



## Homestay notes for students

We believe that it is important for all students to develop an understanding and knowledge of other cultures. You are very lucky to have the opportunity to live and mix with students and families from other cultures.

We want you to enjoy living in New Zealand, but we also want you to return to your countries with academic qualifications and knowledge of the English language and the New Zealand culture that will help you in your future careers.

### **Communicate:**

The purpose of staying with a NZ family is to help you with your English language and to experience a different culture. It is definitely the best way to learn English.

Talk to your host family. Tell them about yourself. It will help them to know you and you will get to know them.

Have some photos of your family, pets and home that you can show them. Your host family will be interested in learning about your country and culture too.

**Don't be afraid of making a mistake, your host family know you are learning and are willing to help you.** Use your electronic translator or a Google document and write words on paper if you are having difficulty making yourself understood.

Try new experiences, join in with family activities like trips to the beach or parks, visiting family and friends, or the movies etc. Joining in will help you to meet more New Zealanders, and will also improve your English much quicker. Be aware that if your homestay family invites you out you may be expected to pay for yourself.

You may experience culture shock. Expect that things will be different. Relationships in families may be different. Food will be different. Customs are different. You will probably be tired and want to sleep more. This is normal and will get better. You must accept that you are living in NZ not your own country and enjoy all the good things it has to offer and cope with the things that are difficult.

Remember that your homestay family is just a normal family that has invited you to share in their life and their home. You are a family member and not a guest in the home and are expected to take your turn with chores as other household members do.

**Talk about any problems you are having with the Homestay Co-ordinator Kathi, she can help you adjust.**

### **Your Room:**

This is your private place, but don't hide in it. Join in family activities, watch TV, listen to and join in conversation, even if you don't understand very much it will help your listening skills and soon you will understand more.

There should be a bed, desk, chair and drawers in your room and in the winter a heater will be made available.

Please keep it tidy and clean, make your own bed, your host parent will provide you with clean sheets and pillowcases on a weekly basis.

You should have a waste paper basket for paper rubbish in your room, do not put any food waste in it (or in the rubbish bin in the bathroom). Ask where to put other rubbish.

If there are small children in your host family or pets it is a good idea to keep the door shut when you are not in the room. Keep any medicines out of sight or reach of small children.

Most families in NZ go to bed earlier than you might be used to, (around 10 pm). If you want to stay up later make sure you are quiet, have earphones for your music or keep the TV on low volume. Turn out any lights, heaters and turn off TV or radios before you go to bed.

If you are tired and want to go to bed earlier just excuse yourself and say you are going to bed now.

During the winter if you are cold tell your host parent that you need an extra blanket or heater.

**Do not leave heaters or electric blankets on all night, and turn them off when you leave the room.**

### **Showers and bathroom:**

Most homes in NZ use only the shower. It is OK for you to have one shower every day, **but keep it short, (10 minutes is usually enough)**. Ask when it is the best time to have your shower. Nighttime is usually best, as mornings are busy times in most families with more than one person needing to use the bathroom. Be considerate of others. Your host parent will provide you with clean towels.

Be careful not to get water on the floors when washing, if you do please dry it.

### **Food and eating:**

NZ food is different to what you are used to in your country. Most families eat a variety of foods, from many cultures. Try everything, take a small amount, you will be surprised at what you will enjoy. Tell your host parent if there is any food that you really don't like to eat or can't eat.

If you are hungry, ask your host parent if you could have a bit more to eat.

Your host parent should show you how to make a cup of tea or coffee and what snack food you can eat. Be reasonable in how much snack food you eat, if fruit is available take only one piece at a time.

### **Breakfast:**

Breakfast in NZ is informal with family members eating at different times, some people miss breakfast completely. Your host parent may tell you to help yourself. He/she will show you where the breakfast foods are, most common breakfast food is cereal, toast, or fruit and yogurt, tea, coffee or juice. Help yourself means just that. If breakfast has always been an important meal for you make sure you eat a bit more of what is offered.

### **Lunch:**

Lunch is a light meal in NZ, the main meal of the day is dinner, and this may take you some time to get used to. Your host family are asked to provide you with breakfast, lunch and dinner. If you are unhappy with either the amount or type of food you are given and if after discussion with your host parents there is no improvement, please tell the Homestay

### **Eating:**

Eating customs in NZ are a bit different to what you may be used to.

Slurping (Such as when you eat noodles or soup) is not good manners in NZ, Noisy eating is considered rude.

Eat quietly and with your mouth closed.

Do not talk with your mouth full.

Knives, forks and spoons are used for eating, not fingers (unless your host tells you it is OK).

Lift the fork to your mouth, don't put your head down to the plate.

The knife is used for cutting, don't put it into your mouth.

When you have finished your meal wait until others have finished, before asking 'may I be excused please', thank the person who cooked the meal, leave the table taking your plate and things off the table to the kitchen to be washed. You are expected to help with the cleaning up after dinner.

### **Home late:**

You will be expected to be home each evening by 6pm. Dinner is usually around this time. If you intend to come home later than 6pm, you should talk to your homestay parents about this in the morning or phone them before 4pm.

All students under 18 years of age must talk to their host parents about where they are going and leave a contact name, phone number and address. Families of older students may also request that these same rules apply to them.

If you are going to come home later than expected, please remember to phone your host family and tell them. If you don't do this they will worry about your safety.

Make sure you lock the doors after you.

Please read your homestay agreement to ensure you are aware of when the College expects you home at night.

### **Sickness:**

If you are sick and unable to attend school you are expected to stay at home. If you do not remain at home (except for visiting the doctor) this will be regarded as an unexplained absence. Your homestay parents are expected to provide you with a note for school to explain the reason for your absence.

If you are late for school your homestay parents will get a text from school asking where you are.

**Internet:**

The type of internet access your homestay has is dependent on their needs. If you require additional data or speed talk with your homestay and consider paying for the additional service you require.

**Do not download anything from the Internet without asking permission. Keep your use to a short time.**

**Laundry:**

Your family will supply you with clean sheets and pillowcases for your bed and clean towels each week. Your host parents will also do your washing (laundry) for you. If you want to wash your own clothes, please ask your host parent to show you how and where to do this.

**Visitors:**

Some hosts will be happy for you to invite your friends to stay or for a meal. **Always ask first** and plan ahead as the family may have already made plans. You and your friends may like to cook a meal for your host family. Make sure you clean up after you.

**Smoking:**

Wellington College expects you not to smoke in your homestay, while in school uniform or at school.

Most people in New Zealand do not smoke.

**Alcohol and drugs**

**It is illegal for people under 18 to buy alcohol and to drink alcohol in public places.**

Some host families have wine or beer in their home and some do not. Be careful about drinking alcohol.

***All recreational drugs are illegal in New Zealand***

**Pornographic material and software are not permitted under any circumstance. Do not download pornographic material from the Internet.**

**KEY:**

You should be given a key to the house. Look after it, make sure you lock the door if you are the last to leave and/or arrive home. Return it when you leave the homestay.

**Holidays:**

You will need to give your host parents reasonable notice of holidays you intend taking.

During the Christmas holiday period your host parents may expect you to pay a holding fee of up to \$50 per week for your room. If you have any problems about any of the above please speak to your homestay Co-ordinator.

**Changing homestay**

If you need to change your homestay you will need to speak to the Homestay Co-ordinator Kathi . You need to give two weeks notice to leave in advance to your homestay. Only in exceptional circumstances or with the agreement of both parties can this two week period be waived.