a District Homestay family. All approved homestay families must comply with all guidelines and expectations. The following host family responsibilities are to ensure that international students are provided an experience with clear guidelines that families are willing and able to comply with, that contribute to the best outcomes for students.

**It is mandatory for new families to attend homestay orientation prior to receiving their first student. It is also strongly recommended that all current host families attend as well, even though they have had previous students. This evening is part of the training provided to all host families, as topics change, and policies and procedures are updated to provide the opportunity for best outcomes for everyone.**

The host family ("Host Family") has the following responsibilities and agrees to carry out these responsibilities in a manner that contributes to the best outcomes for students.

1. The Host Family must be approved by the Homestay Coordinator and have completed a Criminal Record Check (CRC) for all household members and long-term guests over the age of 18. CRC's must be renewed every three years. Partners of single parents are also required to have criminal record checks even if they do not live with the host parent. The School District reserves the right to deny approval or remove students from a Host Family if any CRC reveals or indicates that the student may be at risk.
2. The Host Family parents must have the capacity to and will devote reasonable effort and time with the student to ensure a successful experience, and to ensure the health, safety, and proper supervision of the student.
3. All Host Family members must be able to communicate fluently in English. Students learn their English through immersion. It is important that English is the primary language spoken in the Host Family home.
4. Host Family parents must be in good emotional and physical health, which at a minimum must be sufficient to ensure that they are capable of carrying out the duties under this Agreement, and to ensure the safety and wellness of the homestay student.

5. A Host Family parent must have a valid driver's license and access to a vehicle(s) that seats all family members including the student(s).
6. The entire Host Family must be involved and support the decision to host an international student.
7. Host Family parents must attend homestay information/orientation and training sessions as requested.
8. The Host Family home must meet all Site Inspection expectations as described in the Homestay Guidelines and submit a Site Declaration as requested.
9. Host parents must be (a) clear about house rules and expectations and provide a list to the student for their reference; and (b) enforce all house rules as explained to the student; and (c) ensure issues related to imposing consequences are logical, proportionate and related to the broken rule. If unsure, contact the Homestay Coordinator.
10. The Host Family must:
  - a. orient the student to the home, the neighbourhood, and other areas of Abbotsford;
  - b. orient the student to household fire and earthquake safety procedures;
  - c. continually provide the student with a safe and clean home environment;
  - d. provide food for three wholesome meals each day and nutritious food for snacks, all in reasonable quantities;
  - e. provide access to bathroom, laundry and other shared facilities and instructions on use;
  - f. enforce all house rules and program expectations as explained to the student;
  - g. be open and honest, tolerant and respectful in communicating with the student;
  - h. complete written evaluations of student placement as requested;
  - i. notify the Homestay Coordinator of any changes that may affect the student, such as illness or a change in household members (i.e. children leaving, parents separating, long term guests staying).
11. It is expected that the family and student will eat most meals together as a family. Students should eat dinner with the host family at least 4 nights per week.
12. All members of the Host Family will respect the personal privacy of the student, including by;
  - a. respecting personal privacy while the student is using areas of the home in which there is reasonable expectation of privacy (e.g. bedrooms, bathrooms etc.)
  - b. refrain from any use of video, audio or digital surveillance of the student within the home, including but not limited to, private areas of the home;
  - c. refraining from any monitoring or interception of the student's private communications; and

- d. maintain the privacy and confidentiality of sensitive or private information about the student, except to the extent required to carry out the Host Family's obligations under this Agreement.
- 13. Host a maximum of three students as approved by the Homestay Coordinator or Program Manager. Do not house students or adults from other agencies, private schools, or universities while hosting for the District Homestay Program.
- 14. When applicable, the Host Family must provide 14 days written notice by email and phone call to the International Education Program if ending a placement.
- 15. The Host Family parents will ensure that all members of the household, house guests and respite caregivers abide by program expectations.
- 16. The Host Family parent(s) will provide a cigarette smoke free environment in the home. Cigarettes and vape are permitted on a porch, patio, or an outdoor designated space by the host parents. Host parents can choose to have a smoke/vape free home and property.
- 17. The Host Family parent(s) will provide a marijuana smoke free home, indoors and out on the property. Host Family parents must also ensure that students do not have access to any marijuana/cannabis products, paraphernalia or plants or other illegal drugs or substances in the homestay or on the property.
- 18. Host Family parents must abide by all expectations outlined in the District Homestay Program guidelines, those presented by the Homestay Coordinator or the Program Manager, either verbally or written, and as outlined in this agreement.
- 19. The Host Family will participate in privacy training as requested by the School District and comply with any requirements established by the School District from time to time to enforce and protect student privacy.

**\*\*\* Students cannot be charged any extra money by anyone in the home over and above the homestay monthly fee. Any extra expenses must be approved by the Homestay Coordinator and/or the Program Manager. Please retain all receipts that may be relevant for reimbursement.**

**The International Education Program neither guarantees nor promises student occupancy to the host family.**

**The Abbotsford School District International Program does not assume any responsibility for any damages incurred by the student while in the host family's care.**

## Homestay Program Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

### Host Family Screening

After a host family has met the screening criteria; application, family interview, reference checks, approved Criminal Record Checks, Site Declaration and program contract, they will be placed on an availability list for students. The home must meet site declaration requirements and continue to do so for the duration of the homestay placement. If the family moves, it is the family's responsibility to notify the International Program and request a current site inspection and submit a new Site Declaration. The family must also provide a family profile to the Homestay Coordinator that includes information about the host family with photos, which will be sent to the student and their family.

### Criminal Record Check

A Criminal Record Check (CRC) must be completed through the Abby Police dept. for all persons living in the home over the age of 18. The CRC must be renewed every three years, and the International Education Program reserves the right to request a current CRC at any time. **Any adult living in an Abbotsford District Homestay home that is charged with an offence must report that offence immediately to the International Program Manager or Homestay Coordinator.** Any criminal offences that are reported on the CRC or by any other means, must be approved as per District Criminal Record Search Guidelines for Homestay Families. The cost of a CRC is incurred by the host family. Any long-term adult guests or adults that are sharing in the care of a student, and/or partners or companions of single parents must also provide a CRC to the District Homestay Program.

### Educational and Language Support

Fluent English must be spoken in the home by all family members as immersion is imperative to language success. Conversation is an important part of the student's learning process. The student needs the host family's help and encouragement. Host parents should spend a minimum of 15 minutes per day in one-on-one conversation with the student, remembering to speak slowly, simply, and clearly. Host parents should ensure that the student is spending reasonable amounts of time doing homework and be available for parent/teacher communication at the student's school. Host parents cannot charge the student for tutoring.

### Agents

Some students have an agent in their home country, and some have an agent in Canada. An agent is a businessperson who works for a business, or the home country parents directly. The agent oversees some of the responsibility for a student. The agent may also pay the host family the monthly payment. Local agents may take students for haircuts and shopping etc. Agents are not to interfere in the daily routines and expectations of the host family or the homestay program. Agents should communicate directly with the international office if they have any inquiries about their student or about homestay, not with the host parents.

## School Fees

International students (in full year or half year school programs) **DO not** pay for:

- School Fee
- Workbook
- School field trips that cost \$30 or less

International students in full year or half year school programs **do** pay for:

- Additional project material fees in courses such as woodwork, art, etc.
- Athletic fees (to participate on school teams as per school policies, including uniform rentals) and band fees
- Extra-curricular and optional field trips that cost more than \$30
- Yearbooks

## Textbooks

Classroom teachers loan textbooks to students. Some books can be kept for the duration of the course. Some books are loaned for a short time. The student is responsible for returning the book to the class teacher. If a textbook is not returned, or is lost or damaged, the student must pay for the textbook.

## International Student Liaison (ISL)

ISLs help international students integrate into the school community. They facilitate communication and language interpretation as needed between the student, the student's family, homestay parents, and the schools, to encourage clear understanding of expectations, events, and issues. They also assist students with program renewal documentation. Each ISL is responsible for specific schools and students. Many of our ISLs speak our student's language. The ISL will meet the students at orientation and provide them with their contact information and work hours. ISLs post their hours on the door of the international office at each school. The student can check the schedule and meet with their ISL accordingly. If the student's ISL is not available, there is almost always an ISL in the office that may be able to offer advice or some guidance. ISLs do not normally work on the weekend or outside of school hours.

ISLs are school based and do not give permission to students for activities and social outings. The ISL will direct the student to the host parent when applicable, for permission for activities and outings. If a student says to the host parent "my ISL said I could...." in response to something that needs permission, the host parent should feel comfortable knowing that ISLs do not intervene in homestay issues. The ISL will listen to the student and sometimes provide feedback, and if the issue is significant the ISL will contact the Homestay Coordinator or direct and encourage the student to have communication with the host parent.

## Reporting School Absence

The Abbotsford school district uses School Messenger/Safe Arrival to report student absences. With this system, a host parent can report an absence three ways; with the SchoolMessenger app, the SafeArrival website, or call the toll-free number. The only person that can report to the school is the host parent. Please report your student absent whenever they have an approved absence by you. That would include illness (that you believe is legitimate), outings or trips that have been approved for absence, and visits or holidays with family or parents that have been approved and include missed school days.

Do not report an excused absence if you do not think your student is legitimately ill or in need of an approved absence. That absence will be marked as unexcused, and our program will follow up as needed.

International students are registered in school by the name on their passport which is also on the “profile” sent out to all host parents before the student arrives. Schools/data bases may track “Canadian” names or nicknames, so host parents should know both. Latin American students often have several last names because those countries include last names of both parents.

### SchoolMessenger App

Using your mobile device, download and install the

**SchoolMessenger** app from the [Apple App Store](#) or the [Google Play Store](#).

The first time you use the app, select **Sign Up** to create your account.

Select **Attendance** then **Report an Absence**.

### SafeArrival Website

Using the **SafeArrival** website, go to: [go.schoolmessenger.ca](https://go.schoolmessenger.ca) The first time you use the website, select **Sign Up** to create your account.

Select **Attendance** then **Report an Absence**. <https://go.schoolmessenger.ca/#/home>

### Toll-Free Number

Call **1-844-487-3701** to report an absence using the automated phone system. These options are available 24 hours/day, 7 days a week. Future absences can be reported at any time.

## Academic Progress

Students, natural parents, and host parents can check student marks and any missing work in the Gradebook in their MyEdBC account. Teachers should be posting the information in the Gradebook. If students do not see the marks in the Gradebook and wonder how they are doing, they can contact the teacher and ask.

Students should know their MyEdBC username (the student number) and password. Students should share this info with their parents and their host parents. All parents and host parents can check on a student’s academic progress and access their marks at any time. The password can be provided to the host parent by the student.

## **Confidentiality and Privacy**

Host parents should be considerate of confidentiality when discussing students with family, friends, and co-workers. Ask yourself; would my student want me talking about this?

All members of the host family should respect the personal privacy of students while the student is using areas of the home in which there is reasonable expectation of privacy (e.g. bedrooms, bathrooms etc.) Host parents must refrain from any use of video, audio or digital surveillance of the student within the home. Host parents can have motion sensors only, not live cameras, within the home if they have a security system. If a home has installed cameras, they must be turned off for the duration of the student placement. Outdoor cameras are permitted.

Also, do not record conversations or video record your student without their knowledge, and do not post anything on social media about your student without their permission. We tell students the same.

Students are required to keep their bedroom door locked when they are not in their room. Host parents should respect the privacy of their student and not enter their room when the student is not home, except for safety reasons, or something suspect, or illegal. If a host parent wants to enter the student bedroom to do a room check for tidiness, they should do so when the student is home after knocking first and then pointing out anything that is problematic.

## **Meals**

Host parents are expected to provide food for three wholesome meals per day and snacks. Breakfast foods should include opportunity for hot breakfast, not just cereal or toast. Host parents should teach their student how to cook eggs or breakfast sandwiches that have an egg and cheese etc. If the host parent is not preparing the lunch for the student, then the host parent should ensure there are enough food choices for the student to make their own lunch. Many teens do not make their own lunch, so the student may need help to make a lunch they are taking to school. Also, most countries do not eat sandwiches every day, so students may need something different. It is unreasonable to think that a person is going to immediately change their eating habits just because they are in another country. They may want to take dinner left-overs from the night before, etc. Dinner should always be provided to the student. If the host parent is not going to be home for dinner for some reason, then there should be something preplanned that the student can warm up without much difficulty. The student should be permitted to do some cooking, if they are competent in the kitchen and clean up after themselves, and it is at a reasonable time of day/night.

As you can imagine, food is one of the most difficult issues for a student studying abroad. Adapting to a new diet can be very challenging for many people, and especially teens. Ask most parents, and they will tell you their teen eats way too much of some things, and way too little of other possibly healthier choices.

Abbotsford and Canada are very multicultural, and we understand that some of our host families may follow a nontraditional Canadian diet, with meals that reflect influences from their own

heritage or dietary choices. This can provide a rich cultural experience for the student, and we also want to help host parents navigate potential challenges when it comes to food.

While Canada is known for its multicultural cuisine, many international students and their home country parents, may have expectations around foods that are closer to traditional Canadian meals, which tend to be milder in flavor. Meals like roast meats, pasta, mashed potatoes, and foods like hamburgers and sandwiches. Many students may expect these types of dishes depending on their home country family's knowledge and expectations about Canada.

Host families that may have a nontraditional Canadian diet, may have dishes that are spicier, use unique ingredients, or follow specific cultural or dietary practices. This could be a great opportunity for the student to experience a different type of cuisine, but we also have to encourage flexibility and understanding to make the student feel comfortable while adjusting to a new environment.

Before the student arrives, the host parents should try to learn more about the student's food preferences, allergies, and any dietary restrictions. Many host families and/or international students may have specific dietary practices due to religious or cultural reasons (e.g., avoiding pork, beef, or following vegetarian).

Many students might expect/need simpler, milder, meals when they first arrive. Traditional Canadian food like roast chicken, mashed potatoes, or basic pasta dishes may feel more familiar and comforting as they adapt. These meals can serve as an introduction to local food culture, which is diverse but typically milder in flavor than some of the spicier cuisines your family may be used to preparing.

If your family enjoys bold spices, rich flavors, or exotic ingredients, it is helpful to introduce these gradually to the student. While they may be open to trying new foods, they might not be accustomed to the level of spice or strong flavors and food smells that you enjoy. A family should start with milder versions of your cultural dishes or offer the spices on the side so the student can control the level of intensity.

To ensure the student has a positive food experience, try offering a balance between your cultural meals and milder Canadian-style options. For example, if you make a spicy stew or curry, you might offer a simple side of rice, salad, or bread to balance the meal. This way, the student can enjoy the flavors of your culture without feeling overwhelmed by intense spices.

Understand that it may take time for the student to adjust to new flavours, and they may not immediately enjoy everything you cook. Encourage them to be open-minded but also be patient with their pace of adaptation. They may need some time to get used to certain foods or spices, and that's okay. If they are having difficulty, it is the host parents' responsibility to try and solve the food issue, as the student is expected to eat breakfast at home each day, take a lunch to school, and be home for family dinners minimally four times per week. You cannot expect your student to eat out often, buy their own food, or supplement their diet because of food and taste difficulties in a home.

After meals, host parents should check in with the student. Did they enjoy the dish? Was it too spicy or unfamiliar? Feedback is an essential. This will help you adjust meals to better suit their preferences and dietary needs, ensuring that they feel comfortable and welcome. They may become more adventurous with food over time, and unfortunately they may not, but initially, it is important to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Many students have quite a difficult time with foods that are different than their own cultural foods. Some host families may think the solution is to make separate meals for the student so that their own family can keep eating their regular meals. This is rarely successful because it can make meal times awkward for everyone and it is not something that families usually do. If you are considering hosting a student, please consider if your family is prepared to accommodate your student's need for a mutually acceptable diet.

### **Communication and Reporting**

It is critical for host parents to understand the importance of reporting information to the program about their student. The program must be informed of anything notable that could impact a student such as potential legal issues, anything that could cause harm or affect a student's well-being, difficult or out of ordinary behaviour, problematic academic behaviour, and issues that are troubling beyond the realm of "normal". Host parents should also report if the student continually does not follow house or program rules. Research shows that children and teens who are not being parented by their natural parents are at greater risk of being exploited, taking part in inappropriate activities, and of being abused. It is imperative to communicate any concerns about a student to program staff. In most cases as their Custodian (immigration requirement to be a minor student in Canada) and as the program overseeing the student's safety and well-being, district staff must be involved in all important issues with students.

Students are informed repeatedly by the Program Manager and the Homestay Coordinator and the ISLs not to take part in any illegal activity while they are in the program. Unfortunately, a few students every year make the wrong choices. If a host parent is informed of any controversial, inappropriate, or illegal activity by any student in the program, it must be reported. Failure to report significant activity that could affect the well-being of students will result in the host family not being permitted to continue hosting. Any discipline decisions about student behaviour are decided by the Program Manager and/or Senior Management.

Prompt reporting of problems, including not following house rules is essential. For students to understand what is expected of them they must receive constructive feedback and possible consequences from host parents in a timely manner. If they are not given any feedback, they may continue a certain behaviour because they perceive it as being ok.

Most correspondence between the Homestay Coordinator and host families is by email. Host parents must notify the International Program if they change their email address and provide an email address that is checked often, as there could be important notices sent out regarding homestay or the students.

## Asking for Help

Host parents and students should feel comfortable getting in touch with the Homestay Coordinator regarding any problems that arise. We encourage host parents to network and keep in touch with other host parents of International Students.

Host parents must consider and realize that the student is an adolescent, and sometimes a young one. He/she may be lonely, often disoriented with the new physical and social environment, and may be struggling to learn a new language. The culture stress often produces a sense of insecurity. Be tolerant, honest, and courteous when communicating with your student.

## When does student isolation require additional attention from district staff?

- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Extreme home sickness
- Negative view of new culture
- Not wanting to be around people different from themselves
- Sadness / Loneliness
- Anxiety / Frustration
- Don't care attitude with most aspects of daily living
- Unusual behaviours or behaviour not typical of your student

If a student is displaying any of these behaviours, contact the Homestay Coordinator immediately. These concerns may also need to be discussed with the school counsellor or a clinical counsellor or doctor.

## Changing Host Families/ Required Notice

Changing homes is very difficult for youth. It is preferred that students do not move during their school term. Families and students are expected to make every effort to make the homestay a success. Students should contact their ISL or Homestay Coordinator and host parents should contact the Homestay Coordinator if a student is experiencing difficulties. The Homestay Coordinator will try to help resolve the problem through clear communication between those involved. Everyone should try and be open and honest when discussing the problem. Often, what appears to be a problem may be based on cultural differences, communication problems, or differing expectations, and can be easily solved when discussed openly.

- **District to District homestay change:** When the Homestay Coordinator decides a move is necessary to another District Homestay, usually a two-week (14 days) notice will be given to the student and/or the host family. If the student is being moved because the host family has not met the program's contractual obligations, the student may be moved without paid notice to the host family. If a student is being removed from the homestay for the student's behaviour, the host family will receive minimum two weeks' notice.
- **District to Private homestay change:** Some students request a move from the District Homestay Program to a private arrangement and sometimes a student is dismissed from the District Homestay program.  
The ISL or our office will contact the home country parents and/or the agent and provide a Homestay Waiver form for the natural parents to complete and the student/program will

give the current host family a minimum of two weeks' notice in the calendar month. For example, the student must give notice by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month or sooner to be covered by the paid notice. If the student does not give proper notice, then the student may have to pay for some nights of the following month to total 14 nights notice. The homestay coordinator will calculate the amount owed by the notice date. When a student moves to a private homestay, the student does not receive any homestay refund for the current month. The ISL will also ensure that the student is aware that the new private host family/company will assist the student with the move.

- **Student leaving the International Program:** If a student is leaving the program for any reason, the host family will be given a minimum of two weeks paid notice and the student will not receive any refund for the current month that they leave the program.

### **State of Accommodations:**

Homestay parents must ensure that the student treats their home and the property with care and respect. The host parents should have a weekly inspection with the student present, of the bedroom and the bathroom if applicable, to ensure the room is tidy, clean, and without damage. They should also ensure the environment is free of garbage, dirty dishes, food etc. If the host parent finds anything in the room that is damaged or illegal, they should report it immediately to the homestay coordinator.

### **Damage Deposit:**

Homestay damage deposit is not collected by the Abbotsford School District. Homestay families must make every effort to ensure the students' bedroom and private/shared bathroom are always clean and tidy.

### **Arrival date of new students**

New students are transported to the new host family by the airport service, their local agent, or someone else the natural family has chosen. International office staff will call the host family when the office receives the arrival information. Host families will be told the date of arrival and the approximate time that the student will arrive at the homestay. Students are discouraged from arriving more than 3 days prior to the student orientation date. That gives the student time to settle in and purchase school supplies, etc. Host parents should not make vacation plans that do not include their student during this time. This can be a very stressful time for many students, so respite should not be considered when they arrive.

In January, some students leave our program at the end of the semester and new students arrive for the second semester. There is always the possibility of a student overlap problem during this time if the host family is hosting the first semester. The last day for current students to leave is Jan. 31 and some may leave sooner. New students usually arrive around Jan. 22 depending on the semester start day and the dates of our new student orientation. We ask host parents to make the new student(s) as comfortable as possible in whatever space is available in their home. This may be in a den, or a recreation room or sometimes on an airbed or cot. We understand this is not ideal, but it is only for a short time until the current student leaves and the new student can move into that room for the remainder of their stay. Home country parents and host parents should be

preparing the student(s) for this possibility in a positive way. We also notify all our students' agent or parent about this when applicable.

### **Homestay Payment Process**

The homestay payment period is from the first to the last calendar day of each month.

If the student's family has requested the "Homestay Payment Service", the homestay payments are given to the International Program at the beginning of the semester and the International Dept. will disperse the funds each month directly into the host family's bank account by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). The payments are processed to the host family, usually on the last Friday of each month. If that Friday is too close to the end of the month, then the office may decide to pay the host families one week prior. Payments are made in advance of the month owing. For example, at the end of August the host family receives payment for Sept.

If the student or agent is paying the homestay fee directly to the host parent, then the student should pay their homestay fee on or before the first of the month, by cash or e-transfer directly to the host parents. If the homestay fee is paid in cash, the host parent should provide a receipt and keep a copy.

If the host family is paid from our office, we do not disperse homestay payments for the summer months for students staying in July for summer school. Those payments must be made by the student to the host family. Our program "payment service" for direct payments is from arrival for new students, and September semester to June 30th only.

### **Homestay Payment Fees**

The homestay fee is \$1200 per month (\$40 per night calculation for partial payments).

Homestay payments are full month payments from Sept. to June for full year students. Nightly payment/refund calculations will be made in August for new arrivals, and in January for students leaving the program or new students arriving during student orientation period. Nightly rates may also apply if a student is changing host families. The homestay coordinator will determine the payment/refund based on the reason for the move and if two weeks' notice is required. Host parents must be committed to hosting for the full months of the semester.

### **Host Family Vacation Planning/Travel While Hosting**

Host families should try and plan their family vacations for months when they are not hosting, especially for one semester placements. If a family is taking a vacation while hosting the following should be considered:

The Homestay Coordinator does not normally arrange respite for families during the school year. As parents making plans for your family, it is up to host parents to make those arrangements and considerations as we would for our own children.

It is very difficult for teens to go to respite. Many times, they feel very displaced. Most families would never consider sending their own children to strangers when they take a vacation. Most parents taking a vacation without their children would usually arrange for a family member or friend to care for or supervise their children. That is why it is strongly recommended that if a family does need to be away, that they first consider if the student can stay with a friend so that there is familiarity for

the student or have someone come into their home so that the student can stay in familiar surroundings. If a host family is planning a fun family vacation with their own children and not inviting the student, then the host family should plan that vacation during a semester that they are not hosting.

For emergency situations the Homestay Coordinator can be of assistance for alternate arrangements, but in most other cases please consider these respite suggestions and please consider how this may impact your student.

If host parents are going away and they do make alternate arrangements, they should forward the dates they are away and provide the name, contact information and date of birth for the person who will be caring for their student, to the Homestay Coordinator. The respite family/person should be oriented to our program by the host parent including information about our program guidelines and expectations, and the host parent should contact the student's home country parents as well to notify them when they are going to be away and where their child will be.

If host parents are interested in providing respite for other families, they should let the Homestay Coordinator know and they will be added to a list of families that have an extra bedroom available.

### **Respite (alternate care for your student)**

Students are not permitted to stay overnight on their own. If the host parent(s) are going to be absent overnight, they must notify the Homestay Coordinator of their travel dates and the name and contact numbers for the respite caregiver. Host parent(s) must arrange for a responsible adult over the age of 25, to be present in the home to care for the student, or another approved host family can be used for respite. Please note, the **Respite** family makes arrangements for pay with the **Current** host parents, and all program expectations are the same as if it was their student. All respite exchanges, transportation, and plans are between homestay parents. The respite caregivers receive the full per night homestay fee, as they are providing all the care required, and they are accommodating the needs of the original host family. Please ensure that the adult you are choosing for respite is responsible and trustworthy. Families that leave their student alone without respite will not be permitted to continue hosting.

### **Outings and Vacations (Student)**

Students come to Abbotsford for cultural and academic experiences. Host parents should enhance the student's experience with the occasional day trip to areas of interest. If the host family plans an overnight trip and would like the student to join them, the host family should contact the Homestay Coordinator and provide travel plans and dates. Permission from home country parents is needed for travel to the U.S. (and travel insurance if covered by MSP) with our travel form and must be forwarded to the Homestay Coordinator. If the student accompanies the host family on holidays, outings, or trips, the family pays for the accommodations and food. For entertainment, the student pays for their own admission tickets and/or personal expenses. In some cases, the student will join the family on a vacation where the student will have to pay a flight cost, etc. This extra charge to the student must be approved by the Homestay Coordinator.

## Student Travel

**Students that are travelling** to their parents' home do not need special permission. Their natural parents should send the travel and airport transportation details to the host parent, and the host parent can forward that email for the record. Host families are not responsible for airport drop off or pick up during the school year. They can drive them if they choose to.

**Students that are travelling with their natural parents**, either in Canada or the US etc. also do not need any special permission because their parents are their guardians, and as soon as they arrive in the Greater Vancouver area, they take over responsibility. Students can also fly to the US to meet their parent. Again, they should send the travel info to the host parent and please forward the email for the record.

**Students travelling without their natural parents:** Students must travel with their host family or someone over the age of 25. This trip must have the appropriate travel permission form filled out by the host family and/or the natural parents depending on who is arranging the travel. The completed travel form must be signed by the natural parents and then sent to the homestay coordinator by the host parent for approval. Students travelling within BC with their host parent do not need the travel form filled out. Host parents should let the natural parents know by email what the travel plan/dates are and copy the homestay coordinator on that email so the program knows where the students should be.

### Student Travel to the United States (U.S.)

Not all students can travel to the U.S. Some students will have a passport/visa that will allow them entry to the U.S. Long term students from countries that cannot enter the U.S., can apply for a U.S. visitor Visa after they arrive. The U.S. asks all visitors from approved countries to have an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (**ESTA**), and students can apply for this online prior to planning a trip.

If a student is going to the U.S., the host parents must have permission from the student's parents in an email with the dates and details of the trip **on the homestay travel form**. This applies for day trips as well. Families that cross the border often are encouraged to get a permission letter from home country parents for dates that cover a full semester.

The student would also need travel insurance if they are covered by MSP at the time of travel. Some home country parents purchase travel insurance for their child for the duration of their time abroad. The host parents would need a copy of the policy number for proof of coverage, or the student would have to purchase travel medical insurance prior to entering the U.S. Students that are covered by private insurance are covered for travel in the U.S.

***If a student is considering a high-risk activity while in the U.S., the student and the host family must ensure that the activity is covered within the Studyinsured policy and/or MSP.***

### **Student Overnight Travel to Victoria or Nanaimo**

Students can Uber or bus to and from the ferry, to the destination of the adult approved supervisor. Students are not permitted to day trip to Vancouver Island.

**Travel (student) outside of the Greater Vancouver Area without an adult (age 25 or older) is not permitted.**

### **Day travel (student)**

**Fraser Valley:** Many students have home country friends studying in the Fraser Valley. Students are permitted to day travel without adult supervision to Chilliwack, Langley, Surrey, and Mission, if the host parents have approved the travel and the student provides the names of the friends they are travelling with, the destination information, and have a talk/text cell phone with data.

**Greater Vancouver Area:** Many of our students come from very large cities and are comfortable travelling around on their own. The age limit to day travel outside the Fraser Valley to the Greater Vancouver Area without an adult is 15. Students under age 15 must have an adult in reasonable proximity in case of emergency, to travel outside of the Fraser Valley to the Vancouver area.

Students need permission from their host parents for day travel and host parents should confirm who their student is going with and have friend's cell numbers, what transportation plans they have made, when they will return, and what their safety plan is, if needed. If a student does not provide all the necessary information, they do not have permission to leave Abbotsford.

Students attending evening events/concerts outside of Abbotsford must have an approved local parent present at the end of the event, to transport them back to Abbotsford. The wait/availability of a taxi or Uber etc., is not suitable to deliver students back to Abbotsford in a timely manner.

**Travel (student) outside of the Greater Vancouver Area without an adult (age 25 or older) is not permitted.**

### **Sleepovers**

Host parents need to plan sleepovers as they would for their own children. Host parents and the program need to know within reason where students are. For many reasons we do not allow co-ed sleepovers. If a student is requesting a sleepover, it **must** be verified with the adult at the sleepover and there must be an adult present overnight. Students are **never given permission to stay overnight anywhere without approved adult supervision with someone over age 25**. Host parents should check the following:

- Have you spoken to the parents living in the home where the sleepover is going to happen?
- Do you have all the contact information?
- Have you met the parent/family before? If not, do you want to meet them before you approve your student sleeping over at their home?

### **Overnights/Trips or late curfews outside of Abbotsford**

Students requesting an overnight/trip or a late curfew outside of Abbotsford must have permission from their host parents and their home country parents. The student must provide the host parent(s) with the contact information and address of the family that will be accommodating the sleepover/trip or the adult that will be supervising the student. If the host parent checks with the other family or friends and decides to allow the student to have a sleepover or a late curfew, then the host parent must communicate directly with home country parents by email for written permission on the appropriate travel form, that includes the details of the destination and the adult supervisor. The host parent should request a photo or screenshot of a government photo issued ID, for the supervising adult that provides name, age, and home address if this person is not one of our host families, or if the host family does not know this person.

If the student is taking a trip planned by the parents, then the natural parents would provide all the trip details to the host parent. Because it can take some time for host parents to collect the information and contact home country parents, students should be encouraged to make plans well in advance, otherwise the sleepover/trip may not be plausible. Overnights/trips or late curfews without host parents outside of Abbotsford must be reported to the homestay coordinator with a short email in advance, with the details so that our office knows where our students should be. Our office/program has the final authority to not permit an outing if it is a possible safety risk.

**If a student is considered missing, that is their whereabouts are unknown and it has been an unreasonable amount of time since contact, or if the time away is out of character for that student, call the emergency cell phone number immediately. Try to remember and write down when you last saw or heard from your student, what they were doing, who they were with and what they were wearing.**

### **Student Permission and Forms: Travel and High-Risk form/email at the end of the homestay guidelines.**

Host parents can sign school permission forms for students for field trips and regular activities that are not considered high risk. This includes school items such as lockers and books, etc. School ski trips are pre-authorized by home country parents. Home country parents must sign permission for the following sports in school or in the community: hockey, soccer, rugby, and football. Some concerts and events outside of Abbotsford will not be permitted, so students and host parents should contact our program for information before students purchase any venue tickets.

### **High-Risk Activities and Permission**

Host parents must get permission by email using the High-Risk form, from home country parents for anything that may be considered high-risk. Students are not automatically granted permission to do something while they are here even if their home country parents or their host parents say it is "ok". Home country parents may not be aware of the risk and/or the policies of our program. Please check with the Homestay Coordinator if you have questions about permission. The International Program is the final authority when needed, on any day or overnight travel outside the city of Abbotsford.

Winter, mountain, and some other activities that could be considered high-risk require written form permission from home country parents. Permission must be obtained through email and forwarded to the Homestay Coordinator. Some of these activities include skiing, snowboarding, tubing, river rafting, kayaking, trampoline (personal and parks), ATV's, boating, rock climbing (outdoors). Contact the Homestay Coordinator if you need any clarification or questions regarding activities. A form will be provided, that host parents can email to home country parents for permission and liability waiver.

### **Sports teams and other organized activities**

We recommend that if a student wants to play a sport while they are here, that they do it through their school. Some students sign up for extracurricular activities such as dance, swimming, skating, and martial arts. The District Homestay Program will not expect a host family to provide support and/or transportation for community sport teams such as hockey, soccer, or baseball or extracurricular activities. Students that enroll for local teams will be asked to find a privately arranged homestay that will meet their needs. Host parents should not encourage their student to enroll on a community team unless the host parent is willing to provide all the transportation and support and not be reimbursed for their time and travel.

### **Healthy Time Management**

After school and weekend hours for students should be spent on healthy age-appropriate activities. All teenagers need a certain amount of 'free time'. If students tend to gravitate to the mall and/or computers, homestay parents may have to set limits. We encourage students to participate in outings and activities with families and friends. Student socialization with their Canadian family and friends is of the utmost importance for optimum cultural integration and family bonding.

### **Homestay House Rules**

House rules are very important! If a host family's house rules are not written out, students may be unclear what the expectations are. Host parents should have a discussion with their family about house rules before the student arrives and be clear about rules and expectations. A list should be provided for the student on their bedroom desk when they arrive. All house rules should be enforced as explained to the student. Issues related to imposing consequences shall be age appropriate, logical, and related to the broken rule. List rules in a positive, clear manner. "Pick your battles," and host parents should decide what is important for their home and family members. If unsure, contact the Homestay Coordinator. Not enforcing house rules or not imposing consequences is problematic for the student and for the program. Consistency is the key to success and students should all have some similar expectations in all District Homestays. Host parents need to report ongoing problems with house rules in a timely manner. Host parents should report a problem in the month it incurs (minimally).

### **Curfew**

Host parents should decide before the student arrives what the age-appropriate curfew is for their student. It is expected that the host parents will do their best to ensure that students are home by curfew. Of course, there are exceptions for constructive activities, but if students are just hanging out with friends it is important to expect them home by curfew. The curfew expectation for our program is students should be home most school nights to study and rest for the next school day.

If a student is out on a school night, they should be home at 9pm for grade 9 and 10, and grade 11 and 12 should be home by 10pm. On weekends, students should be home at the same time as the grade they are in at school, except for grade 12, which is also 11pm. For example, if a student is in grade 10, the curfew will be 10pm. Grade 11 and 12 is 11 pm. Curfews are important for safety; they encourage and teach teenagers respect for rules, and it shows that parents care about their teens and worry about them when they are not home.

### **Television Viewing**

If a host family subscribes to a provider that offers pay per view, ensure that parental controls are set on the PVR. Not only could students access inappropriate material (accidentally or intentionally), but there could be program rental/viewing charges. The program will not be responsible for charges incurred by the student if the host parents do not have parental controls set.

### **Computer/Phones and Internet**

Students should have their own laptop or electronic device. Internet access needs to be provided at no extra cost to the student.

Screen time is becoming an increasing problem with youth worldwide. Many parents find they need to limit and control the amount of time their children spend on their electronic devices. International students use the internet as a way of communicating with their home country. Although this is a fun way to keep in touch, it can also become obsessive and problematic. Letting a student spend excessive amounts of time online is discouraged. If phone and/or internet is a continuing problem, host parents should consider having their student put their device somewhere else in the home at a reasonable age-appropriate time at night.

Internet usage: As a host family of a teen from another country it is more than probable that your student will be streaming some shows, therefore host parents must check with their internet provider and ensure they have purchased an internet plan that provides for streaming. The bedroom provided to the student(s) must have a strong WIFI connection. If the connection is not strong enough, the host parent may have to purchase/provide a booster.

### **Cell phone**

All students in the District Homestay Program are required to have a cell phone with a data plan to access talk, text, or a communication App such as WhatsApp, Line, Kakao, WeChat etc. The host parents need to be able to contact our students, therefore host parents should download whatever App the primary source of communication is for each student. The student needs to be able to let their host parents know where they are and what they are doing; if they are going to be late, or if they may have a problem or emergency while they are away from the home.

Many students get an inexpensive pay-as-you-go phone plan for calling and texting. Some students get a local number with a new SIM card and some students use a phone from their home country that has data and primarily use an App to text or video call.

Host parents cannot expect students to use data rather than Wi-Fi in their home.

Our program does not encourage host parents to sign or add students to new or family existing contracts. If a host parent chooses to add a student or sign a contract our district will not cover the

cost if there is a problem during the student's time here, or after they leave. There are many pay-as-you-go plans that do not require a long-term contract such as Chatr, Freedom and Wireless Wave.

If at any time the student's phone is not working or does not have data, and the host parents are not able to text or call the student, the host parent should report to the Homestay Coordinator immediately. Many students do not keep their phone paid up and working, and that is a safety risk. It can also be a risk for many homes that no longer have a landline.

### **Medical Insurance Coverage**

All International Students in British Columbia must have Medical Insurance and it is provided/purchased through the International Program. If your student attends any medical appointments or the emergency department at the hospital, please encourage your student to include their parent(s) virtually when they/you speak with a doctor, so the parents are informed about their health, any diagnosis, or future treatment.

- **PHASE ONE:** All new students will be on private medical insurance for the first three months in Canada. If a student is only enrolled for one semester, they will remain on private insurance until they leave the program at the end of that semester.

At the time of treatment at a clinic or Doctor office, the student may have to pay for the medical service. If applicable, keep the receipt that is provided at the time of the medical service. Information will be given to all students about how to file a refund claim online.

Each student will be provided a brochure explaining complete coverage and liability exclusions when they receive their insurance and how to be reimbursed for covered costs.

**If a student requires medical attention at the emergency department at a hospital while covered by the private insurance, the adult person responsible for the student should tell the hospital to send all medical bills to the host family address, and then the host parent should forward the bills to our office as they arrive. Host parents and/or students should not offer to pay any hospital bills. The hospital usually tries to get the student or the adult with them to pay, but payment is not a prerequisite of emergency medical treatment in Canada. We will contact the insurer, and the bills will be paid promptly after the bills are received. If a student is admitted to hospital, we will contact the insurer who will follow up with the hospital for direct billing. (letter to show ER staff if needed at the end of this booklet)**

**Translation services are available through the private insurance for critical care and emergency medical situations.**

- **PHASE TWO:** The student will be on the Medical Services Plan of British Columbia (MSP) after 3 months in Canada. (Reminder: students who are enrolled for one semester only and leaving at the end of that semester, will not switch over to MSP. Some one semester students who decide to extend, may have study permit issues and may also stay on private insurance for a second semester.).

If a student is sick or has an accident, they need to present their **BC Services Card** at the time of treatment. The student will receive their BC Services Card from their International Student Liaison. The student should carry their BC Services Card with them.

Students travelling anywhere in Canada are fully covered under MSP. While travelling in the U.S. students are covered by MSP, with restrictions. The student would also need travel insurance if they are covered by MSP at the time of travel. Some home country parents purchase travel insurance for their child for the duration of their time abroad. The host parents would need a copy of the policy number as proof of coverage, or the student would have to purchase travel medical insurance prior to entering the U.S.

Students that are covered by our private insurance are covered for travel in the U.S.

**Hospital visits, medications, accidents, or serious illness must be reported to the Homestay Coordinator or the Program Manager or the Program Emergency Phone as soon as possible.** If a student is ill for an unreasonable period of time, or has unexplained pain or symptoms, the host parent should seek medical attention as soon as possible. If the host parent is working, they should arrange for someone else to accommodate the student's needs while they are sick and/or at a clinic, doctor's office, or hospital. Host parents should note and report any student who is taking questionable non-prescription medications.

### **Medication Policy**

The District Homestay Program has a medication policy. Students are usually not accepted if they are taking prescription medications. Students are asked on their application if they are taking any medications. If they answer "yes" then a decision is made by the program about the student's application. If a student does not disclose that they are taking medications and the host family discovers they are taking a prescribed medication after arrival, the International Program must be notified, and the situation will be assessed. The medications and administering of them may not be acceptable for our homestay program. If the student is accepted to stay in the District Homestay Program, a form must be completed by the home country parents. All prescription medications must be kept in a safe place, by the host parent, and administered by an adult. Please consult with the Homestay Coordinator for further guidelines

### **Bus (School Bus and City bus) and Familiarity with Abbotsford**

Host parents should show the student how to get to school and provide them with an orientation of the city. This may involve walking the student to school and bus stops and possibly riding the bus with them the first few times they use the system, depending on their age and maturity. Students may be able to purchase city bus passes at their school office or local retailers.

Most homestays are within a 3km walk to school. Students with more than a 3km walk will take a school bus. A student may be provided a city bus pass because of where they live if a school bus is not available. If a student lives 3km or less from their school, and the student chooses to take the city bus to school, the student can purchase a bus pass.

**Transportation (car rides)**

Host parents may or may not be able/willing to offer car rides. Car rides is not an expectation for our program. Students and their natural parents should decide how the student will get around, either by walking, city bus or an Uber etc. Home country parents should decide with their child, how often their child will use these transportation choices and how much they will pay.

**Family Vehicle**

The host family's vehicle(s) must accommodate all the members of the family and the student(s) with a seat belt for each person for outings and sightseeing trips. It is highly recommended that the host family's third-party liability be 3 million dollars minimum. It is a reasonable cost to purchase and something all people should have who are transporting children not their own.

**Visiting Parents and Family Members**

The Homestay Program provides housing for students only while they are attending school. Visiting parents and/or family members should plan to stay in a local hotel. Many host parents feel pressured or obligated to have the student's family stay with them if they are visiting Abbotsford. It is a very different and sometimes difficult dynamic to have parents/adults stay. Host parents can simply say that the program does not allow it. Please communicate with the Homestay Coordinator if you have any questions or concerns.

**Household Chores**

The host parent(s) should assign minimal household chores for which the student will be responsible. In Canada each member of the family usually assumes chores to maintain the house. As a member of the family, it is important that the student participates in the household routines and chores. The chore should be something simple like setting the table or helping with dishes.

**Paid Employment While in Canada**

Immigration Canada does not permit minor students to take a paying job in Canada while on Study Permit.

**Babysitting**

Students are not permitted to babysit or be responsible for minor/younger children at any time.

**Pets**

Students are not permitted to acquire any pets of their own.

**Banking**

Host parent(s) should assist their student in opening a bank account if the student needs/wants one. When opening the account, the student will need their passport. Students should be discouraged from carrying large amounts of cash. Many students now use a bank card provided/funded by their parents.

## **Money and expenditures**

Students are expected to use their own money to cover expenses, such as personal items, school supplies, city bus passes, entertainment, and admissions; however, when the family goes out to dinner at a restaurant, the student should not be asked to pay. The host needs to discuss these financial matters if they decide to go on a family outing. Even though this may seem awkward, it prevents hard feelings later if host parents are clear from the beginning what the cost of an outing may be.

## **Receipts**

Students cannot be charged anything over and above their homestay fee unless approved by the Homestay Coordinator or the Program Manager. This includes payments for possible damage, vacations, or food provided in the home. Check with the Homestay Coordinator if you are unsure. If a host parent thinks they may be eligible for reimbursement for something, ensure the receipts are kept for reference.

## **House Keys/Locks/Alarms**

The host is required to provide the student with a house key, code lock and alarm code if applicable. Host parents should instruct their student about locking and securing the house. It is highly recommended that one of the home's entry doors have a code lock. This can be changed at any time and host parents do not have to worry about lost or stolen house keys. If the home does not have a code lock, the student is not responsible for payment if the house needs to be re-keyed.

## **Bedroom Door Lock**

The Homestay Program requires the student's bedroom door to have a keyed lock or a lock with a code. A student's privacy is very important, so a working lock should be on the door prior to the student's arrival. This will ensure that they have privacy from little children and/or other teen siblings or their friends, and anyone else that may have access to their room. The student's room should always be locked when the student is **not** in their room.

## **Laundry**

If the student is doing their own laundry, the host must give clear instructions on how to use machines, size of loads, amount of detergent, separating colours, etc. You may want to use a Post-It on the machines, so your student knows each time what is required. Host parents should discuss with their student how laundry was done in the student's home country. Like bathrooms, laundry is different around the world and some students will want to continue laundering their clothes the way they did before. If laundry days are scheduled, laundry should be minimally twice per week. Once a week is not often enough for many teens, especially if they are active in sports and gym.

## **Bathroom**

Students are given thorough information in their Student Homestay Guidelines to make sure the student understands the differences between Canadian and Asian and South American bathrooms. Specifically, that there is no floor drain, and the shower curtain goes inside the tub, and/or to ensure the shower doors are closed. If a student has their own bathroom, the student should be responsible for cleaning it. Some countries do not put toilet paper in the toilet because it does not

break down properly in their system. They wrap it and put it in the trash can. Therefore, some families find large amounts of paper in the bathroom trash. If you notice this, explain to your student that we flush reasonable amounts of toilet paper away in the toilet and suggest they review their Student Homestay Guidelines.

### **Contact Information (Host Family)**

The host should provide the student with information that includes the host family name, address, home phone, and work numbers for host parents, and an emergency contact person, such as a neighbour or relative. Students should have this information in their electronic device and written down. If your student loses his/her phone, or it is turned off or broken, they will not know anyone's contact information.

### **Home Insurance Policy**

The host should notify their homeowner insurance company that they have an additional person living in their house. They should ensure they have adequate liability insurance coverage. This is usually called, "Insurance for a Paying Boarder" and premiums vary with different companies. If there is accidental damage caused by a student, the maximum charge to a student will be \$1000 or the insurance deductible, whichever is the lesser amount. The family's homeowner insurance or the host family will have to cover amounts exceeding \$1000. A report must be made to the Homestay Coordinator for accidents or damage that a family is requesting reimbursement for. The decision for reimbursement will be made by the International Program.

### **Insurance for Personal Belongings (Student)**

In most cases the host family home insurance policies do not cover a student for their personal belongings in the event they are lost, damaged, or stolen. The student guidelines will encourage students to contact his/her parents to ensure the necessary arrangements have been made to have the student's personal property insured while studying abroad if the student thinks this is necessary.

### **Learning to Drive**

Students in the International Program are not permitted to drive a motor vehicle even if they hold a valid British Columbia Driver's License, unless they are residing with one of their parents; therefore, no student in the District Homestay Program is permitted to drive a vehicle.

### **Students ending program in Abbotsford**

All students who are ending their program in Abbotsford, must leave the District Homestay Program by either January 31<sup>st</sup> or June 30<sup>th</sup>. Students' medical, supervised homestay program, and District Custodianship end at midnight Jan. 31<sup>st</sup> or June 30<sup>th</sup>. If a student stays on in Canada past Jan. 31<sup>st</sup> or June 30<sup>th</sup> (depending on the program end date) the Abbotsford School District is not responsible for the custodianship, medical, care, finance, or supervision of the student.

### **Preparing to leave Abbotsford**

Host parents should ensure that their leaving student has not misplaced their passport, as they cannot travel without it. Host parents should have their student pack most of their belongings and clean their room at least several days before the scheduled departure. Many students acquire a lot of clothing and items while they are in Abbotsford and they may need to purchase another luggage,

or they may have to discard some items. Leaving this too late can be very frustrating for everyone.

If the student is returning to the same host family in Sept., the host family should have a discussion with the student in May or June about what the student is leaving in Abbotsford. If a student wants to keep their belongings in their room with the understanding that no one else will use the student's room while the student is away, and the host family agrees, the student will pay \$500 for that time (departure until return date) This should be discussed with the student early, and the ***amount must be paid in advance, by the student, before departure in June.*** If the student takes all belongings with them, no payment is required. Many host parents put their student's belongings in the garage or storage room at no cost.

### **Student Summer Break (July and August for students returning to Abbotsford in Sept.)**

The District Homestay Program provides homestay to students attending our academic school year, from September to June. Homestay is not usually available to students during the summer months, and the expectation is that students return to their home country during summer break. The only students that can continue in District Homestay during the summer months are students that have registered to attend Abbotsford School District academic summer school. The student should leave the homestay program as soon as possible at the end of the summer school program. Due to host family holiday schedules, it may not be possible for the student to remain in their current homestay and a temporary homestay may need to be arranged.

Any returning students who are not in academic summer school with the district custodianship, and who choose to stay in Canada during the summer break, must have their home country parents arrange their accommodation and arrange a new notarized custodianship. Students **are not permitted** to stay in Canada during July and August without a new custodianship being established. The Abbotsford School District does not assume any responsibility or support for any student or host family that is not in a program approved summer placement.

### **Airport Transportation**

#### **When a student leaves or returns to Abbotsford**

- **Airport Transportation during the school year, for holidays, and breaks.**

Students often return to their home country for Christmas and Spring Break. The student and the host parents need to communicate about travel dates, well in advance, to ensure transportation needs to the airport are arranged.

A host family is not obligated to drive a student to the airport during the school year. If a student is mature and experienced with city/airport travel, there are options such as West Coast Express and Skytrain which connects to the Canada Line train that travels into the Vancouver airport terminal. There is also a bus from Abbotsford to the Lougheed Skytrain station to connect to Canada Line. If a student is too young or does not want to travel to the airport alone, the student and their parents can communicate with the host parents to see if the host parents are available to transport them, or if the host parents can help arrange a car service or taxi for the student.

If a host parent drives the student to the airport during the school year, the host family can charge the student \$50 to cover the gas, time, and parking fee. If the host family is unavailable to transport the student, then the host family will help the student make an alternative

arrangement and the cost will be incurred by the student. This may be a ride from a friend, a taxi, or airport service.

- **Airport Transportation at the end of a semester (for one semester students) or school year for others.**

When a student is leaving at the end of their program or school year it is expected that the host parents will take them to the airport and say their goodbyes just as they would for their own child. Host parents cannot charge the students for driving them to the airport at the end of the school year or program. Although it is preferred that the host parents drive the student to the airport, this may not always be possible. We encourage home country parents to communicate about travel times that may be optimal, but that is not always possible when flights are booked by agents in other countries at the time of application. Host parents should make every effort to transport the student, as most of us would not send our own child to the airport on a bus or in a van. If the student, their home country parents and the host parents, cannot agree about airport ride availability, then the host parents should help their student make alternative travel arrangements. Deciding who is responsible for the cost will be at the discretion of the Homestay Coordinator after reviewing all the information.

- **Airport Transportation for Returning Students:** If a student is returning for another school year in September to the same host family, it is the host family's responsibility to pick up the returning student at the airport, if the student and their home country parents have communicated with the host parents and the host parents are available at the arrival date and time. If the home country parents/student do not check with the host parent prior to booking the return flight to Abbotsford, the host parent may not be available because of work or family schedule. In that case the student would be responsible for the cost and choice of airport transfer.

Only students new to a homestay at the beginning of a semester are provided transportation upon their arrival.

### **Closing out Student Bank Account**

If a student is leaving and not returning, then they will need to close their bank account. Host families should remind students and assist them if required.

### **Fun Activity Ideas**

**This is an excellent website for activities:**

<http://www.findfamilyfun.com/main.htm>

## Samples for student permission forms:

(Host parents receive a fillable PDF copy by email when they receive these guidelines electronically)

### Student Travel Authorization Requests – With Host Parent – Sample



#### International Education Program

##### Student Travel Authorization Request – With Host Parents (updated Jan 2023)

*This form must be emailed by the District host parent to the natural parent and returned to the host parent.*

##### Completed by the host parents:

Student name	
Travel - Start date	
Travel - Finish date	
Travel destination	
Cost to student/natural parent (if applicable)	

##### Contact information of the Host Parent

Last Name	
First Name	
Date of birth	
Contact phone number	
Address	

##### Completed by the home country parent or agent:

I hereby give consent for my child  to travel without the supervision of the Abbotsford School District. I acknowledge that the Abbotsford School District or the host parents shall not be liable for any possible injury or accidents that may occur for the duration of the travel. I am aware that I am responsible for all expenses incurred on this trip.

Student travelling outside of Canada must have pre-purchased travel insurance prior to the trip if the student is covered by MSP at the time of travel.

Signature of natural parent or agent on behalf of the natural parent. By returning this email with the information completed, you are consenting to the information provided in this email.

Natural Parent Name / Signature	
Today's Date	
Agent Name (if applicable)	

[Reset Form](#)

2790 Tims Street, Abbotsford, BC V2T 4M7 | T: 604.851.4585 | F: 604.504-7629 |  
<http://international.abbyschools.ca/>

## Travel Authorization Requests – Without Host Parent – Sample



### International Education Program

#### Student Travel Authorization Request

Without Host Parent or Abbotsford School District (updated Oct. 2022)

*This form must be emailed by the District host parent to the natural parent and returned to the host parent.*

*Completed by the host parent if the host parent is arranging travel.*

*Completed by the home country parents if the parents are arranging a travel destination.*

Student name	
Travel - Start date	
Travel - Finish date	
Travel destination	
Cost to student/natural parent (if applicable)	

Contact information of the adult supervisor (over age 25): \* Government issued Photo ID required (to Host Parent)

Last Name	
First Name	
Relationship to Student: (Example: Grandparent, Family Friend, Aunt etc.)	
Date of birth	
Contact phone number	
Address	
Photo ID	Copy/Text/Scan

Completed by the home country parent or agent:

I hereby give consent for my child   
to travel without the supervision of the Abbotsford School District or the host family. I acknowledge that the Abbotsford School District or the host parents shall not be held liable for any possible injury or accidents that may occur for the duration of the travel. I am aware that I am responsible for all expenses incurred on this trip.

Student travelling outside of Canada must have pre-purchased travel insurance prior to the trip if the student is covered by MSP at the time of travel.

Signature of natural parent or agent on behalf of the natural parent. By returning this email with the information completed, you are consenting to the information provided in this email.

Natural Parent Name / Signature	
Today's Date	
Agent Name (if applicable)	

2790 Tims Street, Abbotsford, BC V2T 4M7 | T: 604.851.4585 | F: 604.504-7629 |  
<http://international.abbyschools.ca/>

**Reset Form**

## Higher Risk Activity Permission – Sample



### International Education Program

#### Higher Risk Activity Permission (updated Dec. 2018)

**This form must be emailed by the host parent to the natural parent/agent and returned to the host parent.**

**Completed by host parent:**

Student Name	
Activity	
Date(s) of activity	
Activity location	
Equipment needed for activity (example: Skiing – must wear a helmet.)	
Person supervising: (if applicable)	
Person providing transportation (if applicable)	

**Completed by home country parent and/or agent:**

I waive all claims I may have and release all liability of the Abbotsford School District and my child's host parents and anyone providing transportation, for any personal injury, death, property damage, or loss sustained because of my child's participation in this higher risk activity.

Accidents can be the result of the nature of the activity or the behaviour of the person taking part and can occur with or without any fault on either the student or the facility where the activity is taking place. By allowing my child to participate in this activity, I am accepting the risk of an accident occurring and agree that this activity as described above, is suitable for my child.

Signature of parent or agent: By returning this email to the host parent with this portion completed, you are consenting to the information and activity described in this email.

Natural Parent Name / Signature	
Today's Date	
Agent Name (if applicable)	

**Reset Form**

2790 Tims Street, Abbotsford, BC V2T 4M7 | T: 604.851.4585 | F: 604.504-7629 |  
<http://international.abbyschools.ca/>

## Hospital letter



### International Education Program

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#### **Hospital ER visits for Abbotsford School District international students.**

All Abbotsford School District international students are covered for medical through Studyinsured private insurance or MSP, depending on their length of stay in Canada.

**Students that are covered by Studyinsured** that need emergency medical attention do not have access to a credit card to pay for hospital services. Their caregiver cannot provide a credit card.

The student should provide their passport for identification and provide the address where they are currently residing. The hospital, doctors and any medical service provider should either mail the bills to the student's current address or send them to our office. If they are sent to the student, the bills will be forwarded to our international office and the bills will be submitted to Studyinsured immediately for payment.

The medical provider could also send the bills directly to our office:

International Program - Abbotsford School District  
2790 Tims St. Abbotsford, B.C. V2T 4M7  
International office: 604-851-4585  
Fax: 604-504-7629  
Email: [international.medical@abbyschools.ca](mailto:international.medical@abbyschools.ca)

If the hospital or the service provider needs verification that this student is covered by Studyinsured, and bills will be submitted to Studyinsured promptly by our office, the hospital staff can call our 24-hour emergency number 604-217-1917.

**BC Government website: In an emergency, no one will be denied essential medical care.**

**Notes:**