



District Homestay Program

Student

Guidelines, Policies and Procedures



Welcome to the Abbotsford District Homestay Program.

International Program Staff Information – Emergency Contact Information

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Phone: 604-851-4585

International Office Fax: 604-504-7629

General Inquiries

Homestay Payment Inquiries

Medical Inquiries

International Student Liaisons: Contact information will be provided at the beginning of each semester.

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, call 604-217-1917 as well, 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 regular office hours: 8am – 4:00pm call someone in the International Dept.

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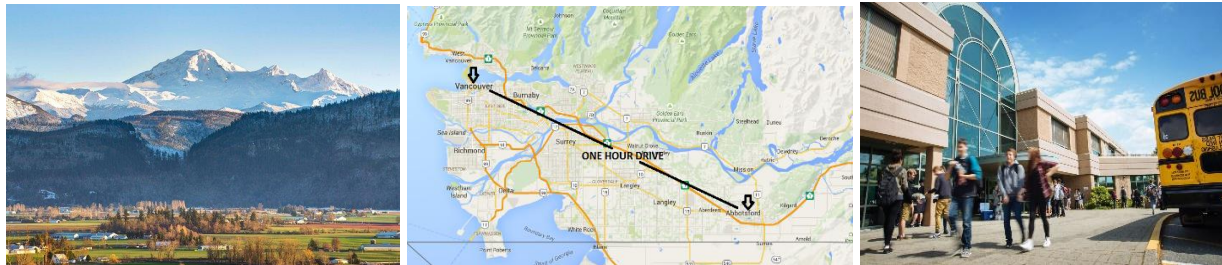
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Student District Homestay Guidelines and Expectations

This booklet provides each student guidelines, ideas, and information to help make every homestay experience a success! If a student is interested or requires more information on a topic or has other homestay questions, they should consult the Host Family Homestay Guidelines (on our website), which addresses most topics more thoroughly.

Please be informed that the ***International Student Agreement*** supersedes any language differences in this handbook.

Welcome to Canada and our Abbotsford community! For some students this may be the first time that you are away from home. Homestay can be a challenging experience as students struggle to understand a new culture, language, and adjust to a new family. We will do our best to help you adapt to your Canadian home. 😊



It is a privilege to be invited to stay in another family's home. It can be a special relationship, a cultural exchange, English language integration, and a time to blend the lives of international students with local families and community. To get the most out of the Canadian experience, it is imperative for the student and their home country parents to understand what the expectations are for the program, and how that may differ from the expectations that students and their parents may have about what the homestay experience will be.

We have a large supportive team, and our staff are experienced, professional, and committed to providing excellent service to students and host families. If problems do arise, our staff provides support to help resolve the issue. In most cases, problems can be solved through open communication and discussion between the student and the host family.

As a homestay student, you will:

- be provided with information about your host family prior to arrival.
- receive pre-arrival information to help prepare you for your homestay experience.
- attend a homestay orientation meeting after arrival (receive Homestay Student Guidelines)
- have access to on-going advice and support from International Program Staff
- have a 24-hour emergency contact number.

Homestay Student Responsibilities

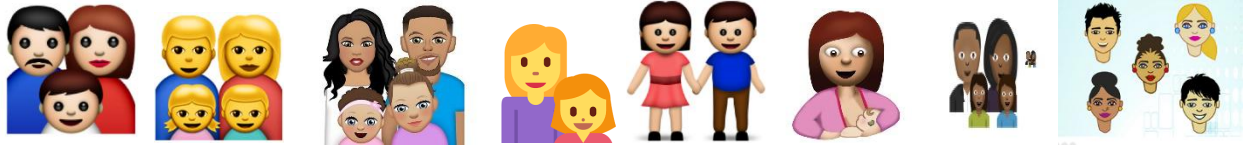
As set out in the International Program Student Participation Agreement, the Abbotsford School District has expectations of students accepted to study in our program. These expectations include important obligations for each student, and we set a high standard requiring all students to meet these obligations. As a homestay student, you are expected to be open, honest, and accountable, and to honor your responsibilities and obligations as outlined. When you conduct yourself in this manner, the relationship with your homestay parents should be a positive experience based on mutual trust, communication, and bonding. As a homestay student, you are part of a family home and therefore must respect and adhere to guidelines/rules for living in the household as given by the homestay parent(s). House rules are approved by our program.

All students must:

1. Behave respectfully toward all family members, their personal belongings, and household pets.
2. Treat the home and the property with respect, care, and attention.
3. Expect your host parents to provide you with a list of house rules and expectations.
4. Request permission, a day or two in advance, to have a guest in the home. It is expected that students will introduce their friends to the host parent(s).
5. Inform host parent(s) where they are going, with whom, their phone number, and when they will return.
6. Keep their room clean and tidy.
7. Pay homestay fees on time if the student is responsible for making the payment.
8. Meet all personal expenses for travel, entertainment, cell phone, medical expenses, and other personal costs, including personal hygiene items such as toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, and hair products.
9. Complete written evaluations of homestay placement as requested.
10. Ensure the Student District Homestay Guidelines have been read and understood.



Hi, I am the Homestay Coordinator. I help students and host parents have a successful homestay experience. We have been working with teens and families for a very long time and know a lot about successful placements. I am going to provide some information and advice about our host families, program expectations, and our community, so that you and your parents know what to expect while you are in Abbotsford.



Host Families: We try to match students with their preferences for homes, with or without pets, and homes with or without children, etc. Host families also have some preferences about students that they think fit with their home. These matches are not always possible, so we choose what we think will be the best fit based on the families available at the time, and the students who are applying. Abbotsford (and Canada) is very multicultural. Unless a person in Canada is Indigenous, all other citizens of Canada have immigrated here over time, so therefore most Canadians come from all over the world. We do not choose or deny host families based on their culture or ethnicity, or if they are a one or two parent home. We choose host families based on their ability to meet our program requirements which is to provide a safe, tidy, friendly, English-speaking home and environment. Once a host family has been chosen for a student, we will not change that family if the home country parents have issues based on the ethnicity of the host family, if they have one or two parents, or if they have children or not.

All our host families undergo a thorough screening process to be accepted into the District Homestay program. All approved homestay families must comply with standards, expectations, and guidelines. Students and home country parents are encouraged to read the District Homestay Guidelines (on our website) to understand the host family responsibilities and program expectations.



Homestay Is About Family

Your host family should do their best to make you as comfortable as possible. You should be

treated as a member of the family, and we expect you to treat them like they are your temporary parents. You will be expected to interact, have conversation, and eat some meals together. You will not be permitted to treat your homestay like a hotel; only sleeping and using your room and not interacting much. The more time you spend with your host family, the stronger your bond becomes. If there is something that you do not understand, ask your hosts. They will be happy to help you adjust to living in their home. The customs of your host family may be different from your home. You will need to learn what your homestay schedule is. For example, what time should you go to bed, what time you should get up in the morning, what time you leave for school, and what time they usually have dinner.



Adjustment Time

The first few weeks, and sometimes months, might be a very difficult time for some students. Clear and open communication is very important for students and host families. Sometimes it may not be easy for you to move in with a family that you do not know, and it is similar for a family to have a stranger move in with them. Host parents should provide a clear explanation of family schedules, customs, habits, house rules, and expectations while you are living in their home. Students are expected to be open and politely honest with the family about their needs, likes and dislikes, as well as anything that is bothering them. Some students adjust quickly, and some students have a very difficult time.

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
- Trouble concentrating
- Unusual behaviours

If you have a problem, please discuss it with your host parent or your International Student Liaison (ISL) if you do not understand. If the misunderstanding is because of a language problem, your ISL will help you with translation. Your Homestay Coordinator is also available to students, as well as host families.



Homestay issues and request for changes.

Once a student arrives, everyone is expected to do their best to make the homestay placement successful. Because the first several weeks and months can be so difficult for so many students and the host families, everyone including home country parents and agents, must be supportive of the placement to help it be successful. Home country parents also have difficulty for the first few weeks. The student and their home country parents are missing each other, and the student may be missing their cultural foods and customs. It is easy to blame this difficult time on a host family or use this time as a reason to change host families.

When there is a conflict in a host family that has been reported by a student, the host parents, a home country parent, an agent, or an outside source, the process for resolving the issue is always the same; regardless of where the student is from, what the circumstances of the student or parents are, or how much pressure the agent is getting from home country parents.

In all cases we act as quickly as possible to assess a situation that is a complaint or inquiry. The student can talk with their International Student Liaison (ISL) who can contact the Homestay Coordinator, or the student can contact the Homestay Coordinator directly. Because the ISLs work in the school and see the students often, they are usually the first point of contact for our students. Agents and parents usually contact our office if there is a problem.

One of our staff members will meet with the student first. After the information has been gathered, we will decide what the next step will be. Sometimes the student will be given advice on how they can communicate their needs to the host family. If the complaint is significant, then the homestay coordinator will call the host parents to see what they think about the issue. If the issue cannot be solved with these two steps, then sometimes the homestay coordinator will set up a meeting with the student, the host family, and the ISL if language support is needed. This is the only way to confirm if the information received from everyone is accurate. Many times, there is a miscommunication, language barrier, or cultural confusion that is contributing to the problem. During and at the end of the meeting, the homestay coordinator will give everyone some feedback and suggestions to help the situation. There will then be follow-up after one or two weeks depending on what the issues are.

The experience of a teen living in a different culture can be very difficult, so the student needs all of those involved to support them and help them to navigate through the rough spots. After the meetings if a student still wants to move, or a host family does not want to continue hosting a student, then there will be an assessment of the situation and the student, and a decision will be made about the options. The parents/agent will be notified about an amicable way for the student to move on.

If a student is offered a second District host family, the program will notify the agent/parents and the student with a list of problematic behaviours and a plan for success to ensure the student attempts to behave properly in the next homestay. If a student is not happy with the second home, it may be possible that our program does not offer what that student or their home country parents

are looking for or expecting. The homestay coordinator may need to assess the situation and talk to the agent and/or the parents.

If it is assessed that a student needs to move from a homestay because of the student's behaviour, and/or misrepresentation of facts, circumstances, events, and communication; home country parents and their agent may have to consider an alternate outcome, which may include making a private homestay arrangement, or another plan chosen by the natural parents.



Changing Homestay

If a student is changing homestay, there is usually a two-week minimum notice period. Please see the Host Family Homestay Guidelines for a complete explanation of moving/notice expectations.



Documents

Make sure you keep your important documents like your passport, in a safe place. Do not carry them around with you in a purse or back-pack.



Homestay House Rules

All students will have program rules and homestay rules. Homestay rules may be different depending on the students' age and the host family. House rules are very important! They help students understand what the expectations are for each homestay family. A list will be provided to you for your reference. The homestay coordinator reviews all host family rules to ensure they are fair and reasonable for our program. You should expect rules about communication, curfew, laundry, your room, and bathroom. Host parents are expected to report to the Homestay Coordinator if a student continually does not follow house rules. Host parents are your temporary parents, and they will be "parenting" you while you are here.



Communication and HS reporting

Our program staff communicate often with each other so that we are all informed about how students are doing, and to make sure that everyone understands what is expected in many situations. Homestay parents are also expected to have open communication with our staff about homestay related issues. If the host family is having a problem with their student, then we expect the host parent to call the Homestay Coordinator. Some of the reasons a host parent may call the Homestay Coordinator are for not following program rules, not following house rules, being late for school, receiving reports from school and teachers, any significant health issues, and any disruptive, inappropriate, or illegal behaviour.



What is a Canadian?

Because Canada is such a multi-cultural country it is difficult to define culturally what a “Canadian” is. What most Canadians would agree make us “Canadian” is; we are peacekeepers, we like order and organization, and we value honesty, multiculturalism, and good government. We like rules. We are polite and appreciate good manners. We smile and are respectful and helpful with strangers. We hold doors open for others, we help when needed, and we are courteous drivers. We appreciate what we do for one another at home, and in the community. Your host family will expect you to have some of these expectations to fit into Canadian culture.



Police and Emergency People

The police and emergency teams in Canada are very trustworthy and rank as some of the best in the world. All law enforcement people are well trained and adhere to our federal and provincial laws. All people are treated equally by law enforcement; they do not make exceptions for people based on status, money, or influence. That means if someone is involved in breaking the law or a police matter, the police will follow the rules of law, each and every time, and the outcome cannot be negotiated by our staff, homestay parents, or home country parents.



Chores

Everyone helps in Canadian homes. Almost all Canadian homes have parents who work and are very busy. Very few Canadian families have any outside help or servants, and parents do the housework, and children and teens have chores. You will too. Your host parent will tell you in your house rules what your chore will be.



Dinner Time

Dinner time is an important part of the day. For busy families and busy students, sometimes it is the only time during the day that the entire family is together to eat and talk about their day. We expect that students will be home at least four times per week for dinner. We know that teens who are not home often are usually not very successful, because they do not have routines that are helpful to being successful in school. If a student is not going to be home for dinner, the student should contact the host parent for permission, and to let them know when they will be home.



Meals

You will be provided food for three nutritional meals and snacks every day, seven days a week, while in homestay. Hosts will tell you what is available for snacks and what you can eat between meals, and where it is kept. Mealtime is a time for you to participate in the family chores. Your host will show you how to set and clear the table and how to help clean up after dinner. Your host may want you to prepare your own lunch, after they have shown you how, and where to find the ingredients and supplies.

When you arrive, your host may take you shopping for groceries. They may ask you what you like

to eat. If you are having a difficult time adjusting to the food and are hungry, let your host know. They do not want you to be hungry and will try to find something that you like to eat. Canadian meals can be different in each homestay. It is good manners to try the food, but you can also tell your host when you do not like something. Our homestay families do not make accommodations for special diets such as gluten free, high protein, plant based, and lactose intolerant.



Socializing, Activities and Parties

Going to the Mall and “Party” is different in Canada. Canadian parents like to keep their children busy with after school activities and sports. Most Canadian children do not spend a lot of time at the shopping malls or organizing parties. There are many activities to do in Abbotsford, either in your school or in the community. Ask your family, your International Student Liaison, or look on a website for a list of things to do. Joining a team, a club or an organization at school is one of the best ways to connect with local people.



Curfew

All students will have a curfew (what time do be home at night). There will be one time for school nights and another for weekends. Host parents use grade and time as a guide for weekend curfews. For example, on weekends, if you are in grade 9 your curfew would be 9pm, if you are in grade 10, your curfew will be 10pm, if you are in grade 11 or 12 it will be 11pm. Most students should be home earlier on school nights because they have homework and need to spend time at home.



Communicating: Host Parents and Students

Students need to inform their host parents where they are going and who they are with and be home by curfew. Students should provide the names and cell numbers of their friends to the host parents.



Manners

Canadians appreciate and value good manners. One of the ways you can show your appreciation for your host family is by being polite and saying thank you when they cook you a meal, do something nice for you, or take you out socially. If there are children in your homestay you must take the time to say hello to them and show some interest in them. If your host family has guests visiting, you should also say hello and attempt to have some conversation even though this may feel awkward and be difficult for you. You must remember that this is a home, and you must learn and adapt to fit in with the family.



Cell Phone

Every student must have a cellphone. Some students get a basic talk and text plan, which is very affordable, and students must have a phone with some data. Depending on how much your parents want you to spend on your phone, will depend on the plan you choose. If your phone stops working, or you do not pay your bill and your phone is disconnected, your host parents will report to the homestay program. We will ask you to do what is necessary to get your phone working and if you do not, then we will contact your parents. Not only is this the way everyone communicates, but it is also a safety issue if you do not have a phone. Your phone must have a plan that works without Wi-Fi to access talk, text or an App for text and video calling.



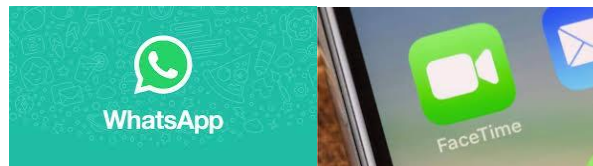
Locks, Keys/Codes and Alarms

Every student bedroom must have a lock on the door with a key entry or a code entry. The host parent will provide the student with a key or a code that will unlock the door. You should always keep your bedroom door locked when you are not in your room. The host parents will have a key to enter your room for emergency purposes and to check that your room is tidy etc. Your host parents will also provide you with a key or a code to a door that enters the home. Please take care of the key and do not lose it and do not share the code with anyone. If your home is equipped with a house alarm, your host parents will show you how to arm and disarm the alarm for leaving when no one is home or entering when the alarm is set.



Keep Your Room and Areas Tidy

All students are expected to keep their room tidy. No one is going to clean your room for you, or your bathroom if you have your own bathroom. You should expect your host parent to check your room once a week to ensure you are cleaning your room, keeping up with your laundry, and organizing your clothes and belongings. If you do not keep your room tidy your host parent may have consequences for you until you clean your room.



Live Streaming

FaceTime, WhatsApp, and other live communication apps can be a great way to communicate with family and friends, but it can also be problematic. Students should try and limit their time with home country family and friends because too much time online with them can interfere with bonding with the new family, prolonging homesickness, and making adjusting difficult. Students who are talking to home country family and friends should be in their room for privacy, so it does not interrupt the host family. You should also make sure you are talking during reasonable hours, at night or in the morning. Students must have their own device or laptop. Host parents are told to not let students use the host family's electronics.



Social Media and Privacy

When using social media, respect your host family's privacy. Do not take or post pictures, or information about your host family, without their permission. Do not take pictures, voice or video recordings of your host family or their home, without their knowledge unless it is a safety or legal issue. Our program will not accept photos or recordings for the purpose of a complaint.



Internet Time

The amount of time that teens are spending online is a problem world-wide. Many teens are spending too much time on the internet instead of studying or doing constructive activities. If you are not doing well in school and not socializing enough, your host parents may ask you about your internet time and may even limit your time. Students should not be online late at night or very early in the morning; this interrupts sleep, makes school less successful, and sometimes is disruptive to the host family. Your host parent may call the homestay coordinator if this is an ongoing problem.



Rides and Transportation

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.

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, and a school bus may not be available. If a student lives 3km or less from their school, and they choose to take the city bus to school, the student can purchase a bus pass.



Permission for Activities, Outings and Travel

Permission for any activities and travel must come from your host parents and/or the International Program. Sometimes your host parents may need to contact your home country parents for additional permission. Your home country parents cannot make decisions alone for an activity while you are in our program. Home country parents may not understand risks that may be involved and requirements of our program. **Some concerts and events outside of Abbotsford will not be permitted, so you and your host parent should contact our program for information, before purchasing any venue or travel tickets.**



Outings

Students come to Abbotsford for cultural and academic experiences; therefore, your host parents might take you on the occasional trip to areas of interest. You should talk to your host parents about what may interest you and how you can all have some fun together. Your host family is not responsible for sight-seeing or trips to Vancouver etc. Field trips will be available each semester by a private tour company. Your ISL will provide information about these trips at orientation. There may be field trips as well at individual schools, and other events organized by our program such as a hockey game, etc.

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 safe, timely manner.



Day Travel

Fraser Valley: Many students have home country friends studying in the Fraser Valley; therefore, students are permitted to day travel without adult supervision to Chilliwack, Langley, Surrey and Mission as long as your host parents have approved the travel and you have provided the names of the friends you are travelling with, the destination information, and you have a working cell phone.

Greater Vancouver Area: 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.

Travel (student) outside of the Greater Vancouver Area without an adult is not permitted.



Overnights (sleepovers)

If a student is planning to sleep overnight at a friend's house, the host parents need information. You must provide your host parent with the name of the family, their phone number, and the address. Your host parent will check if this is ok with the other family and ensure the overnight has parental supervision. We do not permit coed sleepovers (with boys and girls).

Overnight outside of Abbotsford

If you are requesting an overnight outside of Abbotsford, you must have permission from your host parents, and your host parent will need direct contact with your parents, for written permission. Your host parents will also need to communicate with the adult that will be supervising your overnight. It may take some time for your host parents to organize this, so you should give them time to prepare and reach your home country parents by email.



United States (U.S.) Travel

Not all students can travel to the U.S. You may have a passport/visa that allows you entry to the U.S. and if not, long term students can apply for a U.S. visitor Visa after you arrive. All non-Canadian visitors to the US must apply for an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorization) before entry. You can apply online.

If you are going to the U.S. for any reason, you must have permission from your home country parents, (travel form) between your host parents and natural parents, with the dates and details of the trip. You must also have travel insurance provided from your home country parents or purchased locally for U.S. travel if you are only covered by MSP.



Visiting Parents and/or Family Members

The Homestay Program provides housing for students while attending school. If you have family or relatives visiting Abbotsford, they should make their own arrangements to stay in one of our local hotels.



Sports Teams and Organized Activities

If you want to play a sport while you are here, we recommend that you do it through your school. Some students sign up for dance, swimming, skating, and martial arts in the community. You should not register for community sport teams such as hockey, soccer, or baseball. The time and travel commitment are beyond what we expect of our host families.



High Risk Activities

Host parents must get permission, by email, from your 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 your home country parents say it is “ok.” Home country parents may not be aware of the risks and/or the policies of our program.

Winter, mountain, and some other activities that could be considered high-risk, require written permission, include skiing, snowboarding, tubing, river rafting, kayaking, trampoline (personal and parks), ATV’s, boating, rock climbing (outdoors), and travel outside of Greater Vancouver Area. A form will be provided to your host parents that they can email to your home country parents for permission and liability waiver.



Medical Coverage

All International students are provided with medical coverage. You will be provided private insurance coverage or MSP (government Medical Services Plan), depending on how long you will be in Abbotsford. You will receive medical insurance information at orientation, and your host parents will help you if you require medical attention. If you attend any medical appointments or the emergency department at the hospital, we encourage you to include your parent(s) virtually when you speak with a doctor, so they are informed about your health, any diagnosis or future treatment.



Health Care Responsibilities - Student

When a student living with a District Homestay family becomes unwell, ill, or injured and requires medical attention, the host parents and/or an emergency designate, and/or the international program staff, will ensure that the student gets initial/emergency care and assessment.

While host families provide a supportive home environment and assist students with day-to-day needs, host parents or program staff are not responsible for arranging or transporting students to appointments or treatment in the event of an ongoing health or medical issue. If a host family does provide some support with transportation and planning, the host family should be reimbursed by the natural parents for travel if outside Abbotsford, and for any costs such as parking or affiliated expenditures. Host parents are not expected to miss work or spend unreasonable amounts of time or money with a student, for ongoing health issues and appointments.

If a student has an illness, injury or health issue that requires ongoing care and attention, it remains the responsibility of the student and their natural family to oversee and arrange appropriate care.

Depending on the situation, the student may need to go to a medical clinic, contact a medical professional directly, or follow procedures outlined by a medical person. Host parents may assist in providing general support, but they are not expected to take on medical responsibility or transportation to appointments or health facilities. If a student has any mobility issues, they may need to arrange an Uber for a period of time to get to appointments and school.

It is possible depending on the situation, that the international program may have to inform the natural parents that they must consider coming to Abbotsford to care for the ongoing medical needs of their child, or they may have to consider taking the student home earlier than planned while they recover or seek treatment.



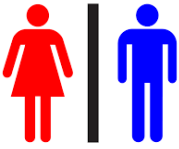
Medications

The District Homestay Program has a medication policy. If you are taking any prescribed medication that will continue after you arrive in Abbotsford, it should have been reported on your application. If you need prescription medication after you arrive, it must be approved by the program, and it must be kept and administered by your host parents. Your home country parents may send some non-prescription medications with you as a precaution and if so, you should let your host parents know what you have and always keep them in a safe place.



Hygiene

Personal hygiene is very important to Canadians and because you will be living in close contact with other people, your host family will appreciate you having good hygiene. Therefore, you should shower, wash your hair, and brush your teeth **every day**. You should also clean your clothes often, including outerwear jackets and coats. Your host parents can give you advice about how often and when to clean your clothes. You should also consider using an underarm deodorant to offset body odor. If you use cologne or perfume, you should not use too much because it may be too strong for some family members. Some host family members may be allergic to perfume and/or cologne.



Bathrooms

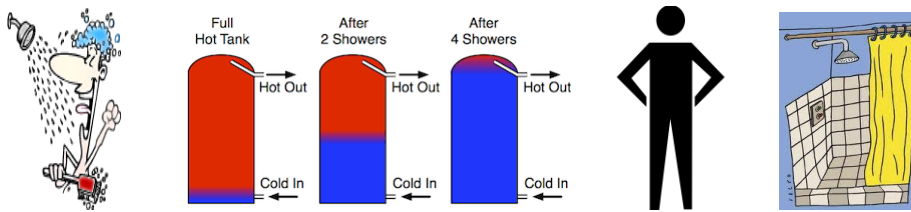
Bathrooms may be different in your country. It can be embarrassing for students to ask questions or understand what is expected of the bathroom in Canada. Here is some bathroom information that may be helpful ☺.



Toilet: All body fluid and body solid waste gets flushed down the toilet. There is a limited amount of flush water in the tank on the back of the toilet. So that means that if there is too much stuff in the toilet it may not flush properly. Some countries do not put toilet paper in the toilet, but we do. You must be careful how much toilet paper you put in the toilet for one flush. You may have to flush twice. Do not use or put anything in the toilet other than pee, poop, and toilet paper. Everything else goes in the garbage can. Used feminine products should be well wrapped in toilet paper and put in the garbage. If you are putting many things in the bathroom waste, then you should take the bag to the large household garbage when it is full. If you put too much toilet paper and body waste in the toilet, it may become clogged. You can tell if it is clogged because the toilet will not flush properly, and the water will rise in the toilet bowl. The water may even go over the edge onto the floor. **If this happens, you must not ignore it. You must use the plunger to unclog the problem and/or tell your host parent.**



Plunger: A plunger is a tool made of a stick with a rubber cup on the end that is used to clear a blocked pipe in a toilet or sink. Plunging can get messy, so if there is too much water, scoop out the excess into a nearby bucket to minimize cleanup. Push down on the stick to the bottom of the toilet—gently at first—forcing the air out, then continue plunging with quick and deliberate thrusts, directing the pressure down the drain without lifting the plunger enough to break the seal. Continue this action for approximately 20 seconds. When you pull the plunger away, the clog should be cleared. If that does not work, do not continue flushing the toilet handle in the hope that the bowl will drain. Instead, allow 10 minutes for the water level to drop. Then try again. You can also watch You-Tube demonstrations on how to plunger a toilet. If the toilet overflows, you must clean up the water or notify an adult. If you do not, it could damage the floor and surrounding areas, and you could be financially responsible.



Showers: Many students have lived in a home with unlimited hot water. Canadian homes have a hot water tank that is smaller than an adult person (picture above). If you are sharing a bathroom, schedule your shower or bath to fit in with the host family members' schedules. Canadians normally bathe or shower only once per day and Canadians like to conserve water. Using too much hot water for a bath or shower is inconsiderate and may mean that there is none left in the tank for the next person (picture above). You should not shower for more than ten minutes. Your Canadian shower will also have a shower door or curtain. If your shower has a curtain, make sure the curtain is always on the inside of the tub or floor pan so that all the water goes down the drain and not on the floor. If water gets on the floor, clean it up immediately so it does not cause water damage.



Clean Up: You should always tidy the bathroom after each shower. Make sure the floor and counter are dry; the sink does not have toothpaste in it, and make sure the toilet is flushed. If you do not do this, it might be a problem for others in the home. Remember, no one is going to clean for you in Canada.



Heat, Electricity and Water

Canada is not a hot climate. Because energy costs are so high, Canadians normally do not keep their houses warmer than 70 - 72 degrees F. (20 degrees C.) In winter, most Canadians wear warm sweaters, and socks or slippers on their feet, even in the house. If you find you are cold, the first thing to do is to put on more clothes in the daytime (a sweater, or a pair of socks), or more bedclothes at night. If you are still cold, discuss this with your host parent.



Alcohol and Drugs

Alcohol and marijuana/cannabis products are illegal for those under 19 years of age and all other drugs other than marijuana/cannabis products are illegal regardless of age. You may come from a country or an environment that allows teens your age to drink alcohol or use cannabis products, but minor students cannot use or consume them while in Canada. We repeatedly advise students to make responsible, legal choices while they are studying in Abbotsford, and unfortunately not everyone does. Anyone using drugs or alcohol will be dismissed from the program. If you are dismissed from the program, your parents do not get a program fee refund and your courses could be in jeopardy, so please think about your behaviour and how it could impact your life.

The Abbotsford International Program has a zero-tolerance policy for drugs and alcohol. As per the International Student Agreement, you must not buy, sell, possess, or use any drugs or alcohol. Any international student who is involved in any type of activities related to drugs and/or alcohol will be dismissed immediately from the International Program.



Smoking and Vaping

Buying cigarettes and vape products in Canada is illegal for those under 19 years old. Canadians are not very tolerant to smokers. Very few host families have someone in their family that smokes, so if a student is smoking or vaping while in homestay, they may have to find their own private homestay that permits a smoker.



Disruptive and/or Inappropriate Behaviour

We expect all our students to behave in a respectful and disciplined manner in homestay, at school, and in the community.



Homestay Payments

Almost all home country parents choose our Homestay Payment Service and therefore our office will pay your host parents directly into their bank account. A few students and their parents choose to pay the host parents directly and those students and/or their agent must ensure they pay the host family on or before the first of each month. Host parents cannot charge you anything above the homestay payment without permission from the Homestay Coordinator. If someone in your host family is asking for additional money, you should talk to your International Student Liaison for clarification.



Bank Accounts

If a student wants a bank account, the host parents can help set that up. Most students now have a bank card that their parents can add money to.



Cash

Students should not carry large amounts of cash with them or keep cash in their room. You should access cash as you need it, with a bank card or at the bank. Having large amounts of cash can be a safety risk for you and your host family.



Insurance for Personal Belongings

Most Canadian home insurance policies do not cover personal belongings for a homestay student; this means that if there is a fire, or a theft in the home, and a student's items are damaged or stolen, the homeowner policy will not reimburse the student. Therefore, home country parents should have their own insurance to cover their child while studying abroad if the value of the personal items is high.



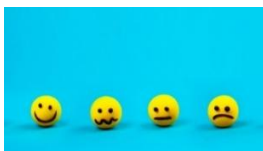
Budgeting

It is difficult for some students to budget their money because their parents have always done that for them. Please ensure you know what a reasonable monthly amount is to spend after you have paid for school supplies, personal products, cell phone, and entertainment. If you spend too much money on shopping and cannot pay for the essentials, we may have to contact your parents. You must pay for everything except the meals that your homestay provides. Your host family may offer to pay for some things extra, but it is at their discretion, they are not obligated to provide anything other than meals and your homestay environment.



No in Homestay

While you are here as a District Homestay student, you cannot have paid employment, you cannot have your own pet, you cannot babysit children, and you cannot drive a motor vehicle.



Trouble Coping

Some students have trouble coping when they are away from their family and friends. School and life can be difficult for a teen. If you are having trouble with anything while you are here, we can help and/or direct you to resources if needed.



Feeling Uncomfortable?

If any situation, in homestay, at school, or in the community makes you scared or uncomfortable, you should talk to someone. That may be a friend, someone from our program, a teacher, or your parents. Remember, the International Department has a 24-hour emergency number, and our local police, fire and ambulance is 911.



Program Support

The Abbotsford International Program is the highest staff-student ratio team in our province. We work collaboratively with the host families, schools, counsellors, International Student Liaisons, office staff, and administrators to provide the best outcomes for all our students, socially and academically. If you need help with anything, we are here to support you.



See You at School

Thank you for reading these guidelines. Having this much information will help you adjust and be successful in your District Homestay in Abbotsford. I, (Homestay Coordinator), will see you at orientation, and I will check in with all new students at their school a few weeks after arrival. If you have any problems in homestay, I am in the schools often, and you can request a meeting with me by talking with your International Student Liaison, or you can contact me directly. See you Soon! 😊