

LORD SELKIRK SCHOOL DIVISION

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM

**HOMESTAY
FAMILY
GUIDE**

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Welcome to the Lord Selkirk School Division's International Student Program!

This guidebook has been created to explain our Homestay Program and outline the rules and expectations the International Student Program has for its homestay families.

The rules and expectations outlined in this book do not cover all situations. It should, however, give you information to help you and your student navigate this experience. While some rules are very important to follow, others call for judgement on the part of the International Student and their Homestay family.

Communication is key to developing a relationship and understanding of expectations. This process will take time and patience as students and families build trust.

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HOMESTAY FAMILY GUIDE

The purpose of the homestay program is to facilitate cross-cultural exchange while ensuring and that students experience what it is like to be a member of a Canadian household.

Homestay families must offer a safe, comfortable, and friendly environment in exchange for a monthly honorarium.

OFFERING A WELCOMING, FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

- Treat students with kindness and tolerance.
- Respect their rights, privacy, and culture, including religious and political beliefs.
- Treat your student as part of the family and give them the opportunity to share in family life.
- Encourage students to feel at home and view themselves as a member of the family rather than paying guests.
- Share the common living areas of the house with students.
- Spend sufficient time with students in order to develop positive relationships.
- Include students in regular family activities and cover the cost where appropriate, such as meals in a restaurant or a going to a movie. Families may invite students to religious activities and meetings, but they should also honour their right to decline an invitation without fear of being treated differently as a result.
- Acknowledge the uniqueness of each student and their varying abilities, especially in relation to their age. Avoid making comparisons between past or present students.
- Provide a stable family environment.

CULTURAL RESPECT AND SHARING

- Allow students to continue cultural practices without criticism.
- Show sincere interest and encourage your student to share their culture.
- Explain Canadian culture in an open way but avoid suggesting that Canadian cultural practices are better than those to which your student is accustomed.
- Do not force religious beliefs upon your student.
- Be accommodating of students' religious requirements.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY!

- Maintain daily communication with your student and encourage them to learn more about Canadian culture, lifestyle, activities and family life.
- Be patient and remember that the language and culture is NEW to your student. It can be easy for them to avoid saying or doing something that might be misunderstood or may cause offence.
- It is important to respect your students privacy and allow them space to be alone. It is also important to make sure they don't feel isolated.

NOTE: Most issues come from miscommunication and language gaps. Politely discuss these problems in order to achieve a mutual understanding.

PROMOTING STUDENT WELL-BEING AND SUCCESS

- Provide a safe environment which will offer students positive experiences while living as a member of a Canadian family.
- Assist, support and nurture where needed or requested.
- Set clear, reasonable, age-appropriate rules and ensure they are clearly understood. Provide rules in writing where possible.
- Be sensitive to the physical and emotional well-being of students. Some may be suffering from home sickness, be unwell or having difficulty communicating their concerns.
- Support and assist students in adapting to the school environment and encourage their participation.

INSURANCE, HEALTH & SAFETY

- Homestay families should always alert ISP staff if their student is ill.
- In the event of a medical emergency, seek medical attention immediately and notify ISP staff who will contact the parents or emergency contact as required.
- Homes must be fitted with working smoke alarms and fire extinguishers, and students must be able to exit the house from their room in case of an emergency.
- Ensure household insurance covers accidental damage to the property.
- Students should not be required by their homestay family to vacate their room at any point during the homestay period, unless in an emergency situation.

SUPERVISION

- It's important to know the general whereabouts of your student at all times.
- Your student should never be left alone overnight without adult supervision.
- Set reasonable curfews for students.

CUSTODIAN OR IN LOCO PARENTIS

International Students are required to have a Custodian who acts 'In Loco Parentis' while in Canada. The Director of the ISP acts as your students' Custodian.

The Custodian has declared in the presence of a lawyer, that they will:

- Assume responsibility for making medical and personal care decisions for the affairs of an International Student during their period of study in LSSD.
- Be the adult contacted in the event of any emergency or problem regarding the International Student during their period of study in LSSD.
- Contact the parents of the International Student in a medical or legal emergency or other problem that concerns their son/daughter during their period of study in LSSD.

The Custodians' responsibilities end when the International student's program is completed.

WHO SIGNS WHAT?

HOMESTAY

- Act on behalf of biological parents or custodian in emergency situations until ISP Custodian/staff is contacted.
- Homestay families should NOT sign any contracts (bank, cell phones) for the student.

CUSTODIAN

- School related issues: the Custodian will inform biological parents of any issues.
- Health emergency and hospital care: the Custodian will inform the biological parents of health emergencies and issues.

BIOLOGICAL PARENTS:

- Permission for high-risk activities.
- Permission to Travel documents (with HS Family outside of MB).
- Any document requiring financial responsibility.

HOMESTAY FEE

- The International Student is required to pay a monthly fee to Lord Selkirk School Division. These fees will be issued on a monthly basis to the HS Family via direct deposit from LSSD.
- **All homestay fees will be paid at the end of the month.**
- If the student enters or leaves mid-month, a daily rate will be charged.
- Homestay fees are not negotiable between the International Student and the HS Family.
- If a student chooses to travel to their home country, they are still required to pay
- If you require respite, your daily rate will go to the family who hosts your student
- Homestay fees do NOT cover extra-curricular school fees

HOMESTAY FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

- Provide reasonable transportation (not including daily transportation to and from school).
- Provide a clean and tidy home.
- Provide a private bedroom (single accommodation only).
- Offer healthy food.
- Have laundry facilities.
- Have working fire extinguishers and smoke detectors.
- Allow student full use of common rooms and living area.
- Provide access to the television and internet.
- Provide student with their own key (and alarm code if required).
- Offer three meals a day (or the food to prepare them) as well as appropriate snacks.
- Be open to students' food preferences and eating times.

THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' ROLE IN THE FAMILY

- The Homestay Family Program aims to integrate the student as a regular family member. Students should not expect to be treated as a guest.
- Students will be expected to complete household chores (ie. keep their room clean, meal preparation, their laundry, etc.)
- Students may also babysit on occasion (if they agree). This offers an opportunity for growth and learning. Younger children in the home may bond easier and it may result in a greater opportunity for speaking English.

ARRIVAL AND ORIENTATION

- A member of the HS Family is expected to welcome their student at the airport.
- You should be available to take your student for their departure. ISP Staff will NOT be going to the airport for departures. This is your time to say good-bye.
- Introduce students to all members of the HS family (including pets!).
- Give a tour of the home.
- Explain how the household works (ie. rules, meal times, internet and television instructions, curfews, household tasks, etc.). Writing rules down may be helpful.
- Provide information on safety and security such as alarm codes, fire or medical emergencies.
- Provide your student with a list of all contact information for the members of the family.
- Instructions may be required for bathroom use, such as a shower schedule, length of time in the bathroom or what can and cannot be flushed.
- Share a family calendar.

HEALTH CARE

- Medical insurance coverage is mandatory for all International Students. Each student will have an insurance policy through Guard Me which is arranged by ISP staff.
- All of the students will receive a wallet-sized ID card which they will need to see the Program Doctor (Dr. Lindenschmidt), QuickCare or the Selkirk Regional Health Centre. The HS Family will have a copy of their claim form which will also need to go with the student to their visit. Claim forms and policy numbers will also be sent to the clinics.
- The International Student may be billed directly for any medical service received. Any cost incurred is the student's responsibility. Receipts and claim forms must be filed for any reimbursement.
- Always use the student's local address in Manitoba on any forms.
- If you have any questions, please contact ISP staff.

ILLNESS OR ACCIDENT

- HS Parents do not need authorization to take your student to visit a Doctor, clinic or hospital for a minor medical problem, but please let us know what's going on!
- Please notify ISP staff immediately of any hospitalization or serious accident.
- If the IS is injured in a car or traffic accident, we ask that the HS Family notify ISP staff immediately and neither the HS Family or IS sign any form discharging the parties of responsibility and forward names of the people involved to ISP staff.

CHANGING FAMILIES AND CONFLICTS

If the HS Family and International Student have issues/concerns, they should speak to ISP staff. Should the solution require a change in Homestay, both parties must realize that this could take time. Be sensitive to everyone's feelings.

Program personnel have the right to move a student from their Homestay placement at any time.

Homestay Families and International Students should not discuss issues/concerns or complain to other students or families.

MANAGING GRIEVANCES AND MOVING STUDENTS

- If a concern or issues arises with a student, attempt to discuss the matter directly and diplomatically. If the issue remains unresolved, contact ISP staff
- Should the HS family have a change in personal circumstances, ISP staff will move the student to a new HS family as quickly as possibly.
- The HS Family can request a student be moved. An agreement must be reached between all three parties before action is taken.
- Should a student have a valid reason for wanting to leave the homestay and the problem cannot be resolved, ISP staff can move the student to a new placement within at least two weeks of being notified.

IMPORTANT: We never WANT to move a student. We will always try to problem solve first.

RESPIRE

While we appreciate that you and your family have opened up your home to one of our International Students, we recognize that travel opportunities and/or plans to get away for the weekend may come up.

The ISP staff ask that you provide at least two weeks' notice in order to arrange for respite. In the event there is a family accident or death, we understand that two weeks' notice is unrealistic. We promise to do our very best to accommodate any unexpected, planned or changes that life may throw your way.

It is also a good idea to think of someone you trust who could stay in your home while you're away so moving the student isn't required. This person would need to have a completed Criminal Record Check.

FAMILY VISITS

Homestay families are under no obligation to provide accommodation for visiting biological families of International students. We recommend that visiting parents arrange motel or hotel accommodations during their visit. The International Student Program holds no responsibility for any costs the homestay family may incur.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND REPORTS

- Regular school attendance is expected of all International students. Classes missed due to illness must be phoned into the school by the HS Family.
- Student report cards can be emailed to the students and also shared with the Homestay Family. ISP staff will also send copies to the biological parents.
- Homestay families are welcome to attend Parent-Teacher meetings (once per semester), however, it is not required.
- ISP staff along with school guidance counsellors are available for academic support. This also includes course selection, attendance, grades and discipline.
- Homestay families are encouraged to review the students attendance and grades in PowerSchool if they wish. You will be provided with their log-in information. If you need help creating an account, please let ISP staff know.

MAKING SOCIAL PLANS & CURFEWS

While academic study, growth and development are the principal goals of the ISP, group interaction and socializing are also important elements. Much of this time will be with members of the HS family, although activities with social friends are also important.

Your student should provide detailed information as to where they are going, how they can be reached and when they will return. Communication is critical to prevent confusion and misunderstanding.

Students should ask for permission before going out. You, as the homestay family can enforce limits on the amount of time your student is socializing. It is important that you help your student balance social and academic life.

You are welcome and encouraged to give your student a curfew, if that is what works best in your household. We will support your decision.

SLEEPOVERS

Sleeping over at a Canadian friend's house is NOT allowed. This rule is in place to protect the student as we work hard with our homestay families outlining the expectations and rules of the program. We also view the home to ensure it is safe for the student.

If your student wants to invite a Canadian friend to stay at your house, that is allowed with your permission.

CELL PHONES & INTERNET

- Your student will likely arrive with a cell phone. We have phone cards available for the student upon their arrival so they can sign up for a Canadian number and plan. This will be strongly encouraged.
- Please explain any data limits that you may have with your internet provider. Should you start exceeding your limit, feel free to put restrictions on the amount of use and/or time they can access the internet.

DRINKING, DRUGS, SMOKING & VAPING

As you are well aware, the legal age for drinking, smoking and vaping is 18. Smoking marijuana is 19 years of age. Regardless of the age of your student, they are NOT allowed to participate.

If your student wants to attend a party, please enforce these rules and expectations. Failure to comply can result in your student being sent home.

SPENDING MONEY

- We discourage International students from carrying around large amounts of money.
 - If your student wants to open up a bank account, we can assist you on how to do that.
- IMPORTANT:** We do not recommend homestay parents sign for students to open an account.
- We recommend that students do not lend or borrow money to their homestay family or other students
 - International students are responsible for paying for their own clothing, cosmetics and other personal items including sports activities, school clothing, travel, or postage.
 - Students are responsible for monitoring their own budget or they may ask you for some assistance.

CLOTHING, TATTOOS & PIERCINGS

It is the responsibility of the International Student to acquire the appropriate clothing. They may need to go shopping when they arrive. We ask that families support them and help them get what they need to stay warm and safe.

While at school, the students will be expected to be respectful and dress appropriately. International Students are **NOT** allowed to get a tattoo or a piercing while they are participating in the program.

PART-TIME WORK

International Students are not allowed to get a job while they are with the program. This is stated on their study permit.

International Students may accept an honorarium for baby-sitting, mowing the lawn or shoveling snow (examples only).

RELIGION

Homestay families and International Students must show mutual respect for each other's beliefs. International Students have the right to practice their own religion and Homestay Families should facilitate attending religious services if this is important to your student.

International Students may also accompany their Homestay Families to religious services and activities, if they wish. However, Homestay Families do not have the right to insist that students attend religious services or activities with them.

DRIVER'S LICENSES AND DRIVING

- International students are **NOT** allowed to drive motorized vehicles.
- They can be passengers for snowmobiles and quads/ATV's as long as they wear a helmet and the driver is experienced.
- International Students CANNOT take Driver's Education or any other forms of driver-training

HIGH-RISK ACTIVITIES

Our number one priority for our International Students is safety.

Students should always wear a helmet if skating, snowmobiling or skiing.

Students should always wear a life jacket on a boat.

If you are unsure if a student should participate in a certain activity, please contact ISP staff.

TRAVEL

- ALL travel plans should be run by ISP staff.
- When an International Student travels with their Homestay Family, the family is responsible for providing the International Students with all meals.
- A 'Permission to Travel' form must be completed and signed by the biological parents for each trip outside of Manitoba.
- International Students may travel with an adult supervisor (21 years of age or older) who is approved by LSSD's International Student Program
- Homestay families may want to include their student in their own travel and holiday plans. Students are encouraged to participate in such travel. Any travel outside of Canada requires a 'Permission to Travel' form from the International Student's biological parents. Please speak to ISP staff for more information.
- Unapproved travel is a serious infraction and may result in expulsion from the program.
- You are not expected to take your student on your holiday if you'd prefer some family time.

GRADUATION & OTHER ISP ACTIVITIES

- Some students will be eligible to graduate. Parents and Homestay Families are welcome and encouraged to attend convocation.
- Students are responsible for covering costs (cap and gown rental, tickets, etc.).
- International students are allowed to attend Safe Grad as a graduate or a guest.
- The ISP organizes additional activities throughout the year. Your student is responsible for paying for the activities they want to participate in.
- Some of these activities are also open to Homestay Families as a way to connect and meet other families involved with the program.

We wish you a wonderful experience and thank you for opening your home and heart to our International Students!