



Homestay Manual



VICTORIA



Homestay Parent Handbook

Section 1: Quick Information

1.1	Structure and Contact Info	Pg. 2
1.2	VIE Directory	Pg. 3

Section 2: Being a Homestay Parent

2.1	Welcome, Expectations, Handbook Purpose, and Program History	Pg. 4
2.2	What is a Host Family	Pg. 6
2.2a	Custodianship Responsibilities	Pg. 7
2.3	Getting ready to be a Host Family	Pg. 8
2.4	Helpful Ideas for the Host Family	Pg. 10
2.5	Meeting your Student	Pg. 11

Section 3: Student Support, Behavior, and Discipline

3.1	Language and Student Socialization	Pg. 17
3.2	What to do if a Student Misbehaves	Pg. 20
3.2a	Curfew	Pg. 22
3.3	Homestay Department Contact and Schedule	Pg. 23
3.4	Support from the School	Pg. 25
3.5	Medical Attention	Pg. 27
3.6	VIE Travel Regulation	Pg. 28
3.7	Dealing with Damages	Pg. 30

Section 4: Travel and Advice

4.2	Advice to Students in Homestay	Pg. 31
4.3	Advice for Student Success in School	Pg. 34
4.4	In-Home Contract	Pg. 35
4.5	Departing Student Checklist	Pg. 36



Structure and Contact Information

Victoria Intentional Education Office

Uplands Campus
3461 Henderson Road
Victoria BC, V8P 5A8

Phone: 250.592.6871

Email:

Website:

Fax: 250.592.6327

isp@studyinvictoria.com

www.studyinvictoria.com

After-hours emergency phone: 778.676.3781

Program Director

Jeff Davis

jedavis@sd61.bc.ca

Leadership Team

Cythera Carlson

(Administration Manager)

cycarlson@sd61.bc.ca

Lukas Hahn

(Homestay)

lhahn@sd61.bc.ca

Mary Shi

(Student Support Services and Marketing)

zshi@sd61.bc.ca

Pilar Divoky

(Student Support Services and Marketing)

pdivoky@sd61.bc.ca

Reid Litster

(Student Support Services and Marketing)

rlitster@sd61.bc.ca

Robert Tucker

(Student Support Services and Marketing)

rtucker@sd61.bc.ca

Office Staff

Angela Leong

ALeong@sd61.bc.ca

Brittany Hazen

bhazen@sd61.bc.ca

Heather Clark

hclark@sd61.bc.ca

Irene Truong

itruong@sd61.bc.ca

Jo-Anne Bettauer

jbettauer@sd61.bc.ca

Sandra Green

sagreen@sd61.bc.ca

Homestay Department

Jenn Stark **(Reynolds and Short Term Groups)**

jestark@sd61.bc.ca

Karen Zetaruk **(Esquimalt, Weekend On-Call)**

kzetaruk@sd61.bc.ca

Lynne Yarmoshuk **(Oak Bay and Camp Victoria)**

lyarmoshuk@sd61.bc.ca

Marnie Snobelen **(Vic High and Camp Victoria)**

msnobelen@sd61.bc.ca

Pamela Smirke **(Mt. Doug and Middle School)**

psmirke@sd61.bc.ca

Shandi Clague **(Lambrick and Short Term Groups)**

sclague@sd61.bc.ca

Shawna Abbott **(Spectrum)**

sabbott@sd61.bc.ca

***For questions regarding academics please contact the international advisor at your student's school.**

Contact information is on the next page.



Greater Victoria School Directory

Secondary Schools

Esquimalt High School – 250.382-9226 (847 Colville Road)

Lambrick Park Secondary School – 250.477.0181 (4139 Torquay Drive)

Mt. Douglas Secondary School – 250.477.6977 (3970 Gordon Head Road)

Oak Bay High School – 250.598.3361 (2151 Cranmore Road)

Reynolds Secondary School – 250.479.1696 (3963 Borden Street)

Spectrum Community School – 250.479.8271 (957 Burnside Road W.)

Victoria High School – 250.388.5456 (923 Topaz Avenue)

Middle Schools

Arbutus – 250.477.1878 (2306 Edgelow Street)

Cedar Hill – 250.477.6945 (3910 Cedar Hill Road)

Central – 250.386.3591 (1280 Fort Street)

Colquitz – 250.479.1678 (505 Dumeresq St)

Glanford – 250.479.7179 (4140 Glanford)

Gordon Head – 250.477.1855 (1671 Kenmore Road)

Lansdowne – 250.598.3336 (1765 Lansdowne Road)

Monterey – 250.598.4589 (851 Monterey Ave)

Shoreline – 250.386.8367 (2750 Shoreline Drive)

Rockheights – 250.384.7125 (1250 Highrock Ave)



Welcome, Expectations, Handbook Purpose and Program History

Welcome to Victoria International Education's Homestay Program, which is part of the Greater Victoria School District. We are pleased that you have chosen to become part of this exciting program in our district. You have been selected as a homestay family because we believe that you will be able to provide a welcoming and nurturing family environment for a student from another country. This is a very important responsibility and it is our hope that you will find this experience enriching and rewarding for all members of your family. We look forward to working with you.

Purpose of this Handbook

This handbook is provided to you as a resource to assist you in meeting our expectations as a homestay family. Our common goal must be the best possible living and learning experience for the international students while they are here. Please use the handbook as a first source of information.

Expectations for Homestay Parents

As a homestay parent, we expect you to do the following:

- Provide a safe and nurturing home environment
- Provide regular meals and snacks that are nutritious
- Ensure your student attends and is punctual for school each day
- Maintain contact with the school concerning student progress and attendance
- Monitor and support the physical and emotional well-being of your student

The Homestay Program

The Homestay Program within Victoria International Education was established in order to support the needs of international students coming to Victoria to engage in academic pursuits with the Greater Victoria School District. The goals of the program are to not only place students with host families, but to offer ongoing support to students and host families with regards to all aspects of life in Canada. The goal of the program is to help both host families and students have a rewarding experience while at the same time learning about other cultures. Currently, the Homestay Program is responsible for about two thirds of the long term students who are enrolled with VIE, as well as numerous short term students. To help the Homestay



Program with the responsibility of caring for these students, there are about 600 host families who open their homes to international students every year.

While the main goal of the Homestay Program is to place students in homes for the duration of their study period, its responsibilities do not end once a placement has been made. Ongoing support in the form of conflict resolution, problem solving, cross cultural understanding and parental support are a regular responsibility of the homestay coordinators who work within the program.

The Homestay Program takes great care to treat all students and host families as unique and to offer support that would best suit the needs of both parties. In the end it is hoped that the Homestay Program will help to create relationships between host families and students that will last a lifetime.

History of International Education in Victoria

The Greater Victoria School District has always hosted students from other countries. These students have arrived via exchange programs such as those sponsored by Rotary, sister city/school agreements, or simply adventurous young people.

The Greater Victoria School District set out to formalize services for visiting students and ensuring that the educational needs of these students were met while also ensuring that Greater Victoria taxpayers were not required to support students from other countries. In 1992 the Board of School Trustees authorized an International Student Program to bring about a better understanding of many of the cultures that comprise our “global village”.

The strong commitment of our Homestay Program families is part of the resounding success of our International Student Program. Families are essential partners of the program.

What is a Host Family

Host families are an integral part of the lives of students who stay with them. Families provide more than just room and board; they become friends and guides in a new culture.

The experience is usually enjoyable and rewarding for both students and families.

As might be expected, there is often a period of adjustment or getting used to each other, and at the beginning the student needs a lot of information from their families. For many, it is their first time away from home and the first time they make all of their own decisions. Some students do not speak English well and at first find our ways confusing. In many cases, they are hesitant to ask for clarification.

Your student will not be able to absorb everything the first day and, in fact, will not be able to understand everything you say, so you may find you need to explain things more than once. Writing a welcome letter with a few questions and answers and some rules may be helpful for the students to refer to. **Though we sometimes enjoy the humor and novelty of cultural difference, we also need to be sensitive to discomforts and difficulties.** People of different cultures present themselves in various ways. What you take as indifference, coolness, slowness, thoughtlessness, or rudeness in the student may only be a mutual misunderstanding of signals.

Host families should expect “shyness”. Some Asian students for example, are perceived to be very shy, and the outward affection we often show each other, such as hugging, is generally embarrassing to them. You should also expect homesickness, some difficulty in communicating, and the occasional bout of tears. The academic workload is also very demanding in the beginning because of the English language understanding required. You can help by being supportive of your student and comforting them.

Children in host families may find it difficult with another youth in the home and may need opportunities for sympathetic listening while they express their feelings and adjust. Take the time, once in a while, to check the perceptions of both your own children and students you are hosting.

You will find that interacting with other Host Families will be of great assistance both in giving you new ideas and in reassuring you about the pace of the development of your relationship with your students. The school will always be available to discuss progress or problems. Throughout the year there will be opportunities to meet with other host parents and share your experiences.

Custodianship Responsibility

All students at Victoria International Education in homestay are under the custodianship of the Program (custodianship is taken on by members of the Leadership Team). Host families act on behalf of the Custodian, but all major or serious incidents must be reported to the Program.

Definition of terms:

Legal Guardian: The person who has legal custody of a minor. For most children, this will be their mother and/or father. A change of Legal Guardian involves a court process and extinguishes the Legal Guardianship of the parent(s).

“Guardian”: the term commonly used when referring to the **Custodial Adult**.

Custodial Adult (Custodian): All minors (i.e. age 18 years and under) need to have a custodial adult in Canada as a condition of receiving a Study Permit (visa) from Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). For all students in the Homestay Program, the custodial adult are various members of the Leadership Team.

The custodian is the person who makes decisions concerning the student’s welfare while the student is a minor. The student is expected to be guided by the directions given by the custodian. In addition, host parents play an important role in supervising and directing student behavior on a daily basis, but they are not legally responsible for the student’s behavior.

In those cases where a student has a custodian in the community, please keep in mind that the International Student Program rules of travel, car ownership, etc. take precedence. Any questions about significant student behavior or student wellbeing should be referred to the custodian and the Program Office.

Homestay parents are expected to act on behalf of the Program with the best interest of the child and Program in mind.

Getting Ready to be a Host Family

Prepare for your Student

Write an email/letter to your student. Describe your family, pets, lifestyle and your neighborhood. Relate funny or typical family incidents. Include photos of your family, home, neighborhood, city and maps.

Write an email/letter to your student's parents. Reassure them that you are looking forward to hosting their son/daughter. Encourage them to write to you.

Be mindful of social media and adjust your privacy settings in all your social media accounts to avoid misunderstandings and preconceptions from developing.

Do some homework. Study a few words of your student's language. Purchase a dictionary (English-native language). Read up on the history and culture of your student's country of origin. Learn to pronounce your student's name correctly!

Prepare your student's room. A room of their own is essential. The room should include a desk, lamp, bed, closet and dresser. Towels and bedding are supplied by the homestay. Other niceties would be putting a welcome banner up, providing a plant, magazines/pamphlets, and perhaps a small gift or treat on the bed appropriate for the age of the student. Please remove your family photos and other pictures to allow the student to make their room their own.

Date of Arrival

Students are asked to contact the host and the Program office with arrival information.

If the Program office receives this information first, you will be contacted. If your student advises you directly of arrival details, please contact the Program office and pass along this information. Based on that advice and any other details that the office has received, you will be sent a letter, on Program letterhead, giving the student's name, birth date and country of origin and identifying you as the designated homestay family for the arriving student.

Please take this letter with you to the airport (or bus depot, or ferry terminal...) in case you need to identify yourself or verify the arrival information (date, time and carrier).



Homestay Fees

Regular Long-term Students

The homestay fee are paid monthly, whether the month has 28, 29, 30 or 31 days. The Program administers the homestay fees for students and the office will advise you if you have any questions. Homestay fees are payable monthly, in advance.

There is no storage fee for student belongings for the summer months or during other absences. No homestay fees are to be charged while a student is away from Victoria during the July-August summer break.

Homestay fees are intended to cover room, board and parental guidance. If you take your student to a restaurant, you are expected to pick up the tab for the student's meal. Similarly, if your student takes part in a school ski trip, the student would pay for the outing but the family would provide a bag lunch or lunch money for the day. The exception would be if train/plane/ferry fare is required, or if an additional hotel room is required. Holiday expenses (e.g. lift tickets, equipment rental) would be borne by the student.

Any questions or concerns about the payment of the homestay support fee should be referred to the Homestay Program immediately. In case of a dispute concerning the payment of homestay fees, the Program will have the final word.

Helpful Ideas for the Host Family

- Give the visiting student the homestay family contact information (name, home address and phone number) on a card that will fit in a wallet.
- Supply exact bus route information to and from school and to and from special events.
- Confirm schedules each day.
- Make a point of engaging the student in conversation. This will require very careful questioning and often paraphrasing in the beginning.
- Treat the student like a family member, not a guest.
- Support the student's learning and development throughout the exchange experience.
- Set reasonable household rules for the student. Be sure they understand the rules and have a chance to request changes.
- Communicate with the student and let them know when there is a problem.
- Be specific and take the time to ensure the student understands.
- Be in touch with the school to assist and to be sure that your student is being successful.

Meeting your Student

Getting Started

It will be helpful to both you and your student if you have a discussion of family rules and schedules shortly after arrival. Patience will be required in all your explanations to the students. If they seem to have difficulty understanding you, it is often valuable to write things down. The student often has a greater comprehension of written English than they do of spoken English. You may even want to make a set of labels to put on various locations and items. Having the labels up for the first month helps the student learn the English names through association. Examples would be fridge, stove, bathroom, shower, TV, computer, laundry.

When you guide the student through your home, it is a good idea to show them how to use some of the facilities. Encourage them to ask questions and try to use simple language in your explanations. Since we learn best by doing, involve the student in trying out devices such as a microwave, washing machine, etc.

Food and Eating

To a student from overseas, Canadian cooking may seem very exotic. Just as you may find raw squid a little unusual, your best barbecued bacon cheeseburger may puzzle your student. The whole idea of homestay is for the student to experience Canadian life, so don't make drastic changes to your family meals. Most students enjoy trying new food. However, you should become aware of your student's preferences.

Sometimes homesickness can be cured by a familiar bowl of noodles or a cup of tea. Also, vegetables such as cauliflower or broccoli served raw or heavier meats may cause digestive problems for Asian students in particular.

One solution to any food-related problem that may arise could be a trip to the grocery store together and a cooking lesson from your student (although not all students are used to cooking). Students are normally happy to share their culture with you in a way that would be mutually beneficial.

Teenagers like snacks – this is a universal phenomenon. Please discuss this topic with your student explaining what snacks and drinks are available, how to prepare them and when it is appropriate to have a snack. You might also wish to include the topic of “cleanup” in this discussion.



Homestay students are not just guests, but hopefully will become a part of your family for the time they are with you. Inviting them to join in a few household responsibilities will help them become involved. Shyness may come from not knowing what to do. Setting the table, helping with lunches and so on, when defined clearly by you at the beginning can become activities to further your communication and relationship building. Clearly inform students of meal schedules in order to avoid confusion. Students are expected to let you know if they will be late or absent for a meal (well in advance) so that you can make adequate plans.

Students may not feel comfortable telling you their food likes or dislikes or that they are hungry. Try to have open conversation and lots of options available for snacks.

Mealtime is a very personal arrangement in the family, and some of the best times spent with your students will be during meals. If your student is helping with preparations give careful guidance. In many cases, Canadian meal behavior is much more casual than what is expected in other countries. Explain how food is served, whether the whole family sits down together, second helpings, “TV dinners” and other aspects that seem unfamiliar.

Many Asian cultures feel that making noises while one eats is a compliment to the cook. If it offends you, you may want to explain that Canadians usually eat quietly. Teach your student a few of the “Please pass the...” phrases in order to help them feel comfortable at the table. If students are going to a restaurant, inform them that they must wait to be seated and of the appropriate tip that should be left.

Who Pays

Families are asked to provide: all bedding and towels, meals, including breakfast, a bag lunch, dinner and access to healthy snacks and access to soap, laundry, cleaning materials etc. When the student accompanies the family to (for example) a recreation center, movie or restaurants, the family should “pick up the tab.” The school will pay for school fees or an event that is required as part of the student’s learning program. Students are responsible for paying for their own clothing, personal items, gifts and bus fares along with food and entertainment if they choose to go out with friends.

The Bathroom

The bathroom is probably the most puzzling room in your house for overseas students because once the door is shut, they are on their own. Start with a guided tour; show your student where extra towels, face cloths, toilet paper and soap are, and how the shower works. Particular routines should be explained such as length of shower, how to dry oneself and not using an excess of water.

Some students from Asia have very different bathroom routines. Some bathrooms are fully tiled and equipped with a drain in the floor so many students from China, Japan and other Asian countries are not used to keeping water contained in a bath tub. A quick lesson in the operation of the toilet is also a must. In addition, discuss cleanup after using so the room is ready for someone else.

Discuss the schedule for using the bathroom so the student knows when and for how long they can use the bathroom. Any generic brand of soap should be provided by the homestay parent. Shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrush and special soaps, hair sprays and cosmetics are the student's responsibility.

Sleeping Arrangements

Here again, your guidance is essential to help your student feel at home. Define clearly where the student can put their clothes and belongings and make sure that they understand how the covers on the bed work. (Japanese students often use simply a futon and a quilt and are not familiar with getting under the many layers of covers that we use). Show your student how to make the bed and let them know at what times they should be going to bed and eating breakfast in the morning. This will facilitate setting up schedules and getting into your family's routine. Students may be used to different sleeping patterns. It is important that you help them establish routines that are compatible with your family's lifestyle.

Medical Insurance/Home Insurance

VIE will arrange for each student to have medical coverage through Guard.Me and BC Medical Services Plan (MSP). MSP is only for students who are here longer than 6 months. Should a student need to visit a dentist, families are asked to request that their family practitioner accept the student as a patient. For medical treatment, a student can go to a local clinic, visit the family physician, or the hospital if needed.

The students are covered by medical insurance for illness and accident. However, your home insurance will probably not have coverage for the student's property or any damage that the student may cause. In order to be covered, most insurance companies require an additional rider to the policy. Please contact your agent to be sure that you have adequate coverage, both for your own and the student's property.



Getting Around on the Bus

Students will use public and private transportation to and from the school, as well as for some extra-curricular activities away from the school. You will need to explain that exact change is necessary or how to purchase bus passes. Practice with them how to ask for a transfer and how to use it. If you are not able to take them for a trial run, explain that the rider gets on at the front of the bus, must pay on entry, pulls the cord to signal the stop and leaves by the rear of the bus. Please prepare written instructions for destinations, bus names and transfers for the student's use. Also, make sure the student has your contact information in case they get lost, especially during their early days in Victoria.

Driving and Owning a Car

Driving – The student may have a license from their home country and may even have an international driver's license, but students are **not permitted to drive**. Students are encouraged to use the bus system or to purchase a bike. Any questions regarding students driving should be discussed with the Program office.

Family Customs

Customs vary greatly from culture to culture, so your student may require some guidance from you in order to avoid embarrassment. If your family wears shoes inside the house, let your student know that it is common in Canada and acceptable in your house. Japanese students in particular always remove their shoes at the door and may feel uncomfortable wearing them in your home.

Use of the Telephone and Internet

Please set definite guidelines regarding phone and internet usage. No local phone calls should be made or received after 10pm at night unless there is an emergency. Students should not be on the phone for long periods of time. Please monitor your student's use of the computer and telephone as you would your own children. Students should turn off their electronics by 11pm and in some cases you may want to turn off the wif-fi should you feel that this is a problem area. Please contact the Program office if support is needed.

**Religion**

Respect your student's religious beliefs. Invite them to join you if you go to church, but be very understanding if they choose not to. Absolutely no attempt should be made to change your student's religious beliefs.

Laundry

Please inform students about arrangements for laundry in your home. Students need to know where to put laundry and the timetable for cleaning clothes, as well as their specific responsibilities with their own laundry. Some students may prefer to do some of their own laundry on their own. Arrange a schedule and process that suits everyone.

Visitors

Your home is the student's home. It may be that they wish to invite a friend home to be sociable or to work on homework. Please discuss this in advance with your student and agree on prior notice, acceptable times, and any other aspect such as snacks.

- Having guests in the evening if parents are absent is strongly discouraged.
- Similarly, having guests of the opposite sex in the student's bedroom is not allowed.

Privacy and Security

Privacy is an essential element when several people live together. It is important that homestay parents make it clear to students any areas of the home that they should not enter. In most cases, these areas are the bedrooms of each family member, but a home office or a workshop may also require this definition.

The student's privacy should also be respected. The student's room should be considered "off limits" to family members and visitors to the home. This is true even if the student is away for a few days. Parents of young children will need to help the children understand this rule. Of course, cleaning the room is necessary and parents should work out an arrangement which may include "permission" to be in the student's room for cleaning.

At no time is it appropriate for a family member or visitor to "borrow" possessions (iPad, computer, headphones, etc.) without prior approval. Everyone should also keep in mind that approval once doesn't mean approval on an ongoing basis. Parents should also explain when and how to use the heating system, electrical appliances and home alarms, if present.

**Alcohol and Drugs**

This is an area in which the rules are clear and not flexible. International students are not permitted to purchase, use or have alcohol or any kind of non-prescription drugs regardless of age. That is, while it is possible for an international student to be 19 years of age before completing their program, drinking alcohol is not permitted. Your student was made aware of these expectations through the Student Participation Agreement when they arrived.



Language and Student Socializing

Language

The primary reason for the students' visit to Canada is to study English. They learn much at school, but they have a chance to use it in your home. Therefore, it is good to try to engage your student in conversation. Speak in short, basic sentences to help reduce confusion. Avoid negative questions, such as "Don't you want any more?" because the answer will likely be "Yes, (I don't want any more)" instead of "No (I don't)". Many languages respond to the verb rather than the meaning of the sentence. Be clear regarding "yes" and "no". Many times students will indicate that they understand when they do not. This is because they do not want to bother you. You need to paraphrase often and check that they understand clearly. This is particularly important when giving instructions so that the students don't let you down.

Tips for communicating with an individual who speaks little English

Arthur J. More, University of British Columbia

Assume:

1. The other person speaks at least one language well
2. The other person is translating into their own language. This takes at least twice as much time as usual.
3. The other person is probably just as intelligent as you.
4. Non-verbal communication is even more important than usual.

Tips:

1. Don't yell, but speak clearly.
2. Take your time, speak slower than usual but avoid "talking down".
3. Communicate words in order of importance.
4. Avoid idioms (or explain them).
5. Do not try to imitate their accent, use your best Canadian accent.
6. Non-verbal communication:
 - a. Make sure it's consistent with your verbal.
 - b. Remember that gestures in one culture may have different meanings in another culture.
7. A smile, nod or "yes" from the other person often doesn't mean "I understand". If it is important, ask a question and look for a paraphrase response.
8. 50% of communication is based on context, use it. Make sure the other person understands which part of the context you are referring to.



9. In information gathering or liaison:
 - a. Don't get "down to business" too quickly.
 - b. Empower the other person: avoid being louder than, or higher than the other person, and consider personal-space.
10. Laughter may communicate embarrassment – this response is considered inappropriate in our culture, but not in most other cultures. On the other hand, laughing at a mistake may be insulting. If something the student does or says seems amusing, explain the humor.

Student Socializing

International students are teenagers and their social life is of great importance. In fact, we encourage our students to socialize, especially with Canadian students. Anything families can do to support new friendships that provide opportunities to speak English is appreciated. On the other hand, no student can be successful in his or her studies if overtired by late nights and "good times".

The hours that students keep will vary with the student's age (please see Student Participation Agreement for curfews). Of course we expect the student to fit into the family pattern, so there is room for individual schedules to suit each family.

Friends are important to young people and we encourage international students to make as many Canadian friends as possible. However, part of growing up is learning to make good judgments about friendships and sometimes our students need adult supervision and advice. The following is offered to assist homestay families in supporting students in maintaining a healthy social life.

1. Friends should be close to the same age. There is often a problem where a young student has "friends" 5 or 6 years older.
2. Students should be able to go out, but in every case, insist that you are told where the student is going and who they are with. If you don't know the friends your student should arrange for you to meet them.
3. You should be given a phone number to contact your student when they are at a friend's house.
4. It is never acceptable for a student to phone at the last minute and announce they will be staying overnight with a friend. Do not accept that type of behavior.
5. Socializing should be done only on weekends when school attendance is not required.
6. Establish phone use policies and insist on cooperation. This is the case even if the student has their own phone. We do not support students running up extraordinary phone charges or spending lengthy periods late at night on the phone.



7. Having guests over without host parents at home needs prior permission.
8. Having guests of the opposite sex in the student's bedroom is not allowed.

What to do if a Student Misbehaves

Students are required to follow the Program rules as a condition of remaining in the Program. Some rules are “heavier” than others and these include:

- Attendance at school and a sincere effort to maintain a passing average through completion of all assigned work.
- No involvement with alcohol, drugs, or gambling.

Young people do make mistakes. As a school system we are in the business of helping kids grow, so sometimes we have to help them when they have made bad decisions. While Program staff, teachers and homestay parents are supervising the young people in our care, we are also trying to guide them. We can’t prevent every mistake, but hopefully we can teach the kids to not repeat the same mistakes. Decision making is an essential skill, but it must be learned – don’t assume this ability. Remember, even good kids make mistakes sometimes.

In all situations please inform the Program and use our support system to resolve concerns

There isn’t a single response to student misbehavior or bad judgment. When a problem arises the actions of the student are considered in context. Here are examples of action we take:

- The student is interviewed to determine the cause of the problem.
- The expectations for behavior are explained again.
- In most cases, homestay families are contacted.
- If the offence is a major one, the student is put on probation. This involves regular review and formal notice to the student’s parents in their home country as well as homestay parents and an agent is applicable.

Where a student’s behavior, attendance or school achievement is simply sub-standard, that student will not be re-admitted to the Program the following year.

Where a student’s behavior involves serious misbehavior or excessive absence, a student could be dismissed at any time. In such cases every effort is made to first correct the behavior and to be sure that the student’s parents have been fully informed. We hope that dismissal is not required, but we will not tolerate abuse of our standards.



Process:

Please contact

1. Homestay Coordinator
2. Homestay Manager
3. Program Office
4. Program Director

Students may be:

1. Given a warning letter
2. Put on Probation
3. Put on Final probation
4. Dismissed from Program



Curfew

Curfew is the time that students must be back at their homestay. Curfew for students varies depending on their grade.

Weekdays:

- Sunday-Thursday students should be home by around 6:00 PM for dinner with their host family most nights.
- Some planned activities and events may be exceptions to this rule. (gym, movies, etc.; we do not want students just hanging out downtown)
- Sunday-Thursday students **must** be home by 9:30 PM
- Homestay families need to be informed of the student's whereabouts. VIE discourages students from hanging out downtown on school nights
- **Computers, electronic devices and cell phones MUST be turned off by 11:00pm**

Weekends:

Students must observe weekend curfews. VIE curfews for weekends (Friday and Saturday) are below. Earlier times may be set depending on circumstances:

Grades 6-8	9:30pm
Grade 9	10:00pm
Grade 10	11:00pm
Grade 11	11:30pm
Grade 12	12:00am

Homestay Department Contact Schedule

You may leave messages at the Program office 250.592.6871 or Homestay office 250.475.4224

For emergency calls after office hours please call **778.676.3781**

Office hours are from 8:30 - 4:30 Mon-Fri

E-mail is usually the fastest way to get in touch with your homestay coordinator. If you need to talk to your homestay coordinator we ask you to please place your homestay calls during regular business hours. Even so, the coordinators regularly visit students at their schools, and families at their homes, so they may not be available at the time of your call. If they are not available:

- Please leave a message, speaking clearly. Give your full name, the date and time that you are calling and a brief description of the subject of your call. Hosts should include the name and school of their student; students should give the name of their school and their host family.
- Always leave the phone numbers that you may be reached at and the times when you will be available. Say the phone number clearly and say it twice.
- The message service is private so you know your message will only be picked up by the person you are calling.
- We will attempt to return your call within 24 hours. If a call is urgent, please indicate this when you leave your message.
- The homestay coordinators work irregular hours, so you may receive initial or return calls from them outside of these times.
- Please monitor your e-mails regularly as this is the most common way we provide information to host families.

We MUST hear from you under these circumstances:

- If there is a serious, urgent event, such as a student going missing, being involved in an accident, or being apprehended by the police.
- If you believe your student may be seriously depressed or suicidal.
- If you suspect that your student may be experiencing discrimination, harassment, threats or inappropriate advances.
- If your student is seriously ill, especially where hospitalization or surgery is expected, or if there is a communicable disease.
- If you suspect that your student may be experiencing a mental or emotional disorder.
- If you suspect that your student is pregnant.



- If you suspect that your student may have an eating disorder.
- If you suspect that your student may be involved in violent acts or acts of bullying, either as victim or perpetrator.
- If charges are laid by the police against a resident of your home.
- If you are planning to change residence or if your home is listed for sale.
- If there is a theft in your home.
- If your student causes damage in your home.
- If a resident of your home turns 18.
- If your student is planning to leave Victoria without a travel application form.
- If your student is planning on changing or leaving their school or homestay.
- If you believe your student may be experiencing financial difficulty.

We expect to hear from you:

- If you notice a change in the pattern of behavior of your student.
- If there is a change in the accommodation that you are offering for students.
- If there will be a new resident in your home (student or otherwise) or if someone is leaving your home.
- If there is a change in your home or work contact information.
- If you will be away from the home overnight, so that we can be sure that adequate supervision has been arranged.
- If a resident of your home contracts a communicable disease.

The above list is not exhaustive, but it lists the most serious matters that need to be reported to Program personnel. We'd like to hear from you anytime that you feel that you would like guidance, support or feedback. And, of course, it is always nice to hear about positive relationships and events.



Support from the School

The Program Advisors and the VIE Program Staff, review international students' academic achievement and progress regularly. Student progress is communicated directly to parents in home countries four times a year through direct correspondence from the students' school.

ISP Advisor

In each school, there is a designated, individual who is responsible for the international students. This could be a counselor, ESL teacher, or an administrator. Please phone the school directly and ask for the ISP Advisor as your first line of contact regarding academic and/or attendance concerns.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued four times a year and schools publish the report card release dates. You are encouraged and have the authority to ask to see the report cards of students staying in your residence. This is a good way to identify any potential problems that might arise in the future. If you have questions about the report or if it is unclear, feel free to enquire at the school. If questions remain, contact the Program Office. Each school will send report cards overseas to parents, with a covering letter explaining the contents of the report.

Interim Reports

Teachers provide interim reports when a student is experiencing difficulty, failing to attend or hand in homework, or if a student has done particularly well. Feel free to contact the teacher if you need more information and then discuss with your student a specific action plan to correct the situation. Please contact the school if you are unsure about when interim reports are issued, or whether your student has received one. Sometimes students are reluctant to show their reports to host parents, but interims serve as an excellent first warning system.

Tutors

Contact the school or the Program office for information about tutors. Most schools maintain a list of available tutors and some schools have peer tutors available.



School Contact and Course Selection

Schools invite parents to parent-teacher meetings, which you can choose to attend. You do not need to sign any forms that involve permission or liability. VIE as the acting custodian is responsible and will work with the school on signing any necessary documents. We encourage you to be as involved as your time permits. For students selecting courses, the ISP advisor reviews students programs, but you can be very helpful in assisting students to understand requirements and to make selections during the course selection process.

Students who are on a one-year English Development Program do not need full graduation requirements, but whether students are in the English Development Program or the Graduation Program, we discourage free study periods, except for grade 12 students writing provincial exams. Students should be taking a full load of courses.

Illness Procedure

Please call the school if your student is ill and cannot attend classes. Students are required to have valid medical insurance so please encourage your student to seek medical treatment if the sickness is more than a cold or simple flu. If it appears that the illness will last three or more days, it is possible to request homework from the school. Please take your student to a clinic or your own family doctor if the student has been absent from school due to an illness for more than 2 days, or sooner if appropriate.

Did You Know?

British Columbians can now call 8-1-1 to get answers to health questions any time of day or night.

A team of operators will answer 8-1-1 calls and depending on the nature of the query, direct people to the on-duty nurses, dietitians or pharmacists for further help.

Nurses are available 24 hours a day, pharmacists from 5pm to 9am daily, and dietitians from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

The 8-1-1 service is available in more than 130 languages and will help people identify symptoms and provide advice on when to seek medical treatment.



WHAT TO DO IF YOUR STUDENT NEEDS MEDICAL ATTENTION?

For a list of medical clinics that will bill Guard.Me directly please visit their website at <https://www.guard.me/clinic-search.php>. For access to a virtual doctor through Guard.Me please visit <https://app.getmaple.ca/register> (for students who are not on MSP).

For a list of medical clinics in your area and access to a virtual doctor use Medimap at <https://medimap.ca/> (for students who are on MSP).

- It is a host parent's responsibility to support a student who needs medical attention and that includes taking them to see a doctor.
- Please ensure you notify your homestay coordinator within 12 hours of the incident
- If it is a medical emergency please ensure you call our emergency line (778-676-3781) to report the incident
- A student who is absent from school for over 2 or 3 days due to illness, must see a physician for evaluation and needs to obtain a written note.
- ALL STUDENTS REGISTERED IN OUR PROGRAM ARE COVERED BY AN INSURANCE PROVIDER.
- All students are given their medical insurance information upon arrival, including their "Guard.Me" card with the policy number and expiration date. THEY MUST CARRY IT WITH THEM AT ALL TIMES.
- Students who are here longer than 6 months will receive their MSP card after 3 months of arriving.
- In the case of an emergency, VIHA will not deny care to a student who arrives at the emergency room. They will collect insurance information and will bill the provider directly.
- If your student visits a clinic that does not bill Guard.Me directly, they will need to pay for an appointment and request an official receipt to be submitted for reimbursement. "Guard.Me" has an online claims form that is fast, convenient and easy to use. Those students already under MSP will not need to provide any additional payment to see a doctor.
- If you need a policy number or additional information regarding medical coverage, please phone our office or communicate with your homestay coordinator.

VIE – Travel Regulations

International students are required to remain in the Greater Victoria area and are not permitted to travel to Vancouver or any other city without approval by VIE. If students would like to travel outside of B.C. or Canada they need parental authorization from their natural parent. Students should check that they have the correct travel documents to enter that specific country.

Students who wish to travel outside of Victoria must apply to the Program Office for permission and must do the following:

- Pick up a [Student Travel Application](#) from their International Advisor, VIE Program Office (Uplands Campus) or online.
- Complete **ALL** the information on the form and discuss it with their homestay family. The host family must conduct their due diligence to verify the information before signing.
- **Return the form to the VIE Program Office or email it to vierc4@sd61.bc.ca at least 7 days prior to travel.**

If complete information has not been given, travel will not be approved. Last minute requests or late forms will not be approved.

- **ALL** overnight travel **must** have an adult supervisor, someone who is **25 years or older**, and be approved by homestay parents and Program staff.
- Since students are under the authority of the Leadership Team while in the Program, the explanation, “My parents or Guardian says it is okay” **will not be accepted.**
- If travel will result in missed classes, students must talk to their teachers and International Advisor directly as well as receive VIE approval.
- A Student Travel Application form is needed **for both overnight and single day** travel.
- With permission, students may visit family members outside Victoria, and VIE must be informed of travel details. Travel must be of an occasional nature.
- Students may travel with their natural parents, but the VIE Office must be notified.
- Students who travel outside Victoria **must** return on time.
- Students are not permitted to cohabit or to have mixed-gender sleepovers, either in the host household or while travelling.
- When students travel outside Victoria with their host family, a travel application does not need to be completed. Students must remain with their host family at all times. If



you are travelling with your host family, a quick email with your plans is always helpful.
Email us at vierc4@sd61.bc.ca

Travelling without permission or failing to provide accurate information is grounds for student dismissal from the Program.

Damage Claim Procedures

Hosting students is usually a smooth and uneventful experience, but on occasion damage to the home sometimes occurs. We ask that all homestay families have adequate home insurance that covers international students living in their home. When reporting damages there is a clear process that needs to be followed:

1. Contact your homestay coordinator before any work is done.
2. A homestay coordinator must visit your home to assess the damage:
 - Homestay coordinator will assess the damage and take photos
 - Homestay coordinator will speak to the student and host family to confirm the claim details
3. The homestay coordinator will bring the matter to the attention of the homestay manager.
4. If it is determined that damage has occurred (not general wear and tear) the host must provide 2 quotes to the Homestay Program.
5. Before any work can be done you must wait for approval of one of the submitted quotes.
6. Once approval has been given you can proceed with the repair, and then submit the receipts to the International Student Program.
7. Homestay manager will take the receipts and relevant forms to the Accounts department.
8. Accounts department will issue payment to you via cheque.

***If these procedures are not followed then we will not be able to issue payment.**

****Please note host families only have 2 weeks after the departure of the student from their home to report damages. Any claims made after this time will not be considered.**

The International Student Program can only cover up to a maximum of \$500. For any damage that is of a more significant nature we request that you go through your home insurance.

Advice to Students: Being Successful in a Homestay

We believe that international students have 3 major goals:

- 1. to learn English and understand Canadian culture**
- 2. to achieve academic success,**
- 3. to mature into a responsible person**

Our homestay families play an important part in helping students achieve those goals. We select families who will support students and we urge their active involvement in each student's success.

Participation in VIE is a privilege. Students who are accepted into the program agree to follow the program rules which include cooperation with their homestay families. This list is provided to help students be successful.

Students are expected to:

1. Be polite and courteous with all members of the family. Talk to the family about how their day is going and ask about their work or activities. Try to share and be part of the family experience. Use their manners by saying “please” and “thank you.”
2. Treat the home and homestay family’s possessions in a caring and respectful manner. The host family will be respectful of your things as well.
3. Maintain the security of the home by carefully closing and locking the windows and doors.
4. Be sure to understand the operation of the heating thermostats and when they should be used. For example, don't leave heat at a high setting when you leave in the morning. As well, discuss the use of the shower to be sure the arrangement is suitable for all family members. Showers should not be too long because long showers use a lot of hot water and energy, which we try to conserve.
5. Be home at the agreed time after school. Mealtimes with host families are very important and should not be missed except for important functions. Students should discuss any food concerns with host parents. Tell them if a type of food is disliked or if there is a wish for a particular food. Sometimes families enjoy a traditional dish cooked by the student; after all, the family wants to learn about another culture too. Be sure to tell the person who cooked the meal if you enjoyed it.

6. Follow the evening curfew rules. Curfews are established for the health and safety of students. It is expected that students will be home studying during most evenings. If they do go out, it should be after homework is done. It is also expected that students will be home at the agreed time after weekend evening activities. Be sure to phone home if an emergency comes up that will delay you. Do that as early as possible, not at the curfew deadline. **Homestay parents may require you to be home earlier.**
7. Ask for permission prior to having guests in your homestay.
8. **Not have guests of the opposite sex in the student's bedroom.**
Sleepovers are only permitted with advance approval from the homestay hosts of both the resident and guest student.
9. Be considerate with the use of the phone. Late night calls after 10 pm from friends in Victoria are not acceptable and late night calls to or from family overseas should be made after discussion with host parents to avoid waking the family.
10. Discuss and ask for permission from the host parents if you wish to invite a friend for dinner or to stay overnight. Likewise, if you want to stay at a friend's house, talk to your host parents in advance to see if it's okay.
11. If you have travel plans, be sure to discuss with host parents at the earliest date possible. Sometimes they can help you with arrangements. Do the same if your natural parents or other relatives are going to visit; talk to your host parents about the plan and the dates. If you are away from Victoria and your return plans must be changed, call your host parents immediately so they won't worry.
12. Remember that if you have a group of friends visiting, Canadian custom suggests that it isn't acceptable to use a language some people in a group cannot understand. Speak in English, at least part of the time, if family members or other Canadians are present.
13. You need to help out in the homestay and be part of the family. If you see that family members are usually busy or have some difficult situation to fix, perhaps you can help by setting the table or taking care of a younger child for a half hour. Perhaps your host parents forgot something at the store and you could volunteer to go and get it. In other words, help make the home successful and happy for everyone.
14. If you are lonely, worried or feel sick, talk to your host parents. They may be able to help you. It is a normal feeling to be worried or sad at times and parents understand those feelings. If you are sick, it is difficult to study successfully.



15. If you have a concern or a problem at home, talk to your host parents about this. It is healthy to discuss any disagreements or concerns as soon as they arise. People become unhappy if friends or family members will not discuss problems in a calm way designed to find solutions that will help everyone. If you are uncertain about how to discuss a problem, you should ask your homestay coordinator for help.

Remember, a good homestay relationship can be one of the most helpful things that happens for an international student. It is also important to remember that both the student and the family have a responsibility to help each other build a successful relationship. Start working for success immediately and do something positive each day.

Advice to Students: Being Successful in School

Teachers and other school staff play an important part in helping students achieve goals. The teachers in Victoria are committed to excellence and willing to assist students who are working for success.

Participation in VIE is a privilege. Students who are accepted into the program agree to follow the program rules, which include cooperation with their school. This list is provided to help students be successful.

Students are expected to:

1. Attend all classes on time and have proper books/materials.
2. Follow all school rules.
3. Complete all assigned homework. Even if the work is difficult, students should do their best to complete it. Students are recommended to study/do homework on a daily basis of:

Grade 9/10 1.5 hours per day

Grade 11 2 hours per day

Grade 12 2.5 hours per day

Be sure that you understand exactly what to do. Ask your teachers to explain the assignment if you are uncertain. Also, ask your teachers or counsellors about help with improving study skills. If you have no homework assignments, spend the time reviewing past work or work you had difficulty with.

4. Read in English for at least 30 minutes per day. Use the newspaper, magazines or novels.
5. Be polite and courteous with all teachers and school staff.
6. Be friendly and cooperative with other students. Try to participate in school activities such as teams, choir, clubs and social events.
7. Ask for extra help if you find difficulty with the work or if the class is moving too quickly.
8. Make vacation arrangements that do not cause you to miss classes.
9. **SPEAK ENGLISH :)** It does not help speaking your own language with other international students.

In-Home Contract

Many of the students being accepted into homestay will be away from their family for the very first time. Some students will have grown up with housekeepers, cooks, nannies, grandparents, drivers, etc. Some will have had their mothers at home to meet their daily needs of parental support, a clean house, meals prepared, laundry done, etc. Others will be from working families, and they will have been taught to, and held responsible for, much of their own care. Some will have been staying in boarding schools. Others will be seasoned homestay students who know the ropes and are comfortable almost anywhere. Regardless, they will be living in your family home – a culture unto itself – with your particular habits, expectations, requirements and preferences.

An important point to remember is that they are part of your family while they are with you. You may have children of your own; you may have other students in the home who will be roommates. Everyone will have needs and wants, and as you all go about living with one another you will need to figure out what will work in your respective homes. It is important to encourage your students to always feel free and comfortable to ask questions. It is all part of their education of living away from home.

In order for international students to learn how to have their needs met they will first need to learn how to ask. In your home you will have specific requirements. It is important to define these areas, and to be consistent in implementing them. People, regardless of age, experience, and culture, need to have some sort of boundary to function within; it brings order and meaning to life. When a particular requirement or boundary is set it must be clear and direct (always with respect, kindness, and a little humour); the student must not be cajoled or teased into completing a task, or exhibiting a particular behaviour. This does not mean that humour cannot be used; it does mean that the seriousness of the request is expressed, and that clear and consistent mentoring or consequences are practiced. Phrasing the request or expectation in a positive manner will make the learning and behavioural outcome successful.

