



Homestay Family Handbook

2024-25

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Introduction: What is a Homestay Family?

A homestay family is an integral part of the life of an international student. The family provides more than just room and board; they become friends and guides in a new culture. As well, caring supervision and parenting on the part of the homestay family is an essential part of the international student's growth and development.

International students are teenagers, and just like Canadian teenagers, they exhibit varying degrees of confidence and doubt, responsibility and forgetfulness, industry, and laziness. However, unlike their Canadian counterparts, international students are dealing with these issues far from their parents, in a culture that is very different and in a foreign language. The keys to success with international students, as with all teenagers, are patience, clarity, consistency, flexibility, trust, and good communication.

The homestay experience is usually enjoyable and rewarding for both students and families. Of course, there is often a period of adjustment. In the beginning, the student needs a lot of information from the family. The student may speak and understand very little English and may need (but may not request) much repetition and clarification. As well, the student has a lot to absorb—new surroundings and new ways of coping. The family should expect some difficulties in communicating and the need to explain things more than once. As well, the family may need to help the student through periods of homesickness and loneliness.

Much of culture is easy to detect; this is called “surface culture” and is often the part we most readily enjoy when we compare. However, many cultural differences are not as apparent, such as the ways in which people present themselves. What people from one culture may take as dishonesty, people from another may intend as mutual face-saving. What some may take as indifference, others may intend as respect, and so on. The family and the student alike must be attuned to the possibility of mutual misunderstanding of signals. Hopefully, problems and frustrations will be rare, and trust and patience will help resolve them.

You may find that interacting with other homestay 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 student. The homestay coordinator is available to discuss progress or problems.

The information on the following pages provides a brief overview of the cross-cultural dynamics of the homestay experience. As well, it is meant to serve as a practical guide for homestay families.

The Stages of Homestay

Bringing a new teenager to live in one's home for a time, under any set of circumstances, can be a challenge. Add to the basic logistical, emotional, and interpersonal stresses the fact that the individual is from another culture, and speaks another language, and you have the formula for an intense, stimulating, but also potentially difficult experience. The adaptability of all individuals concerned will be the key to either a successful or a disappointing homestay.

The stages of homestay have been well documented from the point of view of the homestay family as well as from that of international students. Generally, the experience follows the stages listed below.

Stage 1: Arrival

Your newly arrived student may be at the peak of an emotional high. Months of preparation have culminated in a jet flight across international borders and a burst of excitement at meeting the homestay family.

However, arrival fatigue sets in quickly. Jet lag, the stress caused by unfamiliar surroundings, and the inability to communicate will take their toll. At this point, the student needs time and emotional space to recover. For many students, this takes only a day or two, but for others, especially if they must begin school right away, it may take weeks.

Getting Ready for Your Student

Your attention to a few details in anticipation of your student's arrival will help their transition to a new life:

- After your student reaches out to you, continue to communicate with them through their preferred method (WhatsApp, Facetime, etc.) Describe your family, pets, lifestyle, and your neighbourhood. Include photos of your family and home, as well as pictures, maps, etc. of your city or town. A note to your student's parents would reassure them that you are looking forward to hosting their son/daughter and that she/he will be in good hands.
- Read about the history and culture of your student's country of origin. This show of interest and appreciation of what is important to your student will go a long way to help forge a relationship. It will also add multiple topics for discussion and will give the student the occasional opportunity to be the one "in the know", a welcome respite from constantly being the one who is overwhelmed. Purchase a bilingual dictionary to help you communicate during those first few weeks.
- Prepare your student's room. Ensure that it is functional, comfortable, and inviting. On arrival day, a selection of snacks and beverages placed in the room will be imperative, as the student may wake up hungry during the night. Their internal clock will take a couple of days to adjust.
- Please do not furnish your student's room with valuable or sentimental items that you do not want to see irreplaceably damaged. Be aware that accidents happen, and that NISEP will assist you to recover funds from the student's family, but NISEP cannot be held responsible.

Arrival Day

The homestay coordinator will inform the homestay family of arrival information. On arrival day, we recommend that you make a bright "Welcome poster" with their name on it to bring to the airport to welcome your student to their new home away from home. Remember, the student is going to be as excited as you are but much more nervous!

The First Week

It is important in the first few days after the student's arrival that you do not wait for the student to discover things on their own about your family's way of life. To help him/her adjust to life in your home, explain daily routines, schedules, and expectations. Point out why any family rules you wish to have followed are important to you. **Remember that the student's assumptions may be quite different from yours—They may have no idea why something is important to you.** When these have been clearly explained, the student will be expected to respect them. The family should keep in mind that the student may be unfamiliar with Canadian homes and customs and will need frequent clear and patient explanations. The following issues are areas we suggest you think about in terms of your household.

Determine your guidelines around the issues that are important for you and discuss them with your student *early* in their homestay. This may help avoid conflict and misunderstanding.

- meal times (weekdays and weekends)
- absences from meals
- shower schedule (how long and what times)
- curfews (weeknights and weekends)
- visitors
- family chores (doing the dishes, cleaning bedrooms, personal laundry responsibilities, etc.)
- television (how much and how late)
- family activities (church, etc.)
- telephone rules (how often, how long, how late, etc.)
- internet (how often, how long, how late, etc.)
- smoking
- privacy

It is helpful for the student to have a written copy of your guidelines. Some students may not understand spoken English very well initially, and they may appreciate a copy to read in their own time. All students will be overwhelmed with information about this new country and culture and will have a hard time remembering everything they are told.

Stage 2: Adjustment

After the student overcomes travel fatigue, a period of adjustment for both family and student begins. For a few weeks, the family may find that they must be very focused on the student. Some routines will have to be adapted temporarily to fit the new situation. Such change in family routines is to be expected when hosting a brand-new visitor but is not a permanent condition.

This is the period during which the family must help the student “learn the ropes” of Canadian living. Student independence in the use of the telephone, public transportation, etc., will greatly ease the burden on the family and will cause the student to feel more in control again. Remember, in their own country, the student is a socially adept and competent person. She/he is striving to regain that status.

Helpful Ideas for the Homestay Family

- Above all, treat the student like a family member, not a guest.

- It's important to have a house key for your new student's arrival. Make it special by purchasing a nice Newfoundland theme key ring. (If applicable, a code for your in-home alarm system should also be provided.)
- Ensure through oral practice that your student can pronounce (and remember) all family names. Ensure that all family members can pronounce your student's name.
- Give your student your name, home address, and phone number on a card that will fit in a wallet. This written card is for safety purposes. Also, ensure that your student memorizes this information and can pronounce it. Imagine how embarrassing and debilitating it is for a teenager to be unable to state this personal information.
- Supply exact bus route information to and from school and various community destinations.
- Show the student how to answer the phone and encourage him/her to do it frequently. Discuss the use of 911.
- Confirm schedules of family members and student each day.
- Set reasonable household rules for the student. Be sure she/he understands the rules and has a chance to give input.
- Communicate with the student and let him/her know when there is a problem.
- Continue to verify that your student understands and that she/he is not just being polite and saying yes.
- Speak English to the student as much as possible and engage the student in conversation. In the beginning, this will require clarification, careful questioning, and paraphrasing.
- Expose the student to all types of social games (such as cards and Scrabble), English television, video, music, etc.
- Encourage the student to come out of their room, i.e., to watch television, to write letters in the kitchen or family room, or to help with family chores.
- Support the student's learning by assisting with homework. Monitor the student's progress through contact with the school.

If you see that after the first few weeks the student is withdrawn and spending all his/her time in the bedroom, sit down with the student and make sure that everything is alright. You will find the homestay coordinator's assistance and counsel invaluable now.

Stage 3: Culture Shock

An initial "honeymoon stage" is common to an international student, and she/he is at first fascinated with life in the new country. However, they will inevitably go through a period of being overwhelmed with the reality of dealing with new surroundings. This is called "culture shock", and usually sets in two to three months after the student's arrival.

Symptoms include:

- Mourning: homesickness, withdrawal, stereotyping of host nationals, disdain, or dislike of all things “Canadian”
- Atypical physiological symptoms: psychosomatic ailments, insomnia or need for excessive amounts of sleep, compulsive eating, loss of concentration
- Atypical emotional responses: irritability, unexplainable fits of weeping, dread of going to school, boredom

Culture shock can often result in severe mental fatigue and despondency. However, it is a normal phase of cultural adjustment, and the family needs to be aware that patience and communication with the student significantly assist in overcoming this difficult phase. If the student shows extreme signs of depression or suicidal behaviour, the family should consult with the homestay coordinator immediately.

The homestay family must be aware that they, too, can experience quasi-culture shock. When things suddenly aren't wonderful anymore, when the family finds themselves annoyed by the student's opinions and behaviour, or when the family begins to wonder why they ever made the decision to host someone from another country, this is probably quasi-culture shock. This is when the family enters a period of intense learning and adjustment. It helps if the family understands what is happening and can see the benefits of it. The family's version of culture shock will usually start out mildly and may intensify two to three months into the experience but should then ease.

Stage 4: Cultural Sharing

This stage tends to be the best period for the student and the family. The student has adjusted to the new environment, and the family has begun to understand and appreciate the many cultural differences of their foreign visitor. Many misunderstandings have been resolved and the relationship has grown stronger as a result.

Stage 5: Departure

Saying goodbye is always difficult for both the family and the student. The student further faces re-entry shock upon their return home; the initial euphoria of being reunited with family and friends slumps as she/he notices that much has changed—perhaps the returnee most of all. Reverse culture shock sets in while the student must determine who she/he is and where she/he fits in. There can even be a mourning period, as the student mourns for the homestay family, friends made in Canada, and the Canadian culture left behind. Eventually, this too passes, and she/he will look back with pleasure on the rich emotional and intellectual experiences of the visit.

Practical Tips for the Homestay Family

Alcohol and Drugs

In Newfoundland, the legal age to purchase or consume alcohol, cigarettes, or cannabis is 19. The international student is not permitted to purchase or consume any of these, regardless of age. While an international student can be 19 years of age before completing the Program, alcohol, cigarette or cannabis usage of any kind is strictly forbidden.

The international student is not allowed to use any drugs or medications unless prescribed by the student's doctor.

Infraction of these rules may result in immediate dismissal from the Program, confiscation of the student's Study Permit, and notification to Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Banking

Please assist your student in opening a bank account. A chequing account is most convenient, as occasionally students will need to make larger purchases from it. Most transactions are best completed with a debit or "Interac" card. As well, they can do EMT transfers. Encourage the student not to carry large sums of money with them. In many countries, such as Japan, most transactions are done by cash, and people are accustomed to carrying larger amounts. Many banks have no-fee bank accounts for students. Students should obtain a credit card that can be used in Canada.

Bathroom

The bathroom is probably the most puzzling room in your house for an overseas student because once the door is closed, they are on their own.

A student may not be familiar with Western bathroom facilities and their use should be clearly explained. Asian bathrooms typically include a drain in the floor and a shower is taken in the bathroom itself. **The idea of showering in a bathtub with a shower curtain drawn inside may be new.** Careful (and, possibly, repeated) explanation and demonstration may be necessary to ensure that the student uses the facilities appropriately.

Discuss the schedule for bathing so the student knows when and for how long she/he can use the bathroom. The homestay parent must provide soap, toilet paper, and towels; show your student where these are kept. Personal toiletries are the responsibility of the student. Encourage the use of deodorant after bathing.

Be sure to emphasize that only toilet paper and **nothing else** is to be flushed down the toilet. Re-iterate that excessive amounts of toilet paper cannot be used, as the toilet may become clogged and overflow. Items such as Q-tips, sanitary supplies, etc. should be placed in the wastebasket.

Cell Phones

Students should have a cell phone during their stay. You may need to accompany them to set up an account locally. Some students simply swap their personal SIM cards into a local phone, while others use a pay-as-you-go plan with a Canadian carrier (Bell, Rogers, TELUS, Kudo, etc.) Students can also use local SIM cards from a third-party provider like Lucky Mobile.

Cigarettes and Vaping

Under provincial law, it is illegal to sell cigarettes to anyone under the age of 19. **NISEP has a strict no-smoking policy for all its students.** This includes the use of cigarettes, vapes and any paraphernalia of the sort.

If a student is found to be in possession of any of these items, they will be subject to disciplinary action, which could, ultimately, result in their dismissal from the program.

Curfew

NISEP Program guidelines suggest that international students should be expected to be in the home most school nights. The family should determine a curfew for the student, taking into consideration such factors as the student's age, maturity, level of English, and activity. NISEP recommends a negotiable 9:30 or 10:00 p.m. curfew on school nights and a negotiable 11:30 p.m. or 12:00 a.m. curfew on weekends. Curfew times should coincide with those set for family members of similar ages, if applicable.

In determining the international student's curfew, the homestay parents should discuss the student's proposed activity and schedule with the student and determine when she/he is expected to arrive home. The student must always notify the homestay family if she/he expects to arrive home later than planned. This courtesy will relieve the homestay family of unnecessary worry about the student's whereabouts and safety.

Custodianship

Citizenship and Immigration Canada requires that all minor international students have a custodial adult as a condition of receiving a Study Permit. The custodian is the person who makes decisions concerning the student's welfare, and the student is expected to be guided by the directions given by the custodian.

In most cases, a NISEP director is the custodian. Ultimately, the NISEP directors, homestay coordinators and the homestay parent/s as daily caregiver/s have joint responsibility for the well-being of international students. **Please keep in mind that in all cases, the NISEP rules take precedence in all matters that involve what international students should or should not be permitted to do.** In any matters of ambiguity, please contact your homestay coordinator for direction.

Customs

Customs vary greatly from culture to culture, so your student may require some guidance from you to avoid embarrassment as she/he adapts in Canada. For example, Canadian expectations around table etiquette need to be taught explicitly but with sensitivity. What we consider to be bad manners may be considered perfectly acceptable elsewhere. Open discussion about matters of etiquette will help the family understand the student's behaviour and will help the student understand the family's expectations.

Driving and Owning a Car

The international student is not permitted to drive any motor vehicle. Some students may wish to get their Learner's Permit and Driver's License while here, because the cost may be prohibitive in their home country. However, they are not permitted to drive during their stay.

End of Semester Departure—Semester One

For students departing at the end of the first semester, the final homestay payment will be for the month of January. Depending on the date, they may not depart until the first days of February.

NISEP's responsibility for the student ends on the same day as their departure. Students should not remain in Canada once their semester has ended.

End of Semester Departure—Semester Two

The final homestay payment for the school year will be for the month of June. Students are expected to depart by June 30th. NISEP's responsibility for the student ends on this date. However, occasionally a student wishes to stay in Canada for a few extra days in July. In such cases, NISEP requests a written statement from the natural parents absolving NISEP of all responsibility for the student. Homestay parents may, if they wish, agree to keep the student in the home for these extra days in July. It is important for the homestay parent to note:

- We do not have a homestay program during the summer, and the homestay parent takes on the responsibility for the student.
- We do not issue homestay payments for the summer. The student should pay homestay fees directly to the homestay family.
- NISEP must be notified of such arrangements in advance so that the program can confirm with the natural parent that it is indeed their wish that the student remains and that they are fully aware and approve of the student's plans.

Family Absences

The homestay family is expected to be in their town or city throughout the student's homestay period, and the student is not to be left alone in the house overnight. If an emergency arises and the homestay family must leave unexpectedly, the family usually arranges for an adult friend or family member to move into the house during the absence, or for the student to stay at the home of a family friend.

The homestay parent must inform the homestay coordinator of the arrangements that have been made for the student in case of emergency contact from the natural parents. If the homestay family cannot make suitable arrangements, the homestay coordinator will move the student to another home for the duration of the parent's absence. The family's homestay payment will be adjusted accordingly.

Home and Automobile Insurance

Please contact your insurance providers to be sure that you have adequate coverage, particularly in the area of liability, though NISEP has never been made aware of additional coverage requirements.

Laundry

Please inform students about arrangements for personal laundry in your home. Students may be expected to do their personal laundry, or the homestay parent may prefer to do it. Arrange a schedule and a process that suits everyone. Homestay families are expected to launder the student's towels on a regular basis, and student's sheets weekly or biweekly. If the student does their own laundry, they should be shown how to do this, to ensure they understand how the equipment works.

Meals

One of the trigger points for discomfort in a new country is food. While one-dish meals are typical in Canadian homes, they are not common in several countries. Therefore, avoid serving one-dish meals in the first week or two of the homestay. Serving a variety of dishes allows the student to try a few unfamiliar foods and then fill up on the ones she/he enjoys. The family is encouraged to ask the student what kind of foods she/he likes and dislikes, and even to take the student shopping to select a few favourite items. It is a good idea to keep a grocery list on the refrigerator door so that the student can add desired foods. Learn about food preparation in the student's country so that you can view the meals you serve through the student's eyes. For example, students may not be familiar with eating raw vegetables or with eating fruit and/or vegetables with the skin on.

Please understand, too, meal etiquette in your student's culture. In many cultures, it is polite to refuse second servings several times before finally accepting. Do not allow your student to go hungry because of this cultural difference. Also, making noise while eating may be your students culturally learned manner of showing an appreciation for the food served. It is appropriate for you to help the student understand dining customs gradually and gently in Canada. What may be considered bad manners may simply be a cultural difference.

While the family must provide three meals a day, it is reasonable to ask the student to prepare their own breakfast and lunch after you've shown them how to do so. Ensure that the student understands the use of appliances, etc., and your expectations regarding which foods are available and clean up after food preparation.

It is important that the family eats the evening meal with the student. This is often the only time when everyone has a chance to sit down together and discuss the day's activities. The student is generally expected to be home for dinner, but if she/he occasionally wishes to dine elsewhere, she/he should decide in advance, or call home in plenty of time, and gain the permission of the homestay family. The family must establish its own rules about last-minute student decisions not to be home for dinner.

As do most teenagers, international students will require between-meal snacks. The family must be prepared to provide something for the student to eat after school and before bedtime; these snacks may be something as simple as a piece of fruit or some cookies but should be something the student enjoys.

You may wish to take your student out to eat in a restaurant. Because homestay fees are to include meals, the homestay family is expected to pay for restaurant meals that they initiate.

Medical Emergencies and Illness

If you feel that your student should see a doctor for a minor complaint such as a cold, take the student to a walk-in clinic. You may wish to accompany the student if you feel your assistance in explaining the symptoms is required. For serious ailments, where you feel that an interpreter is required, please contact the homestay coordinator. In the event of an emergency, it is the responsibility of the homestay family to ensure that the student receives medical attention at the nearest hospital. The homestay coordinator must be informed of all medical incidents.

The homestay coordinator must be notified immediately in the event of a student requiring hospitalization for any reason. The homestay family is not to sign as financial guarantors.

Whenever the student is ill and cannot attend classes, please inform the school.

Medical Service Locations

Clinic Name	Street	Telephone	Clinic days & Times
Blackmarsh Family Care	260 Blackmarsh Road	709-576-6555	Mon-Fri 9:00 -11:30, 1:00 - 4:00, 6:00 – 8:00 Sat, Sun 9:00 – 5:00
Mundy Pond Community Walk-In Clinic	50 Mundy Pond Road	709-777-1706 Book Apt. via text: 877-709-2005	Mon-Fri, 8:00 – 8:00 Sat, 8:00 – 4:00
Dr. Andrew Rossiter	Centennial Square, Mt Pearl	709-368-0033	Mon-Fri, 9:00 – 4:00
Janeway Children's Hospital	300 Prince Phillip Drive	709-777-6300	24/7
NL Health Line	N/A	811	24/7

Medical Insurance

In a medical emergency involving an international student, please visit your local hospital, ensuring you have the student's medical insurance information. **For medical visits that are not an emergency, please visit a local doctor's office or clinic, as noted above.** The cost of a hospital visit is, on average, \$250 whereas a doctor's visit costs the insurance company approximately \$40-\$75. The student must pay the doctor's office at the time of the visit but is reimbursed.

All international students are required by NISEP to have medical insurance. NISEP arranges medical coverage through GUARD.ME, a private insurer. Details of coverage can be found on the website at www.guard.me.

While GUARD.ME covers the student, some doctors' offices as well as the hospital, will bill the insurance company directly.

If the doctor's office will not bill Guard.me directly, the student must pay the fees at the time of treatment, obtain a receipt, and submit a claim for reimbursement. Claim forms may be downloaded at www.guard.me.

For the students' medical coverage, GuardMe sends the student a "Welcome Letter" using the email address they provided NISEP, with detailed instructions on how to set up their GuardMe account.

If students are having issues, they are encouraged to contact their Customer Care Department directly via email, chat, or phone call to request the policy information, and for guidance on how to access their "guard.me My Account" to get this information. The Customer Care email address is customercare@guard.me, in addition to the contact number that is also available 24/7 to speak with a Customer Care representative at **905-752-6200 or 1-877-873-8447** to assist the student regarding any questions or concerns about their account, coverage, claims or healthcare access card.

Guard.me also offers the opportunity to speak to a doctor online in any language through mobileDOCTOR (Maple). The visit is billed directly to Guard.me insurance. Maple lets you speak to a Canadian-licensed doctor right away through your smartphone or computer to get medical advice, a diagnosis or a prescription. Doctors can treat many conditions online including allergies, asthma, cold and flu, and infections, just to name a few.

Visit www.guard.me/mobiledoctor to sign up.

Money Matters

Under no circumstance is any homestay family member either permitted to borrow money from the international student nor is the international student permitted to borrow money from any homestay family member. Host families are not permitted to charge extra fees to the student.

Names

Review with the international student the names of all family members and pets and what everyone prefers to be called, including the student. Practice the pronunciation of names; if you find after a few days that your student is not calling family members by name, it is likely because she/he is uncertain of the pronunciation and does not wish to risk the embarrassment of a mistake. If this is the case, help your student practice pronouncing the names again. Remember that it will help the student remember this important information if it is written for them.

Respect your student's name. Be sure to ask about the proper pronunciation, and then call him or her by name. The excuse "It's too hard for me to pronounce" really means, "Your name isn't important enough for me to learn."

Parties

While parties will always be a form of teenage socializing, the following guidelines apply:

- Students must obtain the permission of the homestay family before attending any party.
- The homestay family must have the address and phone number where the party is to be held.
- The homestay family must make prior contact with the responsible parent who will attend the party throughout the duration.
- If there is no responsible adult in attendance, the student will not be permitted to attend the party.
- Students are prohibited from consuming any alcoholic beverages or drugs. To do so could result in immediate dismissal from the NISEP Program and return to the home country.
- Overnight attendance at parties is forbidden except in cases preauthorized by the homestay coordinator.

Privacy and Security

Privacy is an essential element when several people live together. Homestay parents must make it clear to the student 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, visitors, and pets. 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 for them to be in the student's room for cleaning.

At no time is it appropriate for a family member or visitor to borrow the student's possessions (computer, CDs, etc.) without prior approval. Everyone should also keep in mind that approval once doesn't mean approval on an on-going basis. Parents should also explain carefully to the student which family and household items are open for use and whether some are not.

Please be clear about the procedures for securing the home and items such as bikes. Explain about locking windows and doors, as well as which entrance to use.

The family must remember that physical contact is less common within some cultures, and it may make the student uncomfortable, particularly at first.

Public Transit Information

If you are in an area with public transportation, knowing how to utilize public transportation will increase your student's independence and may be an important factor in developing friendships with other students, both international and Canadian. Also, some students may need to take the city bus to school. NISEP encourages students to purchase a monthly bus pass, though this is not compulsory.

The family should help the student determine bus routes and schedules to and from school and various other locations in the city. The student must be taught bus etiquette in Canada, including not sitting in reserved seats, and signaling the desire to get off.

It is a good idea, initially, to prepare written instructions for the student, including destinations, bus names, and transfers needed. Depending on the student's language level, the family may wish to prepare cards that can be shown to the bus driver indicating where the student wants to go. The best way to teach your student the protocol of riding the bus is to ride with him or her the first time or two.

Although the student will be expected to become somewhat independent in getting around, the family might occasionally wish to arrange to pick him/her up if an activity ends late in the evening or in poor weather.

Receipts

In any case where the family collects reimbursement from the student for expenses deemed legitimate within the guidelines of the NISEP Program, it is a good idea that the family issue to the student a receipt. Remind the student that she/he should save this receipt.

Religion

Respect your student's religious beliefs. Absolutely no attempt should be made to change these. If your student wishes to attend a church, please assist him/her in making suitable arrangements.

School Holidays

International students may choose to remain in the homestay for the Christmas vacation. This is a wonderful opportunity to share Canadian culture. The homestay family is expected to include the international student in all aspects of holiday celebration. The international student is also expected to participate in family activities. International students generally stay in the homestay during Easter vacation as well.

However, if an international student intends to return home during these school holidays, she/he will require a letter of permission from NISEP. Otherwise, she/he may have trouble at Immigration upon returning to Canada. Please remind your student of this important detail.

Students are generally expected to return to their home countries for the summer break. Departure should be by June 30 unless other arrangements have been made. Please contact the homestay coordinator if you have questions about the summer break.

Shopping

Your student may be arriving from a warmer climate. We encourage families to take their students shopping for appropriate winter clothing, at the student's expense. Big box stores and thrift stores are all reliable options.

Sleeping Patterns and Arrangements

Sleeping arrangements should be explained so that the student knows how to sleep in the bed (how the sheets and covers work), and where to find extra blankets if needed. Show your student how to make the bed and let him/her know at what times you will be going to bed and eating breakfast. The student may be accustomed to different sleeping patterns. It is important that you help him/her establish routines that are compatible with your family's lifestyle.

Sleepovers

It is a good idea to encourage your student to bring their friends to your home so that you can get to know these friends and will have a good idea of the kinds of acquaintances your student is making. Please remember that it is your role as a responsible parent to take an active interest in your student's social life.

If your student asks to go to a friend's home for a sleepover, it is your responsibility to phone the parents who will be hosting your student to confirm that your understanding of the plans is accurate and that there will be a parent home throughout the night to supervise. It is up to your student to provide this phone number, as well as the address and names of the parents.

NISEP prohibits sleepovers involving students of the opposite sex and discourages sleepovers in general but leaves this to the discretion and good judgment of the host family.

Student Discipline

The NISEP program is designed for students who wish to further their English skills, succeed academically, and participate in Canadian culture. Every attempt is made by the Program and school staff and the homestay family to help the student achieve these goals.

The student, of course, must also bear responsibility for their own success. The student is required to obey all program rules, including attending all classes, maintaining good academic achievement, and cooperating with homestay families.

If a student fails to fulfill program requirements, NISEP personnel must intervene. At times

the misdemeanor is the result of cultural misunderstanding, and counselling is successful. At other times, disciplinary action and more serious consequences are necessary.

The NISEP student discipline process is very fair and very thorough. It has three basic steps (a “three strikes” procedure), designed to provide the student optimum opportunity to alter unsatisfactory behaviour. The homestay coordinator is responsible for implementing the disciplinary process and for notifying parents.

The three steps are:

1. **Written Warning.** Should behavioural issues persist following discussions with the Homestay Family, the student will be issued a written warning by their Homestay Coordinator. This warning will outline the ongoing issue, and the requests/solutions put forth by the Homestay Family (putting dishes away, respecting curfew, etc.) moves to step 2 below.
2. **Probation.** The student is provided with a “probation report”. This delineates the student’s unacceptable behaviour and the requirements for improvement and requires the student’s signature indicating the intention of improving.
3. **Expulsion.** Failure on the part of the student to fulfill the requirements of the Probation may result in dismissal from the NISEP program. The student is returned to their home country, and the Study Permit is returned to Immigration Canada

Telephone and Internet

Ensure that your student memorizes your telephone number as well as your work number in case she/he needs to contact you while you are at work. Also, ensure that your student understands the use of 911.

Please set definite guidelines regarding phone and internet usage. Most Canadian families do not appreciate calls late at night; therefore, your student should not phone Canadian friends or other international students in homestays after 9:30 at night unless there is an emergency. The student should not be on the phone for long periods of time.

Monitor your student’s use of the computer and telephone as you would for your own children. Should you feel that this is a problem area, please contact the homestay coordinator.

Please permit the international student to speak for longer periods of time if talking to the natural parent. However, if you are concerned that too frequent and too lengthy calls to natural parents are not helpful in your student’s adjustment to their new life, contact the homestay coordinator for assistance and advice. Also, discourage frequent incoming or outgoing calls, including those to and from parents, at inconvenient hours, i.e., before 7:00 a.m. or after 10:00 p.m.

NISEP Activities Program

NISEP offers its students an activity approximately every month, which participating students may attend. A sample of proposed activities that have been arranged in the past include Outdoor paintball, Ziplining, Cross Country Skiing, Downhill Skiing, Snowshoeing, Bell Island Mine Tour, and Whale Watching/Iceberg boat tour. An updated list for this year will be sent by email to homestay families and students when finalized.

Host families are expected to provide or arrange transportation for the student's arrival and pickup to/from the activity. When there are multiple students from one area attending, **NISEP encourages carpooling whenever possible**. Please note that NISEP will offer school bus transportation for some, but not all, activities. In cases like this, we will have a central drop-off and pick-up destination. When travelling across the highway, such as for the ski trip, we will have at least one additional pickup and drop-off location.

Visiting Parents

While homestay families are not required to host and entertain visiting parents, we encourage you to share some meals and activities to establish closer bonds. Visiting natural parents **must** stay in hotels at their expense.

Visitors

Your home is the student's home. It may be that she/he wishes to invite a friend home. Please discuss this in advance with your student and agree on notice, times, snacks, and any other aspects such as which rooms are suitable for hosting. Students must not entertain friends of the opposite sex in their bedrooms.

Withdrawal/Graduation/Program Completion

When your international student is preparing to leave Canada and return permanently to their home country, insist that the student complete the bulk of the packing and shipping in advance. Otherwise, when you take your student to the airport, you may find that the student's luggage is overweight and must be repacked. At the airport, if a student's luggage is overweight, they may be required to pay the associated fee.

Trips

Although the family is not obliged to show the student the attractions of Newfoundland and beyond, family excursions enhance the cultural experience of the international student and family members alike. Such trips are encouraged.

Overnight Trips with the Homestay Family

If you travel together (for a ski weekend, or out of town for a sightseeing trip, etc.), you are expected to bear the expense of transport (in the family vehicle), meals, and accommodation for the student. The exception would be if train/plane/ferry fare is required, or if an additional hotel room is required. The entertainment expenses (theatre tickets, ski lift tickets,

sports equipment rental) would be borne by the student. However, be certain in advance that the student wishes to participate in any activities that will cause him/her an extra expense.

Travel to the U.S.A.

A family wishing to travel to the United States with the student must remember that some students require visas to enter the U.S.A. Information regarding who requires a visa can be found on the web at <http://www.travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/visit.html>. Click on “Visa Waiver Program (VWP)”. If your student’s country is listed under the waiver program, she/he should not require a visa to enter the USA.

Trips out of Newfoundland without the Homestay Family

Under no condition is the student permitted to be away from Newfoundland overnight without the written permission of the homestay coordinator. The student must request to the homestay coordinator, by e-mail, at least seven days prior to the departure date. The homestay parent must approve this request prior to submitting the request to the homestay coordinator. It is expected that the homestay parent will have confirmed the precise destination of the student and will have spoken personally with the adult who will assume responsibility for the student during this trip. Students are not permitted to stay in any accommodation (hotel, apartment, house) without a responsible adult present who is at least 25 years of age. A student failing to comply with this rule may be subject to discipline, including dismissal from the program.

Clarification of Permission Requirements for Out-of-Town Trips

Out-of-town day or overnight trips with the homestay family

Homestay parents do not require permission from NISEP to take the student out of town for the day or overnight within the province.

Out-of-town overnight trips without the homestay family

The student must submit a request to the homestay coordinator, by e-mail, at least two weeks prior to the departure date, in order for the coordinator to send a Student Travel Authorization form to the student’s agent. Examples of such trips could be school team travel within or outside of the province, student holiday travel, etc. More time is required if the trip requires the written permission of the natural parents.

A student travelling out of town without Program consent will be considered in breach of their Participation Agreement and may be disciplined. For reasons of student safety and legal responsibility, it is important that this rule be strictly observed.

Homestay family trips without NISEP student

If a homestay family will be travelling without their student, (i.e., on pre-planned vacation) NISEP requires families to provide adequate notice to their assigned homestay coordinator.

Homestay families usually arrange for an adult friend or family member to move into the home during their absence, or for the student to stay at the home of a family friend.

Details Regarding Homestay Agreement

Limited Number of Students per Family Policy

The Newfoundland International Student Education Program stipulates that a homestay family may host no more than two international students at a time. In addition, no student will be placed with a homestay family that is currently hosting a student for any other program except with express permission of the homestay coordinator in consultation with the NISEP homestay program manager.

Homestay Fees

You will be reimbursed for sharing your home with a student. Homestay fees are intended to cover room, board, and parental guidance, as well as the rights and courtesies extended to all other members of the family.

The honorarium will be agreed upon with the NISEP Program; no further charges may be made by the family to the student.

- * The monthly rate for students will be \$875. Homestay payments are processed on the 21st of each month, for the current calendar month. If the 21st falls on a weekend, payment will go on Friday.
- * NISEP pays families using direct deposit. Your up-to-date banking information must be provided to Sandra Ward. A voided cheque showing your name and mailing address can be provided to your homestay coordinator for transmittal to NISEP.
- * If your student returns to his/her home country during the summer break, no fee will be charged to the student nor paid to the family for these absences.

Any questions or concerns about the payment of the homestay fee should be referred to Sandra Ward (sandra.ward@nisep.ca) immediately.

Homestay Damage

NISEP does not hold for any student a homestay deposit to be applied against any damage incurred by the student. If damage to the home or the family's belongings is incurred by the student, NISEP will use its best efforts on behalf of the family in collecting reimbursement from the student.

The homestay family must notify the homestay coordinator as soon as possible. Failure to do so may result in loss of compensation received from the student or the student's family. All damages must be inspected by the homestay coordinator and approved for payment. Newfoundland International Student Education Program, nor its staff or homestay

coordinators will be held responsible for damage caused by an international student in homestay.

Student Moves

The homestay coordinator makes every attempt to find a suitable match between the student and the homestay family and will monitor the satisfaction of both parties through regular contact.

Although most homestay placements are successful, predicting which factors promote success is not easy. Unfortunately, some matches do not work out and the student must be moved to another home. This decision is never made lightly and is usually made only after several discussions with both the family and the student have failed to produce satisfactory results. If issues or problems are the result of incompatibility between the student and the homestay family, NISEP will locate a new homestay.

The transition can be eased if the reasons for the move are discussed openly, and blame avoided. After a move has been made, families and students often feel sad, guilty, and rejected for a period because they feel that they have failed in their homestay experience. However, both sides are encouraged to evaluate the experience as a whole and to try to understand what was learned as well as what mistakes, if any, were made.

If the issue or problem has resulted from more serious problematic behaviour on the part of the student, a course of action will be determined on a case-by-case basis. If it is deemed that the student should remain in the Newfoundland International Student Education Program, the homestay coordinator will locate a new homestay. This will be termed a “Probationary Move”. A student will be allowed only one Probationary Move.

If a further difficulty arises due to serious problematic behaviour on the part of the student, the student will be withdrawn from the Newfoundland International Student Education Program, Citizenship and Immigration Canada will be notified, and the student may be required to return to his/her home country at his/her own expense.

If a homestay family does not abide by Program guidelines and fails to provide for a student’s emotional as well as physical needs, the student will be moved from the home. In these cases, the homestay family cannot expect any notice from the program. Furthermore, if payment for the current month has already been made, the family may be asked to refund the appropriate portion of the month’s homestay fee.

Student Expectations/Discipline

During their time in Newfoundland, NISEP students are expected to adhere to all rules of both the Homestay Family and the program.

The student's Homestay Family set rules regarding chores, curfews, household activities, etc. Should a student continually disobey the rules of the home, the Homestay Coordinator may need to become involved.

Once the Homestay Coordinator becomes involved in an ongoing issue, NISEP utilizes a three-strikes policy:

- First offence – Written warning
- Second offence – Probation
- Third offence – Termination from the program

Written Warning – Should behavioural issues persist following discussions with the Homestay Family, the student will be issued a written warning by their Homestay Coordinator. This warning will outline the ongoing issue, and the requests/solutions put forth by the Homestay Family (putting dishes away, respecting curfew, etc.)

Finally, the written warning informs the student of the consequences of their failure to comply moving forward. Should a written warning not be enough to resolve the issue, the student will then be placed on probation.

Probation – Once a student has been placed on probation, failure to adhere to any and all rules and expectations of both the Host Family and NISEP will result in the student's termination from the program.

There are also instances where NISEP will forgo probation and terminate the student immediately. Some of these instances include, but are not limited to:

- The commission of a crime
- The consumption/selling of illegal narcotics
- Significant mental health and safety concerns
- Smoking cigarettes/vaping

NOTE: Termination from the program is done solely at the discretion of NISEP. If a student is terminated from the program, they are not entitled to a refund of fees.

Alcohol/Drugs/Vaping – In Newfoundland, the legal drinking age to consume alcohol or purchase cigarettes is 19. While some students may be of legal age by the time of their departure, **no NISEP students are permitted to consume alcohol, smoke cigarettes, or consume any recreational drugs during their stay. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in the student's immediate termination from the program, at their own cost, without a refund of fees.**