Homestay Handbook

2013
CITIPOINTE HOMESTAY PROGRAM

Emergency Number: 0412 304 375

Homestay Coordinator:

Mrs Thia Ferero

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322 Wecker Road  
Carindale QLD 4152

Phone: 3347 5929  
0412 304 375

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Email: thiaf@brisbane.coc.edu.au

Head of International:

Dr Lillian Myers

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Absence from school: If you are absent from school, ask your homestay parent to phone the College on 3347 5907 before 9.30 am. When you return to school, ask your homestay parent to give you a note for your teacher explaining your absence.
HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR HOMESTAY STUDENTS

Welcome to Australia and your home away from home. We are so happy to have you here and are looking forward to getting to know you. Your homestay family has taken time and care to prepare for your arrival.

You are starting on a new adventure into Australian life and culture. Many things will be similar to home but many others will be different and sometimes confusing and uncomfortable at first. You will see customs and values that are different from your own. Don’t spend too much time thinking about the negative things you don’t like, but try to think of the positive.

Always be considerate and tolerant in your dealings with others. It is important that you try to be flexible and include new ways of doing things into your life. These skills of tolerance, flexibility, sensitivity to others, and dealing constructively with difficulties will make you more successful in life and in the workplace. They are a valuable part of your life education.

Some students have difficulty with culture shock and homesickness. Please talk to your homestay parents, your teachers or the Homestay Coordinator if you are feeling sad, angry or confused. We will always make time to be with you and help you.

Advance Notice
Students must ask their homestay parents well in advance if they want to have someone come to visit, or if they make plans to go out, or if they change plans. Students may not phone homestay parents at the last minute to ask if they can stay out later than agreed, or change their plans in any other way.

Arrival Day
Greet your homestay family with a smile and just be yourself. In Australia smiling is a very important way to show you are friendly. A person who doesn’t smile is seen as unfriendly or sad.
Your homestay family may be difficult to understand at first but they will get to know your English level and adjust their English over time. Don’t be afraid to say, ‘Could you say that again please?’

To be polite, you should also say ‘I’m sorry’ if you make a mistake. Don’t be afraid to use your English; it is probably better than you think. Australians admire your desire to learn English and even if you only speak a little they will be very impressed.

Your host family will introduce themselves and show you around the house. They will tell you what you can use and when you can use it. Ask any questions you might have. It isn’t rude to ask questions politely.

They will also explain the house rules to you. Every house has different rules so some will be different from those you are used to in your country. Whether you like the rules or not you must respect your homestay family and obey these rules without complaining. If you have a problem with the homestay rules, talk to the Homestay Coordinator.

Bathrooms
Australians usually take short showers once a day. Taking baths is not usual. The reason for this is that there is a drought in Australia and we are running low on water, so everyone tries to help in many ways including having short showers. Also, Australians have hot water systems that tend to run out of hot water if showers run for a long time. Five to ten minutes is enough time for a shower. You wouldn’t want to leave the rest of the family with cold showers!

Australian bathrooms are not built for splashing water. Australians wash and keep the water inside the bath or shower and never splash. You will be given a small towel called a ‘face washer’ for wiping your face clean and a larger towel to dry yourself. Make sure you leave the bathroom dry. Hang your wet towel to dry on the rail in the bathroom as Australians use the same towel for up to 5 days.

Girls who use sanitary pads and tampons put them in a paper bag and place them in a small rubbish bin in the bathroom. They should never be flushed down the toilet, as the toilet will block and it would be very embarrassing.
Boys are expected to lift the toilet seat when going to the toilet. They then should put the seat back down when they have finished. They should never wet the toilet seat or the floor.

**Bedrooms**
In Australia bedrooms are very private. You should never enter another person’s bedroom without knocking first and waiting to be invited in. Never open private desks or draws of bedroom cupboards that belong to others. Your room will also be your private space and members of the family should knock and wait before they come into your room. Other children in the family should respect the student’s privacy and should ask permission before entering the student’s room or touching any of the student’s belongings.

In Australia you should not entertain friends in your room with the door closed.

Wet clothes should not be dried in your room. Ask your homestay mother what to do with them. Australians usually dry wet clothes outside or in a clothes dryer. Food should not be kept or eaten in your room as it attracts mice and insects.

**Bedtime**
Homestay students must go to bed and stay in bed at the time the host parents decide. If they have difficulty getting off to sleep, reading in bed may help.

**Chores around the house**
It is reasonable to expect the homestay student to make his/her bed each morning, keep his/her room tidy, clean up after himself/herself (e.g. when making a snack in the kitchen), and help another family member to set the table or clean up after dinner. Homestay students are not required to do other housework i.e. cooking or gardening.

**Church**
It is expected that the homestay family will take the student with them to church every week and will encourage attendance at Youth and other church activities. This is a great opportunity for students to make new friends and to experience the fellowship, joy and teaching of the House of God. Listening to a sermon is excellent listening practice so students should not leave the service because it’s too hard to understand. Students should not spend part of the service outside or in the church foyer.

**City**
On advice from the Queensland Police Force, homestay students are not permitted to go to the city for recreation. They should under no circumstances be permitted to go to the city alone, day or night. A homestay parent should only give permission for a student to go into the city if the student is accompanied by a responsible older person, preferably an adult.

**Dining out**
If the family dines out at any time, the cost of the meal should be met by the homestay family. The student’s homestay fee covers three meals each day.

**Eating**
You will notice that Australians eat with their mouths closed and chew their food quietly. Even when drinking they try not to make a noise. All eating and drinking noises are considered impolite. Also, talking with food in your mouth is considered impolite.

Meal times are a time for lots of family conversation. The family usually eats together in the evening so please try hard to talk at evening meal times. It’s a great opportunity to practise your English and learn about Australian culture and your host family. Remember also that complimenting the cook or praising the food you liked is considered very good manners in Australia and will be appreciated by your host family.

There are many other customs for politeness at meal times and at other times. Your homestay parents will teach you about these because in every country the politeness rules are different. In Australia people will make decisions about what kind of person you are by how well you follow the customs for politeness. It is very important that you learn these things, so please ask your host family to teach you.
Equality
Australian law holds men and women as equal. Husbands treat their wives as leaders together with themselves in the family. For this reason it is very important that you give equal respect to your homestay mother and father.

Most mothers work outside the home and all the family members help with the household chores. No member of the family is regarded as more important than another. This means that older children in the family in Australia are not more important than younger children. Older children do not have the right to give orders to younger children in an unkind manner.

You will be included in family outings, activities, conversations and chores. All members of the family, male and female, are responsible for making their beds, keeping their rooms clean and for light tasks such as setting the table and washing the dishes. You will be expected to do these things to help with the running of the home.

Good manners
You should say ‘Please’ whenever you ask anyone for anything, even in a supermarket or at the bank. After someone has done something for you like cooked a meal, washed clothes or assisted you in the library, you should say ‘Thank you’. To forget to do so is considered very rude.

- In Australia it is considered good manners to blow your nose, bad manners to sniff.
- Always answer when someone speaks to you. It is considered bad manners not to answer.
- Give eye contact to the person who is speaking to you.
- Do not mumble. Speak clearly.
- Even if an adult is speaking to you informally, be very polite.
- Knock and ask to be invited before entering a room.
- Keep you mouth closed when eating.
- Smile when talking to people.
- Never spit in public. If you need to spit go to the bathroom.
- If someone is carrying a heavy load, offer to help them.
- If there are no seats left on a bus or train, offer your seat to elderly person or a pregnant woman who is standing.

Hair Style
The College Homework Diary is very clear about students’ hairstyles:

Girls: tidy, neat, above the collar and off the face; long hair to be tied back and conservative in colour
Boys: tidy, neat, above the collar and off the face; conservative in cut and colour

Boys should have a College haircut (short back and sides as described above) before the beginning of each term. Girls need to maintain an appropriate hairstyle.

Holidays
Students are not permitted to miss school days when they go home for the holidays. The College asks that homestay parents supervise the booking of flights home to ensure that the student is in class on the first and last day of each term. Students should not travel overnight so that they arrive back in Australia on the first day of term as this makes them too tired to engage in class activities. When going home for holidays, travel to and from the airport is at the student’s expense.

If the student wishes to travel to any destination other than home during holidays, parents must apply to the College in writing, specifying welfare, travel and accommodation arrangements. Permission for such travel will not be granted unless the College is satisfied with these arrangements.

Homestay students are not permitted to attend Schoolies Week celebrations. At the end of Year 12, students should return to their home country promptly.
Homestay not hotel
Your homestay family has decided to take an international student into their home because they look forward to the experience and enjoyment of getting to know you and your culture. The money you pay for homestay is much less than you would pay for full service in a hotel. It is important that you ask politely if you would like someone in the family to do something for you. e.g. Could you help me, please? or Would you be able to...? or May I please . . .? You should always say Please and Thank you. You should never speak to them the way you speak to someone serving you in a hotel.

It is also important to fit in with the house rules, show respect to mother and father and all the children in the family, and ask them in advance if you want to go out or do something special. This will build good and warm relationships between you and your host family.

Internet
Students should use their computer in a family area or study and not their bedroom.

Students should be responsible for their own internet costs and usage. They will be required to purchase a pre-paid wireless internet package which can be purchased upon arrival. An internet USB stick is included in the package by the internet provider and the student can recharge the USB stick according to their usage.

Meals
Homestay parents will prepare substantial meals each day for the student, with a packed morning tea, lunch and drink for school days.

Mobile phones
Every student in homestay should have a mobile phone. Make sure you give your phone number to your Homestay parents and the Homestay Coordinator. Store your homestay phone numbers and the Homestay Emergency Number (0412 304 375) in your phone.

Your mobile phone should always be switched on when you are not at home and on the weekend to enable your homestay parents to contact you. All students are required to have an Australian mobile number.

Students should not be speaking on their mobile phones after the family go to bed at night.

Mobile phones at school
Students should keep mobile phones switched off and in their bags while at school. Students should have their mobile phones switched on at all other times.

Permission forms for camps, tutoring, medical attention etc
Homestay students should not ask their homestay family to sign forms giving permission for money to be added to parents’ school accounts. Only the actual parents can authorise the payment of any fees or the administration of any medical attention.

Any permission forms of this nature need to be directed to the Homestay Coordinator.

Permission to work
The Headmaster has set a rule for student visa holders enrolled at the College that they cannot work at all during term time, but can work during holiday periods. Students granted student visas after 26 April 2008 automatically receive permission to work with their visa grant if they are over 14 years and 9 months of age. Students granted student visas before 26 April 2008 need to apply for permission to work, but they will only be granted permission if they are over 14 years and 9 months of age:

http://www.immi.gov.au/students/students/working_while_studying/how-to-apply.htm

Pornography
Access to pornography, on the internet or in any other medium, is unacceptable and may result in your expulsion from the Homestay Program and consequently, the College. Accessing pornography in your homestay, at the College or in any other place is not permitted.
Respect and obedience
Homestay students must respect and obey the homestay family rules. They must always speak respectfully to the host mother, the host father and the host children. They should be courteous and respectful at all times and must obey homestay parents’ instructions and requests.

Safety
If you walk to or from school:
- You must walk in groups of at least two to three;
- Walk near the fence line rather than street kerb;
- Do not talk to anyone you don't know under any circumstances even if they ask for directions, help to find a dog, general help etc;
- If approached by a stranger, scream loudly, run to the nearest house and call your homestay parents immediately or the College emergency number: 0412 304 375.

Sleepovers
As part of our Risk Management Strategy (a legal requirement), the College discourages sleepovers. Homestay parents must not give permission for the student to sleepover at another location without the prior permission of the College Director.

Telephone access
Students should use their own mobile phone for all private calls. The home phone should only be used when receiving calls from the student's family

Transport costs
The College offers a complimentary pick-up service from the airport when a new student arrives to begin their study. You are responsible to pay for all subsequent travel to and from the airport.

Travelling in other students' cars
Homestay students must not travel in a car driven by another student without the written permission of the College.

Washing and ironing
The homestay provider is responsible to wash and iron the student's clothes, unless the student asks to do this themselves.

HOMESTAY FEES
The homestay fee is A$12,960 per school year. The minimum homestay payment is one semester in advance. Payment to the College of A$6,480 per semester must be kept in advance.

For homestay purposes: One school year = 11 months

Homestay fees must be paid to the College. Students can pay in person at the Business Office, or payment can be made by parents by telegraphic transfer as follows:

BANK: Westpac
BRANCH: Garden City
NAME: Citipointe Christian College International
BSB: 034093
ACCOUNT NUMBER: 187497

Please ensure that any deposit of funds includes the student's name or ID number as a reference.

Summer holiday homestay: For students wishing to stay in their homestay over the long summer holidays, an additional payment of A$960 needs to be paid to the College before 1 December.

Please note carefully: If you are temporarily away on overnight camps or short holidays (e.g. Easter, mid-semester or spring vacation), the homestay fee will not be affected. This means that your homestay family will not reimburse you for short temporary absences.
HOMESTAY STUDENT CONTRACT

The College has a number of rules to keep students safe in Australia and to assist in building good relationships with the homestay family. These rules need to be read carefully and obeyed:

- You must respect and obey the homestay family rules. You must always speak respectfully to the homestay mother, the homestay father and the homestay children. You should be courteous and respectful at all times and must obey homestay parents’ instructions and requests.

- You should make your bed each morning and keep your bedroom tidy and clean. You should ask your host parents for permission if you want to hang any posters. You should not take any food or drink into the bedroom.

- You should go to bed at the time the family says.

- You should not speak on your mobile phone after the family goes to bed each night.

- You should talk to the family and practise your English as much as possible. You should not spend a lot of time in your room alone, as this can encourage homesickness and loneliness.

- You are expected to do all your homework each night and politely ask for help from your homestay parents when needed. You are expected to study hard and make good progress at school.

- You should be present at family meal times unless you have made arrangements with your host parents.

- You must take short showers to help save water. You should ask your homestay parents the best times for you to use the bathroom.

- You should help with general household chores such as setting the table, clearing the table and washing dishes.

- You should use your own mobile phone for all private calls. The home phone should only be used when receiving calls from your family.

- You should be responsible for your own internet cost and usage and will be required to purchase a Pre-paid Wireless Internet package. If you do not have your own computer you should ask the homestay family if you may use the family computer.

- You must ask permission well in advance from your homestay parents before going out and inviting friends to visit. You must let your homestay parents know where you are going, who you are with and when you will be home. You must not travel on public transport after dark.

- You must not change your plans at the last minute – you must be home at the time previously arranged with your homestay parents.

- You should not go into the City unless accompanied by a responsible adult with the approval of your homestay family.

- You must give your mobile phone number to your homestay parents and the Homestay Coordinator. Mobile phones should be switched on at all times, except when you are at school.

- You should join in with family activities and family outings and attend church every Sunday with your homestay family. This will help reduce homesickness and help you get to know Australian culture. It will also help you develop your English skills. When at church, you must stay in the meeting with the homestay family and not go outside or to the foyer.

- You must not drive a car while you are enrolled as a student at Citipointe Christian College International or Citipointe Christian College.

- You must not travel in a car when another student is driving without written permission of the College.

- You must not have body piercing, tattooing or hair colouring done while in Australia.

- You must not smoke, drink alcohol, take drugs, gamble or access pornography in any form.
• You must pay for all personal, medical, dental and entertainment expenses (e.g. anywhere that has an admission fee).
• You should inform the Homestay Coordinator of your travel arrangements before the end of each term. All students must be at school on the first and last day of each term.
• You should talk to the Homestay Coordinator if you have any problems you cannot resolve easily with the host family.

I have read the homestay rules carefully and I promise to obey them.

Signed: .................................................................

Print Name: .............................................................. Date: .........................

STUDENT PROTECTION

Every student at the College has the right to feel safe and free from harm.

We expect you to respect your teachers, homestay parents and other students and we expect that you will receive the same respect in return.

You should never allow yourself to feel unsafe without reporting it to someone you trust.

Who should I tell if I am not feeling safe at school or at home?
There are delegated Student Protection Contact Officers. However, you may report to a teacher, the Homestay Coordinator or the Director. If you do not feel like talking to a member of staff, you may like to write him or her a letter.

What will happen if I report what is happening to a member of staff?
If the concern is worrying you but not causing you immediate harm, then the member of staff will discuss with you ways to solve your problem.

If the concern is serious and the member of staff believes there is inappropriate behaviour or you are being harmed or in danger of being harmed, he or she will report it to the Contact Officer or Headmaster.

What if I don’t want the member of staff to tell the Headmaster?
The member of staff will try to keep your concerns confidential as much as possible. However, if the member of staff is aware or reasonably suspects inappropriate behaviour or harm being caused to a student of the College, then College Policy and the law says that the matter must be reported to the Headmaster and it may have to be reported to the Police. If the staff member has no choice about reporting what you have told them to someone else, he or she will explain to you exactly what will happen next.

What about confidentiality?
Your report will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Headmaster and those directly involved. Each person who has access to information regarding suspected or disclosed harm has an obligation to observe appropriate confidentiality.

Remember the most important thing is that you feel safe and free from harm. You need to tell someone if you are being harmed or afraid that you will be harmed.