

# UPPER HUTT COLLEGE



**Student Guidelines to  
Living in a New Zealand  
Host Family**

**Dear Student,**

**Welcome** to Upper Hutt, Wellington, New Zealand, and to your host family. We hope you enjoy our lovely city and our friendly people.

This booklet contains some information and suggestions to help you to enjoy living with your New Zealand host family.

You will find many things are different – some things you will like and other things may make you feel uncomfortable at first. This is quite normal so be patient with yourself and with others around you. Adjusting to another culture and way of life takes time.

Remember, it is good to ask when you don't know what to do. If you have any problems while staying in a host family provided by Upper Hutt College, you must call or make an appointment to see the Homestay Manager. We want to do our best to support you in your adjustment to study in New Zealand. It is to everyone's advantage that you adjust quickly and are happy in your homestay.

If you have problems relating to your study, please speak to the Director of International Students, Mr Mutch.

Please read the following information carefully; this will help you to understand what is provided for you and also what we expect of you living in our host families. **Please also read the full PDF version that has been sent to you.**

Belinda Walker  
Homestay Manager  
Upper Hutt College  
[walkerb@upperhutt.school.nz](mailto:walkerb@upperhutt.school.nz)  
Phone 027 434 8864

**Guidelines to living in a NZ Home**

Keeping these simple guidelines of respect will help make your homestay experience a happy one.

- Be part of the family – enjoy your host parents, brothers and sisters. Respect them and be friendly. They will treat you the same way.
- Remember this is your home – it is not a hotel. Respect the personal and private property of your family. Always ask before borrowing or using any items.
- If you make a mess please clean up after yourself. As a homestay student you are a member of the family, not a guest, and should therefore contribute to the upkeep of the family home the same as everyone else, e.g. washing dishes etc., making your bed and keeping your bedroom tidy.
- If you break anything then please be honest and own up. Offer to pay for the damage.
- You must always tell your homestay where you are and ask permission if you want to go somewhere. They also need to know how you will get there and back and when you are coming home. **Don't be late!** Your host family may worry about you if they do not know where you are or if you are not home when you say you are going to be. You **must** have your mobile phone switched on.
- Ask for permission to invite friends to your house.
- Leave a contact phone number, or mobile number (switched on) with your host family when you are away from the home
- **Keep your host family's name, address, mobile phone and home phone numbers with you at all times. Also keep the name and phone number of your Homestay Manager with you.**
- Try to keep your room clean and tidy.
- Make sure you keep yourself and your clothes clean and fresh.

**Remember: Just as it is in your home country, no two families are the same. The same applies to New Zealand families. It is important that you discuss the specific house rules for your homestay so that everyone understands what is expected of them.**

## Meals

Your host family will feed you 7 days per week (3 meals per day). In every family there are usually set meal times when the family sits down together to eat and exchange news. It is expected that you will join the family at these times.

If for any reason you are going to be late for a meal you must telephone your homestay parents to tell them so. If you wish to be away for a meal, you must have your homestay's permission to do this.

New Zealand food may be very different to what you are used to but please try everything. If you decide that you don't like some things tell your homestay family so that they can give you something different. Tell your homestay parents what food you would like for your lunch each day.

You will receive breakfast and an evening meal during the week days along with food to take for lunch. In the weekends you will receive breakfast, a light lunch and an evening meal. Sometimes in the weekend you will be able to help yourself and cook what you like to eat.

### **Breakfast**

Usually New Zealand families help themselves for breakfast. Cereal, fruit, toast, tea, milo and coffee will be provided. Some homestays may have a cooked breakfast like bacon and eggs or pancakes in the weekends when there is more time.

### **Lunch**

During the week your lunch will more than likely consist of sandwiches, muesli bars or some alternative snack food as well as fruit. Your lunch is your responsibility to prepare. In the weekends you or your host mother/father may make lunch. It may be filled rolls, sandwiches, salads, fruit, noodles, soup, a meat pie etc. You may need to speak to your host mother/father and tell her/him what you like for your lunch.

### **Dinner**

This meal is eaten together and you should be on time for this meal. This is when the family talk about their day and relax together. It is all right to say 'no thank you' to food if you do not like it, but you must be prepared to try new foods and not expect your host parents to always cook food from your country. They may try but it will probably not be the same as you are used to.

It is good manners in New Zealand to wait until others start eating before you begin, and to not leave the table until everyone has finished. If you need to leave early, say, "Excuse me, please. May I leave the table?"

You are part of the family and it is expected that everyone help. For example, setting the table, clearing the table, washing the dishes and emptying the dishwasher are jobs you could help with.

Ask your host mother/father what snack foods you can eat between meals.  
Do not help yourself without asking unless you have been told to do so.



## Housework

In most families everyone, both male and female, share the household duties. You may be asked or expected to help daily with some jobs around the house.

For example:

- Preparing the vegetables for dinner
- Washing and drying dishes
- Bringing firewood into the house
- Taking out rubbish bins (garbage)
- Mowing lawns
- Vacuuming the carpet
- Cleaning the bathroom
- Washing your own clothes
- Setting and clearing the table

If you do not know how to do any household jobs, ask your family.

## Important Points to Remember

- Your homestay parents may let you use their computer. However, it must only be used for study purposes and keeping in touch with your family. Under **no circumstances** access websites that cause offence to the homestay.
- The homestay will supply you with a heater. However, that does not mean you can leave it on all day and night. Electricity is expensive in New Zealand. Therefore, please be considerate and only use the heater when necessary or to warm up your room. Make sure you turn it off when leaving the room. If you have a window open, do not have the heater going.
- You may have lots of study to do and your homestay will also probably be very busy with daily life. However, there will be opportunities you can take to increase your English knowledge. It is appreciated and considered polite if students help with household chores such as the dishes or preparing the evening meal. These times are wonderful opportunities for learning and practising your English. Remember, not all learning takes place from a text book or in a classroom.
- Homestay families are happy if their student wishes to join in and be part of the family. However, you will need to be adaptable to their way of life. They will be ready to listen to you and help you in any way they can. If you have any personal problems or difficulties or you are not sure about something, don't be afraid to ask or talk to your homestay mum or dad. Don't expect you will fit into the family straight away. It takes time to build relationships.
- **Curfews** – Most of our homestay families have or have had children so they understand that you may want to go out and want to get involved in various activities. The older you are, the later families will allow you to stay out at night. Discussion and communication is the key to curfews working well with you and your host family. The most important thing is to inform your host family of your location – especially if you are going to be late home, not home for dinner, staying at a friend's house etc. This is common courtesy and also for your own safety.

## **Conflict Resolutions and Complaints Procedures**

There are procedures for dealing with complaints you may have. It is not helpful to you or anyone else to complain around your friends and associates about things you are not happy with. If you want changes to be made you must follow the procedures for dealing with your concerns.

School Matters – students must follow the complaint procedures of the school. These are:

- STEP 1** Contact:
- **Belinda Walker** if it is a homestay issue
  - **Mr Mutch** if it is a matter about your subjects, teachers or other students
  - **Mrs Greig** if it is a matter about money

**STEP 2** If your concerns aren't dealt with to your satisfaction, see Mr Mutch

**STEP 3** If your concern or complaint is not dealt with to your satisfaction, you or your parents can write to the Principal, Ms Taylor, or the Board of Trustees.

**STEP 4** If, at this stage, you are still not satisfied with the outcome, you can contact the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) by phone on 0800 697 296 or email [qadrisk@nzqa.govt.nz](mailto:qadrisk@nzqa.govt.nz)  
A Complaint Form downloaded from the NZQA website can be sent to:

The Complaints Officer  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority  
PO Box 160  
Wellington 6140

Or email or scan the completed form along to:  
[schoolcode.enquiries@nzqa.govt.nz](mailto:schoolcode.enquiries@nzqa.govt.nz).

You must be able to show them that you have tried to get the school to act before you contact them. They will consult the school to see if anything can be done to help you.

# Homestay Matters

Put your problems in writing or speak to the **Homestay Manager, Belinda Walker**, about any concerns you may have regarding the host family. This is confidential.

If you do not get satisfaction from your **Homestay Manager** regarding your concerns take your complaint in writing to the **Director of International Students, Mr Mutch**.





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