



Upper Hutt College

Homestay Family Handbook





Welcome

A very warm welcome and a big thank you for becoming a host family for one of our International Students.

Your international student has enrolled at Upper Hutt College to study alongside their NZ counterparts to improve their English language and experience a new culture.

Each student comes to Upper Hutt College with different levels of English ability, confidence, maturity, skills and experience of New Zealand culture. The host family plays a valuable role in providing the care and support students need to succeed in their quest for English language competence. Being part of the life of your family really assists the student in developing an understanding of the New Zealand lifestyle.

Being a host family is both interesting and rewarding. No doubt you will be faced with challenges but we hope that we'll be able to offer you the assistance you need to turn these into positive experiences.

The staff and students at Upper Hutt College highly value your support and we look forward to building ongoing relationships with you.

*Any questions or concerns please direct them to **Amanda Sharkey**, International Homestay Coordinator, or Deputy Principal and International Director, **Janetta Van Maren**.*

We can be contacted at:

School Office: (04) 527 8749 ext. 733
International email: international@upperhutt.school.nz
Emergency contact: 027 434 8864 Amanda Sharkey

Looking forward to sharing and working with you as a host family,

Kind Regards,

Amanda Sharkey
International Homestay Coordinator
Upper Hutt College
04 527 8749 ext.733
sharkeya@upperhutt.school.nz

Guidelines for Homestay Families hosting International Students from Upper Hutt College

School Responsibility to Host Families

Upper Hutt College is committed to ensuring that both the host family and the international student have a mutually satisfactory experience. Upper Hutt College is a signatory of the New Zealand Pastoral Care Code of Practice. The policy and procedures relating to homestay have been drawn up in relation to the Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of International Students outlined in the Code of Practice.

Ongoing Support

We endeavour to give the homestay advice and support when needed. We are only a phone call away and are happy to help and assist you in any way we can to help make your hosting a positive experience.

The Application to be a Host Family

When a host family contacts the school, an application form is sent out. Once the application form has been sent back and the form is assessed to determine whether the homestay has met all the requirements, the International Homestay Coordinator will make a time to visit the family where she will discuss the Policy and Procedures relating to Homestay. You, as a potential homestay parent, are informed of the expectations of hosting a student and given time to ask questions or discuss any concerns you may have. This first visit is also a chance to have a general chat to get to know you and your family. An inspection of the home, the proposed bedroom, study area, bathroom situation and laundry are also carried out at this time. This process helps to determine what kind of student would suit the home and family lifestyle, and assists in making the best possible match for both the family and the International student.

UHC Expectations of the Host Families

The aim of our Homestay Programme is to include the student as part of your family. In order for this to happen we feel you need to do the following:

- Fill out a Police Vetting Request and Consent Form (everyone living in the home 18 years and over must complete one). This is a requirement under the Code of Practice. It enables us to place the student in a safe environment.
- Involve your student as much as possible in your family life.
- Treat them the same as you would a valued family member.
- Provide a safe and caring environment for them to explore the NZ lifestyle.
- Supply them with a bedroom, a desk, a quiet place to study and internet access.
- In winter, supply the student with a safe heater, extra blankets, electric blanket or hot water bottle.
- Provide them with three meals per day.
- Provide access to transport to get to and from the school.
- Notify the school if you have any concerns over the student's health or behaviour.

- Register your student with your family doctor or the Upper Hutt Health centre within one week of arrival. Contact the school if you have any concerns relating to the student's health and well-being.
- Notify the International Homestay Coordinator if circumstances change within the homestay carer's family situation – including a change of address or family make-up.
- Be available to get to know your student and their family ahead of their arrival, via email, phone or Zoom meets as requested.
- Be available to collect your student at the airport and take them back there for their departure.

Helping with school life

You can help your student achieve success by:

- Providing a quiet, warm place to study
- Taking an active interest in school work and progress
- Helping with homework if possible and stressing its importance.
- Being aware that learning styles in NZ are often different. Skills such as group working, giving personal opinions in discussions, original research and problem-solving activities may not have been experienced before.
- Be realistic and encouraging. Many students have unrealistic expectations about what they can achieve in a short time and are disappointed when reality hits. Many do poorly in their first tests. Parents often expect high grades but do not understand how difficult studying in another country, in a second language, can be. Your encouragement will help.
- If possible, attending parent teacher nights or talking with the ESOL teacher.
- Contacting the school if you have any concerns.

A high level of English is the key to academic success.

You can assist by:

- Talking to your student clearly, and avoiding kiwi expressions and complex sentences, if the level of English is not good. Speak slower so they have time to process and translate.
- Encouraging your student to keep a notebook of new vocabulary.
- Encouraging your student to join sports teams etc where the student will have to communicate in English.
- Encouraging your student to use English when friends are visiting, especially if homestay members are present (they will need to use their own language at times).
- 'Total immersion' is the best way to learn a language. Your student's English will improve because they are living with first language speakers.

The Student

Prior to the student arriving in NZ, they and their family will be sent a profile of the host family along with contact details. These details will allow both the student and their host family to contact each other prior to arrival. We have found this to be beneficial to both parties and aids in making the integration into their "kiwi" family much smoother.

The student will probably be unfamiliar with New Zealand accents even if they have good English. It may take time to adjust to colloquial and distinctively "Kiwi" expressions. Homestay families should attempt to learn some basic greetings in the student's language. Learning a few phrases of your student's language helps to show respect for their culture and may help them feel more welcome and cared for.

Arrival and Welcome to NZ

When arrival details have been received by the college, you will be notified and requested to make arrangements to collect your student from the airport. Again, we believe this assists in making the student feel welcome and wanted in their new family.



When your student arrives:

Once you have collected your student from the airport and have arrived home we suggest the following:

- Talk to them; speak slowly. You may need to write things down.
- Show them your home/pets.
- Ask them questions about themselves/their home life.
- Make their room welcoming. Have their room warm, towels on the end of the bed.
- Work through the “First Day Student/Parent Checklist” located below.
- You may want to get a translation app on your phone. This could be used to ensure students fully understand essential information.

*** Please remember that every student is an individual and can be completely different from the last student you had. Personalities and cultural factors can play a big part.**



First Day Student/Parent Checklist

- ☐ Make sure the student knows where the bathroom and toilet are.
- ☐ Make sure the student knows where to put his/her washing.
- ☐ What does the student call his/her new family? Mum, Dad, first name etc?
- ☐ Make sure that the student knows what time meals are.
- ☐ Is it all right for the student to help himself/herself to food when hungry?
- ☐ What time is he/she required to be home, on both week nights and in the weekend?
- ☐ Make sure that the student understands that they must call you when they are late and that they have your contact details, and you have theirs. It is suggested you give them a small card with your name, address and phone number on it. Many students arrive with roaming data only on their phones; using apps such as LINE or WhatsApp may be the best method of digital communication.
- ☐ Check pronunciation of names.
- ☐ Are there any jobs for them to do around the house? e.g. dishes
- ☐ Are they able to cook meals from time to time?

In the following days:

Student Care

Homestay families are responsible for their student all the school year, including the school holidays. It is the homestay carer's responsibility to know where their student is and how they can be contacted. If a student wishes to stay at a friend's place overnight, contact should be made with the host parents or family beforehand. Please contact the International Homestay Coordinator to get the necessary permissions in place.

- Show your student around the neighbourhood, supermarket, bank, bus stops etc. The local Asian supermarkets are also popular with many of our students. Bus routes can be found at www.metlink.org.nz and they also have a handy app that the student may like to download for journey planning and live tracking of buses and trains.
- Make sure your house rules are clear. Different homestays have different guidelines, but we recommend you tell your student the following:
 - Tell us if you are going to be late home so we don't worry.
 - Let us know if you won't be home for a meal.
 - Friends are welcome, but if they want to have a meal or stay the night, you should always ask first.
 - Keep your room tidy.

It is a good idea to discuss other things like:

- Using the home wifi.
- Reasonable length of time in the shower.
- Use of heaters and electric blankets.
- Playing music or computer games late at night.
- Times you expect your student home at night, and the latest time friends can visit.
- Toiletries: Students should provide their own shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste etc.

Many of these matters do not need to be written down, but can be discussed as issues arise. Helping with the dishes etc will help your student feel part of the family. Students may not offer to help as they never do so at home, but will be happy to do so if you ask.

It is important to remember that it is your home and you have the right to expect certain standards of behaviour. Some students are used to a lot of freedom at home. In some countries, servants are common. If your student is treating your house like a hotel, it is up to you to explain the difference! Some students come from strict home backgrounds where every moment of the day is accounted for. The extra freedom and lack of parental supervision in NZ can cause problems.

By offering to be a homestay, you have accepted a degree of responsibility for the teenager in your care. Parents expect that you will act in the best interests of their child and this includes setting firm guidelines. The safety of the student in your care is paramount. For most, the main purpose of being in NZ is to study. Do not hesitate to set rules, especially for younger students. What would you expect of your own child?

With some students, enforcing rules is not easy. They may not want to accept your authority because you are not their parent. If your student repeatedly refuses to follow reasonable rules and you are worried and unhappy, it is most important that you contact the International Homestay Coordinator.

Students must not be left alone overnight in the house for any reason. If this is inconvenient because of an emergency, please contact the school or the student's NZ based agent support person (if they have one).

Transport

It is your responsibility to teach the student how to get to and from school. It is extremely important that students arrive at school on time. Communication between your student and yourself regarding pick up and drop off times is very important. If for some reason you are running late it is advisable to tell your student when you expect to arrive.

Please note there is no car access to the school driveway during bus time for safety reasons, please arrange to meet your student on Moonshine Road or Hikurangi Street after school.

Student Invoices

Host families are loaded as Caregivers in our student management system, KAMAR. Because of this, any fees that the student needs to pay (such as sports or trips) will automatically be sent to you as their caregiver when invoice batches are produced. **YOU ARE NOT LIABLE TO PAY THESE** – they are for the students or their parents to pay. Please just remind your student to pay them at the school office.

Host Family Questionnaire

Sometime during the term, a questionnaire will be sent out to you. The purpose of this is to find out how your student is progressing and if there are any issues that need to be addressed. The questionnaire is very important and we would appreciate it if you would take the time to fill it out because it helps us to find out the issues that you face as a homestay family. When we are made aware of any areas of concern we can address these and assist you in coping with hosting a student. The student is also given a questionnaire for the purpose of monitoring the living conditions provided and how they are progressing and settling into the routines of your family. If you wish to have an interview to discuss any areas of concern, we invite you to call the International Homestay Coordinator and arrange a meeting.

Curfews

International students must always let their host family know where they are and be back home at the time arranged. We are using the table below as a guide to what times your student should be home by each evening.

Age	Sunday - Thursday	Friday - Saturday
Under 15 years	To be agreed between the host family and student	Under supervision
15 years		10pm
16 years		11pm
17 years and over		12 midnight

Parties

Sometimes students ask to go to parties that are being held by local students, we would advise that you ask your International student to give you the name of the student, the address where the party is being held and the phone number of a parent so you can speak to them about the event. International students are not permitted to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, take drugs or ride in a vehicle driven by a Learner or Restricted Driver. If the party arrangements do not suit your plans, you can tell the student this. Remember they are living in your home and you will also have family rules.

If you are unsure of the party arrangements, please contact the International Homestay Coordinator.

Sleepovers

Any time your student is not going to be sleeping at your home, the International Homestay Coordinator must know, this is part of our duty of care. International students can sleep over at other international student's homestay, as all our host families have been police vetted. If your student asks to sleep over at the home of a local student they will need to provide the name and address of the student, a telephone number of a parent of the student. We will then contact your student's agent and give them these details. International students have to have the permission of their agents and written consent from their natural parents to be able to go to sleepovers at local students' houses, this is because they are not known to us and are not police vetted. Please make sure your student gives us plenty of time to obtain these consents.

Higher Risk Activities

Many higher risk activities are not covered under the student's insurance policy, or may not be allowed by their agency or school. If the student wishes to undertake any activity that you deem higher risk, please check with the Homestay Coordinator first if they are able to. Some examples are camping in the bush, shooting or hunting, skydiving, bungy jumping, riding motorcycles.

Holiday Arrangements

Situations arise during the year where either the host family makes plans to go away, either with or without their student or the student wishes to travel without their host family. The school is responsible for providing alternative homestay accommodation during the period that the host family is away without their student. Whether your student will be with you or not, the school requires that you complete the relevant "Holiday Travel Plans" form located at the back of this booklet and return it to the International Homestay Coordinator.

When the student goes on holiday away from the host family house they must complete the transfer of care process. Please contact the International Homestay Coordinator at least two weeks prior to their travel. Students can only travel on supervised tours that have been approved by the school. They cannot go off backpacking or camping or to stay in hotels somewhere for the weekend.

When the student is out of your home, we pay a retainer fee up to the first 5 nights, and subsequent nights are unpaid. This is because the Homestay payment is intended to cover the actual cost of hosting a student, but we acknowledge that there may be extra expenses and impositions such as airport runs and storing their belongings when the student is away from your home.

International Students Emergency Procedures for Caregivers



The following is information about what you need to do in case of an accident or emergency involving your international student. Please keep it in a safe place e.g. on your fridge, on the family notice board, or stored in your smart phone. Caregivers need to ensure that everyone who takes care of your international student is aware of these procedures.

Role of the School

The school is responsible for all emergency procedures during school hours and all emergency procedures in the homestay. This means that the school should be contacted as soon as possible in all these situations. The school will help and support you and make sure that all appropriate procedures are followed. If a student is in a critical condition, contact with the parents will be made by the Director of International Students or by the Principal.

Role of the Caregiver - Accident or Emergency

The role of the caregiver includes being available 24 hours a day to respond immediately to a crisis.

If an international student is injured or unwell and your level of concern is high, take the student to the nearest accident and emergency department or if appropriate dial 111 and ask for the ambulance.

In the event of an accident or emergency, homestay parents are **not** responsible for contacting their student's parents. Host parents need to notify the School on the International Emergency mobile 027 434 8864 or the Director of International Students, via the school office on 527 8749.

If your level of concern is low or moderate take the student to your GP, or if time permits call the International Department at school or send in an email: international@upperhutt.school.nz

Earthquakes

All disasters have the potential to cause disruption, damage property and take lives. It is vital that you prepare now. See this website: <http://www.getthru.govt.nz/>

Please go over the procedure with your international student of what should happen if there is an earthquake. Some students would have had no experience of earthquakes at home. Even if students come from countries where earthquakes are more common they need to practise the procedure to follow.

IMPORTANT

In the unlikely event that your student is involved in an incident that arouses the interest of the media it is **essential** that you do **not** talk to the media. You should give a simple "No comment" or a statement that all enquiries should be directed to the Principal.

Household Emergency Plan

Please have a Family Emergency Plan. Include your international student in the details. You will need to complete the Upper Hutt College Civil Defence Planning form which covers the release of your students after a major event at school.

When Difficulties Arise with your Students

- Initially discuss issues directly with your student as soon as they arise.
- Do not hesitate to contact the International Department. We are happy to assist you in resolving any difficulties.
- We hope it is not necessary to remove students from homestays and would endeavour to work through any problems. However, in some circumstances and at the discretion of the International Homestay Coordinator this may be done.
- Sometimes students are not happy in the homestay, this can be for a number of reasons. Please talk to the International Homestay Coordinator if you are experiencing difficulties with your student.

Changing Homestays

The school places a student in a homestay family for an intended length of time in good faith. There is, however, no guarantee that the student will remain in the same homestay for the full time. Moving a student is not done lightly. If a problem occurs the school will work with the homestay and student to solve the problem. Students are constantly encouraged to work through any problems by talking to their homestay family and international staff.

Some students cannot face discussing quite minor problems because they think it will be interpreted as rudeness by the homestay family. They would rather avoid the issue by changing families. In many cases, it takes at least one month for students to feel settled in a new homestay family. If, after talking about the problem with the student/homestay family, no resolution is forthcoming, a new homestay family will be found.

This school reserves the right to move a student from a homestay family at any time, if it is felt the student's health and safety is at risk or if the International Homestay Coordinator determines that it is the best interests of the student to do so.

Possible reasons for leaving a homestay

- The student returns to their home country at parents' request.
- The homestay family is unable to continue to care for reasons of illness, transfer, or change in domestic circumstances.
- The student's behaviour is unacceptable to the homestay parents and/or to the school (e.g. disobedience, theft, serious breach of school rules).
- Behaviour of homestay members that is unacceptable (e.g. Lack of respect for student's cultural beliefs, theft).
- A "mismatch" between the student and homestay.
- Written request from parents for their child to now live with a guardian or family member.

The Problems of Culture Shock and Homesickness

Moving to another country requires a time of adjustment to the language, food, people, weather, house and different ways of doing things. These changes affect people in a variety of ways; some students adjust quickly to their new environment; others go through bouts of homesickness and uncertainty before they settle down. "Culture shock" is a very real thing, but it does pass with time.



Many students go through the following stages:

Leaving home...

Students are often nervous, sad to leave family and friends but excited and adventurous. Expectations of their new life may be unrealistically high.

The first few weeks...

The student may be on a "high", enjoying new experiences and meeting people. Tiredness may be a problem.

After 4 or 5 weeks...

As initial excitement wears off, homesickness may strike. There may be rosy memories of home and feelings of anxiety, loneliness and confusion may set in. Physical symptoms may include tiredness, head and stomach aches, changed sleeping and eating patterns. School work may seem too difficult and a fear of "letting down the family if I fail" may occur. The student may also be questioning if they made the right decision to come to New Zealand.

Eventually...

These feelings will pass. Friends will be made and school life will settle down. The student may become more realistic about expectations and realise that emotional ups and downs are normal. Feelings of confidence and happiness will return.

Also...

Students can also experience "reverse culture shock" when they return home. After adjusting to the "Kiwi" way of life and being more independent, some find returning to their old life style quite difficult.

One very useful website is

<https://naumainz.studyinnewzealand.govt.nz/help-and-advice/personal-wellbeing/feeling-lonely-homesick-or-depressed>

On the next page you will see a Follow your Dreams scenario, which shows you a natural "U" curve of what often happens when the student arrives in New Zealand.



Leaving Home

- ♦ Nervous
- ♦ Excited
- ♦ Happy
- ♦ Sad
- ♦ Full of Hope



Follow Your Dreams

New Zealand Welcomes You ... but
be prepared for the natural
"U Curve" of Adjustment

- ## New Zealand's Great
- ♦ Now feeling confident, successful and happy
 - ♦ Hope for the future career
 - ♦ A definite purpose to be in NZ
 - ♦ Looking forward to uni/employment



Settling In

- ♦ Enjoying Study
- ♦ Making friends
- ♦ Beginning to adapt to new culture
- ♦ Things are not so bad
- ♦ Getting involved in school activities
- ♦ Enjoying different food.
- ♦ Understanding English
- ♦ My homestay feels like home



What Have I Done?

- ♦ Extremely homesick missing family, friends, shops, food and pets.
- ♦ Miserable
- ♦ Was I right to come to New Zealand?
- ♦ Does anybody like me?
- ♦ Hopelessness
- ♦ Everything is terrible
- ♦ Want to sleep all the time



Culture Shock

- ♦ Lonely
- ♦ New Food
- ♦ New Language
- ♦ Difficult to study
- ♦ Foreign environment
- ♦ Frightened
- ♦ Hard to make friends
- ♦ Tired from speaking English all the time.
- ♦ Nothing seems right



Arrival in New Zealand

- ♦ Confused
- ♦ Tired
- ♦ Still Happy
- ♦ Adventurous
- ♦ Everything is new
- ♦ Everything is different



The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021

What is the Code?

When students come to study in New Zealand, schools have an important responsibility to ensure that those students are well informed, safe and properly cared for and that the international students have in New Zealand a positive experience that supports their educational achievements.

To support this, the New Zealand government has developed the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021. The Code of Practice clearly outlines the full legal requirements that education providers enrolling international students must abide by.

More information about the Education Code of Practice can be found on the NZQA website: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/education-code-of-practice/>

The most relevant section for Homestay families is Outcome 18 under the general heading of *Safety and well-being*.

The Guidelines that accompany the Code discuss the following:

Good practice regarding accommodation when living with a residential caregiver

A declaration from residential caregivers that their home meets all relevant legislative requirements can be used as evidence that living conditions are deemed safe.

A home visit will also offer evidence of living conditions in relation to:

- location
- standard of bathrooms and other facilities
- level of safety and security
- standard of cleanliness
- temperature and heating
- appropriate bedroom furniture
- appropriate linen and bedding
- study facilities
- provisions for emergencies, e.g. first aid supplies, smoke alarms
- whether the physical and emotional environment is safe for the student
- number and age of students and other residents living in the house.

Safety checks

It is very important to ensure the safety of international students when selecting accommodation. Students may be staying in accommodation for an extended period, for a short period or in temporary accommodation, alone or with other students.

Schools are required to complete an 'appropriate safety check for a residential caregiver'. It is expected that a police vet or criminal history check is completed for all adults residing in a homestay who are 18 years of age and over.

As well as a police vet or criminal check, the following checks can be included to ensure an appropriate safety check is undertaken:

- Confirmation of identity, e.g. sighting passport or driver's license
- Home visit

- Character references, the new code of practice asks for one of your referees to be your current employer
- Interviews with host family members.

All information obtained during the safety checking process is confidential. Schools are required to have processes in place to protect the privacy of participants, including any information obtained through the criminal history check or police vetting process.

Home visits

Home visits are an important strategy to collect information about the quality of residential care. Schools should visit student accommodation at planned intervals and on a regular basis during the student's stay. The number of visits to a residential caregiver should be sufficient to ensure the quality care provided is of an acceptable standard. The residential carers should be advised in advance that the visit will be taking place.

Some residential caregivers may need more visits than others, for example it may be appropriate to visit early in a students' stay and then again, some weeks later to review the placement. It can be useful to visit the accommodation while the student is present to gauge the interactions between the student and the residential caregivers. These visits need to be documented and records kept.

Effective communication

Schools are required to have procedures for ongoing checking of the residential caregiver and the accommodation to ensure the safety and well-being of the student. It is important to keep written records of monitoring and issues in order to maintain effective communication with families.

The school should attempt to mediate and resolve any issues as they arise and keep families informed of progress. Expectations in relation to accommodation can be clearly set out in written contracts, accommodation agreements and codes of conduct for students.

Student interviews

Student interviews are an important strategy to gather information about the well-being and care of international students. All students should be interviewed on a planned, regular basis to ascertain they are safe, their accommodation is appropriate and their academic, social and emotional needs are being met. The number of student interviews should be sufficient to ensure international staff are informed and up-to-date with information about international student well-being and care. All interviews should be documented and records kept.

During student interviews, it is helpful to ask open-ended questions that allow students to describe how they feel generally about their living conditions. Questions might include, asking about activities they undertake with their residential carer, food, family routines, people in the home, bedroom and facilities, any issues arising out of their living situation.

Schools should have a documented process in place to follow up from student interviews if necessary. Problems discovered during an interview should be referred to the appropriate person. Serious concerns should be followed up immediately.

Appropriate supervision

The laws of New Zealand relating to the supervision of minors also applies to international students. Students under the age of 14 should not be left in the home alone at any time.

Residential caregivers should notify the school if they will be away overnight if the international student will not accompany them. Alternative arrangements should be made.

Students 18 years and over

Many schools require international students who are 18 years of age or over to agree to terms of their enrolment that are consistent with those under 18 years. In this case, students agree to abide by all school policies and procedures. For international students 18 years and over enrolled in schools, this expectation should be clearly communicated prior to signing a student contract.



Homestay Administration Fees



The fees cover the costs of the student's care. The fee that parents pay the school includes a commission to the school which covers some of the school's Homestay related costs.

Payments:

The school will pay the homestay automatically two weeks in advance. Payment will go into the appointed bank account each fortnight on a Wednesday evening. The payment will be received in the bank account on the following day.

Should your student arrive midway through a pay period, your account will be credited the following payday with the amount owed from the date your student arrived.

Under no circumstances are any alternative arrangements to be made with natural families or agents.

Vacating the Homestay

- For those students re-enrolling and returning to UHC in the new calendar year, and who would like to return to their current homestay, they need to establish whether you are happy to continue hosting them for a further period of time.
- Once the host family agrees, the student can pack all their belongings to take with them, or with your permission store things at your place or they may be able to store things at school. The homestay fee will be payable again on their return.

Homestay payments when students are away on trips.

Homestay fees are intended to cover the costs of hosting your student, such as food, electricity, washing, petrol etc. These payments are not intended as an income source. If students are away on trips **for more than five nights**, there would be no homestay payments made for the time that they are away. A retainer fee is paid for the first 5 nights that they are out of the home to acknowledge extra costs or inconveniences such as airport runs and storing belongings.



APPENDIX:

Cultural awareness

SOME COMMON PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS:

Our student arrived yesterday. We were told his English was quite good, but s/he cannot say anything.

S/he may be in culture shock and overwhelmed. When s/he relaxes a little, the English s/he knows will emerge.

Our student won't look me in the eye. S/he must be so shy.

Not necessarily. The student may be showing respect. In some cultures, making eye contact with an elder, especially when being told off, is impolite.

Our student arrived three days ago but has not used the shower.

Have you shown her/him how your shower works? Western showers are very different to bathing facilities in countries such as Japan. The student may be too shy to ask.

Our student is relaxed with me but seems tense when my husband is around. I don't think the student likes him.

In some Asian countries it is uncommon for the father to spend a lot of time at home, be home for meals etc. Perhaps your student needs time to adjust to a man being present.

Our student will do anything my husband asks but is rather arrogant towards my daughter and me. I think s/he is rude.

In some cultures, males hold a higher status. Mothers wait on males at the table and father holds the authority. The student is acting in an acceptable way in their own culture and may not realise this appears rude. Try to explain that in NZ everyone is equal.

Our student never bothers to help around the house. How lazy.

Have you explained that you would like the student to do this? Live-in home help is not uncommon in many countries and perhaps the student has never had to do chores at home. Explain that in NZ everyone helps out!

We took our student to Kaitoke Regional Park. S/he slept all the way and was disappointed there was no shopping centre. That's the last time we're taking her/him out!

This does seem ungrateful but not all teenagers share a love for the outdoors – not even NZ teenagers! Is it possible to ask her/him what s/he would like to do next time?

Our student doesn't show much emotion. I wish we knew what s/he is thinking.

In some cultures, outward displays of happiness, anger and upset are not encouraged. In western cultures, emotions are often displayed openly. Your student is probably feeling emotions strongly, but bottling things up internally. Time and getting to know each other better may help.

Our student always agrees to do things even when I'm sure s/he would rather not. The student often says 'maybe' instead of a definite 'yes' or 'no'.

Many students will have difficulty saying no because they don't want to appear rude or ungrateful. Reassure them that it is okay to decline an offer.

Our student has been here for six weeks and is suddenly really homesick.

This can be a danger time, after the initial excitement has worn off. Winter, mid-year, can also be a down time. Encourage them to talk, explain that it is normal to feel homesick. Be understanding and try to keep the student busy. Let the school know if you have any concerns.

Our student told her/his teacher that s/he is cold at night but did not tell me. The teacher rang me and now I feel embarrassed.

Don't be. Some students will keep small problems to themselves as they don't want to be a "nuisance" or cause a possible upset in their homestay. They may tell another person instead. Keep encouraging them to be open about any problems.

Our student uses the heater all day and night, and always spends too long in the shower.

Students should be made aware that they should only have their heaters on while they are in their rooms, and that they must limit the time they spend in the shower. If there are concerns, explain to the student that electricity is expensive in New Zealand and that if they have a long shower, there may be no hot water for other people.

We wish that our student would spend more time with the family in the evenings and less time in her/his room.

This is a common problem, especially at the beginning. Most students will need some time alone – it is exhausting getting used to a new culture and a huge effort trying to speak English all the time, especially after a day at school. There should be a balance though. This can be a problem if the student is homesick.

If, after settling in, the student is spending all of her/his time in her/his room on the computer, you may need to speak to the school. If they are neglecting schoolwork and/or coming to school sleepy, the computer may need to be taken away until time limits are agreed upon.

Our student often goes to bed very late and then cannot get up in the morning.

Many students from Asia study or socialise until midnight. Going to bed at 10.00pm seems very strange to many. Computer use may also be a problem. Explain your need to get up early for work etc and that the house needs to be quiet so that others can sleep.

Our student has been here for several months. S/he made good progress at the start but now doesn't seem to be improving.

Learning a new language is a complicated business and doesn't occur in a steady even progression. Students often make a lot of progress initially as they learn a lot of vocabulary, and then seem to plateau. Another jump in progress will occur.

At times my student appears rude and speaks too 'informally' with older adults. The student is also starting to use some swear words.

Understanding levels of formality in English is really difficult, if the language is not your first language. Many students will copy the language of those around them. They may use slang/swear words without having any idea that they are inappropriate. This can result in some quite funny situations! It is important the student is told. If you think it is intentional, don't accept it.

Our student is not doing much study at home. S/he often says s/he doesn't have homework. S/he is spending more time with friends in town on weeknights.

It is impossible to have no homework. Even if no assignments are due, there is always revision of work, reading an English book, making lists of new vocabulary and working on self-study for grammar. If your student wants to succeed they must have a balance between study and social life. You need to talk about this together and decide on a rule. Contact the school and express your concerns.

Our student has trouble telling the truth.

This is frustrating and damaging to relationships. Confront the student and explain the importance of honesty. Contact the school to make them aware of the problem. Some students will avoid open conflict at all costs and this includes telling you what they know you want to hear instead of the truth.

We have just discovered that our student has been truanting school.

Good attendance is vital. This is made very clear to students. When a student is absent please make a telephone call to the school in the morning or email absences@upperhutt.school.nz . If the student is sick for more than 2 days they may be required to provide a medical certificate. The school and the homestay need to work together to solve any attendance problems. Students will receive the normal school punishment for truancy. If the problem is ongoing they will be put on an attendance report.

Our student seems bored in the weekends and can't seem to organise her/his free time.

This can be a common problem. Some students have every minute of the day organised for them at home, with long hours at school, extra study classes and music lessons etc. For many, the day here is quite short and the concept of free unstructured time is new. Many students need help to be made aware of activities available and help to join sports clubs etc. Information is given at school and students are constantly encouraged to join extra-curricular activities. Students from big cities often find it very quiet here.

Our student's parents are coming to NZ and they expect to stay with us.

This is your decision, but you are under no obligation to host family or friends. It can put pressure on the homestay family. We do, however, suggest having a meal together.





HOLIDAY TRAVEL PLANS HOST FAMILY

Situations arise during the year where either the Host Family makes plans to go away, either with or without their international student. In compliance with the Homestay Provider Agreement, the International department is responsible for providing alternative homestay accommodation during the period that the Host Family is away without their student.

Whether your student will be with you or not, please complete the form below and return it to the International department as soon as possible and once an alternative host family is located we will return this to you with their details.

Thank you.

.....

Student Name: _____

Host Family Name: _____

Dates you will be away: From: _____ to: _____

Will your student be going with you: Yes / No (please circle)?

Contact details where you will be: _____

Contact Number: _____

Signed Host Parent: _____

Signed Student: _____



HOLIDAY TRAVEL PLANS STUDENT

Situations arise during the year where the student requests to go away on holiday without their host family. In compliance with the Code of Practice, the International department is responsible for obtaining approval from both their host family and their parents overseas.

Please complete the form below and return it to the International department as soon as possible.

Thank you.

.....

Student Name: _____

Host Family Name: _____

Dates student will be away: From: _____ to: _____

Who are you travelling with? _____

Where are you going? _____

Contact details where you will be staying, including addresses and phone numbers:

Contact Number: _____

Signed Host Parent: _____

Signed Student: _____



Thank you for making yourselves available to host Upper Hutt College international students.
We appreciate your commitment.

We hope it will be an interesting, stimulating and enjoyable experience.



Amanda Sharkey
International Homestay Coordinator
UPPER HUTT COLLEGE
Moonshine Road
Upper Hutt
New Zealand
sharkeya@upperhutt.school.nz

Email: international@upperhutt.school.nz

School Phone: 527 8749

Janetta Van Maren
International Director
Deputy Principal

School Phone: 527 8749

International Emergency Mobile: 027 434 8864

Please note this phone is not to be used for every day queries regarding your student.
Please email or contact the International staff at the college during office hours for general issues.

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