

COLUMBIA COLLEGE



HOMESTAY PROGRAM STUDENT HANDBOOK

LIVING IN HOMESTAY

Homestay allows the student to live with a Canadian family and experience the Canadian culture while studying at Columbia College.

Vancouver is a very multicultural city and so are our host families. They come from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Some families have been born and raised in Canada, while others have immigrated to Canada many years ago. They are all Canadian.

A typical host family can consist of a single person, couples with or without children, of all ages, and from economic backgrounds.

Each homestay is different. All are kind, caring people who enjoy learning about different cultures from around the world. They are happy to share lives as respected and active members of the household.

Each host family is carefully selected by our Homestay Coordinator. A qualifying host must provide important paperwork including valid criminal record check along with an extensive home interview. The family is re-visited every two years thereafter.

Our families will:

Provide a clean, safe environment, nutritional meals, and fond memories of the student's time spent in Canada.

Homestay with a Canadian family will:

Allow the student to form friendships with the host family and other students living in the home. Students will share their culture while adjusting to the Canadian way.

Host families will provide each student:

Their own furnished bedroom, bedding, linens, desk or wardrobe, meals (if requested), laundry facilities, wireless internet and a house key. (Laundry soap and toilet paper are also included in the homestay fee).

The student should notify the Homestay Coordinator if the host family is not meeting these expectations or if the student does not feel safe in their homestay.

SUCCEEDING IN HOMESTAY

Living in homestay can be both exciting and overwhelming, especially if it is the student's first time away from home. Our host families are here to help! They will assist the student with challenges they may encounter.

Below are some expectations when staying in homestay.

- **Communication is extremely important. Get to know the host family by emailing them prior to arriving. Natural parents also welcome to contact the host family at this time.**
- **Homestay is for Columbia College students only. Parents and family members traveling with the student MUST make their own arrangements to stay elsewhere. Please do not ask the host family to stay with them, it is against our policy.**
- **Be polite and respectful towards the host family. Manners are a must!**
- **Have an open-mind to Canadian food. It is very different from back home. Being demanding while stating the foods they want to eat can hinder the relationship between the student and host. The student may be asked to leave homestay if the host feels they cannot please the student.**
- **Speak English in the presence of the host family.**
- **Follow the host families' rules in the home. Every host family will have different rules. Talk to them and ask questions.**
- **Respect the rights, privacy and beliefs of the host family and of any other student in the home.**
- **Absolutely NO smoking; cigarettes, marijuana, vaping or drinking alcohol (if under the age of 19) in or around the home.**
- **No hot plates, kettles, candles, or incense allowed in the student's room.**
- **The student will be given a house key. Do not lose it! The host may replace the key at no cost, or rekey all the doors at the student's cost. This is costly.**
- **Always lock the door when leaving or returning home. Double check it is locked.**

- **Do not borrow items in the home without permission or go into any other bedrooms uninvited.**
- **Bedroom windows should be closed/locked and portable heaters off (if given) when leaving the home. Be prepared to experience colder temperatures. Ask for extra blankets, or a portable heater, and wear weather appropriate clothing. Slippers are highly recommended.**
- **Ask if friends can come over before assuming they can. Overnight guests may or may not be permitted and should be discussed with the host beforehand.**
- **Custodianship students wanting to spend the night outside of their homestay will see the Homestay Coordinator and provide details on where they will stay. Written permission from the natural parents is necessary. Students should plan in advance allowing enough time to get permission.**
- **Custodianship students have a curfew (when to be home). If curfew is not followed, natural parents are notified and the student may be asked to leave the homestay program.**
- **No relations with other homestay students living in the same homestay. The student will be asked to leave the homestay program with little or no notice.**
- **In Canada pets are part of the family. Be nice to them! Keep bedroom doors closed to avoid them entering.**
- **Quiet time in the home is between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. During this time, do not speak loudly when talking to family back home, playing video games, etc.**
- **Ask how to use household appliances to avoid any damages. The student is responsible to pay for damages such as bedding, household appliances, furniture, re-keying of locks, exterminator, fire or flood damage, etc.**
- **Always see the Homestay Coordinator before paying the host family any money for damages or any additional fees that were not originally agreed upon prior to coming.**
- **Downloading or the usage of any pornographic sites is prohibited.**
- **Host families MAY go into the student's bedroom with little or no notice to ensure the student is respecting their home.**

Homestay is not a hotel! Please treat the host family with courtesy and respect.

HELPFUL HINTS

- **When completing the Homestay Application be specific in your requests. It can avoid being placed with a family that will not accommodate requests, such as food.**
- **In Canada, it is not uncommon the bedrooms are located in the above-ground basement.**
- **Canadian breakfast is usually cold or continental style, and ‘help yourself’. It may include; cereal, toast, fruit, yogurt. Some hosts may prepare a hot breakfast on the weekend.**
- **Lunch is prepared by either the student or host. It can consist of food from the dinner before (leftovers) or a sandwich with a piece of fruit/granola bar. If making your own lunch, don’t be shy and ask your host for lunch suggestions if you are unsure on what to make.**
- **Dinner is prepared by the host. It is our biggest meal of the day. Students should communicate their dinner plans if they will not be home. Food is very expensive in Canada for that reason, we do not waste it.**
- **Speak to the Homestay Coordinator if there are any food concerns.**

WHAT TO BRING

- **Toiletries; body soap, deodorant, shampoo, hair dryer, lap top, cell phone/cell phone charger, etc.**
- **Appropriate clothing. The host family will assist where to purchase seasonal clothing at affordable prices.**
- **Slippers and/or flip flops for showering (optional). Most student bedrooms are located in the above-ground basement. They are cool in the summer and winter months.**
- **An umbrella! Vancouver has wet days all year long – be prepared.**
- **Small amount of Canadian currency for incidentals such as extra nights in homestay (if arriving early), taxi, Compass card, SIM card, snacks.**

MOVE IN DATE

BEFORE booking the flight contact the host family to determine if the room will be ready at that time.

If the student moves in before the 1st of the month, they are responsible to pay in cash, directly to the host family, \$50 per night for the remaining nights left in that month. Be prepared and have Canadian funds upon arriving or pay the host family shortly after moving in.

If the student moves into homestay after the 1st of the month (they are studying), the host family will be paid for the full month as they have 'reserved' the room.

If the student goes on holiday, there are no discounts in homestay. The student will pay their host family for the entire time they are away. Their room and belongings will be left untouched waiting for their return.

If the student does not return to homestay after holidays the host may pack their belongings and give them to charity. It is up to the student to contact the host family and check if they will hold onto their items until they return. The host may charge the student a storage fee.

Homestay is reserved for Columbia College students who are registered and currently studying at the College. If the student is no longer studying at the College, they **MUST** leave homestay once their studies are complete.

Homestay is a minimum stay of two months for all students. If the student leaves before the second month, they will not receive a refund.

LEAVING OR CHANGING HOMESTAYS

When leaving the homestay program contact the Homestay Coordinator 30 days before wanting to move. A Notice of Termination form will be given to the student to complete with host. If sufficient notice is not given the student will be penalized an additional ½ months' rent that will be paid to the host family.

Host families realize students will move for various reasons; going back to their country, moving to an apartment, or wanting to live with another Canadian host family. Students should not be afraid to leave homestay; their host family understands and will not be hurt!

CUSTODIANSHIP STUDENTS

Under the Ministry of Education, students who are under 19 years of age and studying in our High School program will require a custodian. Columbia College can take on this role.

The IRCC website states, students who are 17 years and older, do not require a custodian when studying in a University Transfer program. However, it is highly recommended those students who are specifically 17 years of age obtain a custodian to avoid any difficulties when applying for their study permit.

The host family will take on the custodianship role after a short time the student is living with them. The student must remain in the Homestay Program until they turn 19, leave Columbia College, or obtain a private custodian, regardless if they transfer to a University Transfer program.

Columbia College does not obtain custodianship if the student does not live in a Columbia College homestay. They must obtain a private custodian outside of the homestay program.

PRIVATE CUSTODIAN

Those students who move into homestay where the host family has taken on this role, but now wish to leave homestay, or have been asked to leave the homestay program, MUST obtain a private custodian before moving. A family member or friend can take on this role. Below are the requirements of a private custodian:

The individual must be a Canadian citizen, or have (PR) Permanent Residency status, reside in the lower mainland, 25 years or older, and able to speak English fluently. This new appointed private custodian will be the Colleges' point of contact while the student is studying at the College.

Students who arrive with a private custodian can stay in Homestay and are considered an adult student with adult homestay fees being applied.

HOMESTAY FEES / OPTIONS

Over the years, the cost of living has increased dramatically in Vancouver therefore, living in homestay is the most economical choice for those students on a budget.

Below are the homestay options we provide:

Note: Full homestay fees are required prior to the student being placed in homestay. Do not wait until the visa approval to apply or pay fees. Placement is not guaranteed past the due date or without full payment made. Homestay is on a 'first come, first serve' basis and requests may not be met.

Adult

1. Long-term → \$2,875 with airport pick-up \$2,775 without airport pick-up) Adult students – mandatory two month stay in homestay

- Homestay placement fee of \$375 (non-refundable)
- Homestay rent of \$2,400 (\$1,200 per month)
- Airport pick-up fee of \$100

2. Long-term → Dinner Only; upon availability → \$2,475 with airport pick-up \$2,375 without airport pick-up) Adult students – mandatory two month stay in homestay

- Homestay placement fee of \$375 (non-refundable)
- Homestay rent of \$2,000 (\$1,000 per month)
- Airport pick-up fee of \$100

There is no cooking in homestay. Students will have the use of a toaster, kettle, microwave and storage in the refrigerator.

3. Long-term → Room Only; upon availability → \$2,275 with airport pick-up \$2,175 without airport pick-up) Adult students – mandatory two month stay in homestay

- Homestay placement fee of \$375 (non-refundable)
- Homestay rent of \$1,800 (\$900 per month)
- Airport pick-up fee of \$100

There is no cooking in homestay. Students will have the use of a toaster, kettle, microwave and storage in the refrigerator.

Adult / Non-Custodial students; homestay fees are paid directly to the host family on the 1st of every month in cash, AFTER their first initial month in homestay.

Adult students prepay two months of homestay fees to the College prior to be placed in homestay. The College pays the host family for the student's first initial month. From the second month onward, the student is responsible to pay their host directly in cash, due on the 1st of every month.

The student's second month of prepaid homestay is used to pay the host family for the student's last month in homestay, or if any damages have been made by the student while staying in the home.

Students who choose the 'room only' or dinner only' option should be prepared to pay high food prices when eating out. It is much more affordable to choose the 'full meal' option then later change the option if they are not satisfied with the food.

*Notify the Homestay Department if the host is charging any additional fees than originally agreed upon. *

Custodianship

1 Long-term → \$7,350 with airport pick-up \$7,250 without airport pick-up) Custodianship students

- Homestay placement fee of \$375 (non-refundable)
- Homestay rent of \$5,200 (\$1,300 per month)
- Extra month in Homestay account – deposit (\$1,300)
- Custodianship of \$325 (initial – one-time set-up fee)
- Monitoring fee per semester \$50
- Airport pick-up fee of \$100

2 Long-term → Dinner Only; upon availability → \$6,350 with airport pick-up \$6,250 without airport pick-up) Custodianship students – mandatory two month stay in homestay

- Homestay placement fee of \$375 (non-refundable)
- 5 months Homestay rent of \$5,500 w custodian
- Custodianship of \$325 (initial – one-time set-up fee)
- Monitoring Fee \$50
- Airport pick-up fee of \$100

There is no cooking in homestay. Students will have the use of a toaster, kettle, microwave and storage in the refrigerator.

3 Long-term → Room Only; upon availability → \$5,850 with airport pick-up \$5,750 without airport pick-up) Custodianship students – mandatory two month stay in homestay

- Homestay placement fee of \$375 (non-refundable)
- 5 months Homestay rent of \$5,000 w custodian
- Custodianship of \$325 (initial – one-time set-up fee)
- Monitoring Fee \$50
- Airport pick-up fee of \$100

There is no cooking in homestay. Students will have the use of a toaster, kettle, microwave and storage in the refrigerator.

Custodianship students; the College will administer the prepaid homestay fee to the host family (every month) for the entire semester.

Students who choose the ‘room only’ or dinner only’ option should be prepared to pay high food prices when eating out. It is much more affordable to choose the ‘full meal’ option then later change the option if they are not satisfied with the food.

A homestay invoice will be provided to the student approximately 6 weeks prior to the semester ending indicating when homestay fees are due. The student will not be able to register until fees are received for the following semester.

***Notify the Homestay Department if the host is charging any additional feels than originally agreed upon. ***

MOVING FEE: Students who request to change homestays (after their first initial month) will be charged a \$200 moving fee per occurrence.

PRIVATE BATHROOM: (Upon availability) The student will pay the host family directly \$100 per month in cash, starting on their first initial month of homestay.

SPECIAL DIETARY: (Upon availability) halal, gluten-free, lactose free, vegan. The student will pay the host family directly \$200 per month in cash, starting on their first initial month of homestay.

VEGETARIAN: (Upon availability) The student will pay the host family directly \$100 per month in cash, starting on their first initial month of homestay.

PARTICIPATE

The College offers student activities, many of which are free. To enrich their College and homestay experience, we highly recommend to get involved. Time goes by quickly! It is a great way to make new friends and feel part of a community.

SUPPORT

The College offers an abundance of emotional support for our students. If at any time, the student feels lonely, anxious, unsafe, or need to talk for any reason, they should reach out to the Homestay Coordinator, their host family or any staff member at the College. We also have experienced well-qualified Mental Health counsellors on site, along with two school nurses who are available to meet with our students at any time.

Confidential resources are available:

- A) keep.meSAFE is a Mental Wellness Student Support Program that provides solutions-focused support for all Columbia College students 24/7/365 from anywhere in the world. Students can access support from qualified counsellors in their language and culture to help them deal with any school, health, or general life concern.

Through the use of the My SSP app, students also have access to a wide variety of multilingual self-help resources, including articles, videos and assessment tools. Additionally, the program offers different referral pathways for students to access counselling, consultative support for staff and faculty, community outreach, as well as ad hoc support.

Ways to connect:

Mobile App: Students can download the free My SSP app today and connect with a

counsellor anytime by chat or telephone via the Apple App Store or Google Play

Telephone: Students can access phone support anytime of the day by calling: 1-844-451-9700 (Canada and USA) or 001-416-380-6578 (rest of world)

Web: Students without access to a smartphone or tablet can access chat support and self-help resources online at: <https://www.keepmesafe.org/ca-us/support-and-access.php>

- B) Kids Help Phone (Tel: 1-800-668-6868)**
Provides counselling and mental health support
- C) Kelty Mental Health Resource Center (<http://keltymentalhealth.ca>)** Resources regarding mental health issues, substance use, medications, and healthy living.
- D) HealthLink BC 8-1-1- Services (Tel 811)**
Free of charge provincial health information and advice phone line available in British Columbia.
- E) Suicide Crisis Helpline (Text/Tel: 988) <https://988.ca>**
Confidential, free 24-hour access to responders trained in suicide prevention.

EMERGENCY NUMBER

In the event of an emergency only, please call 604-671-8525.

Any other inquiries, please contact Rosemary Mooney, the Homestay Coordinator; via TEAMS or email rmooney@columbiacollege.ca.