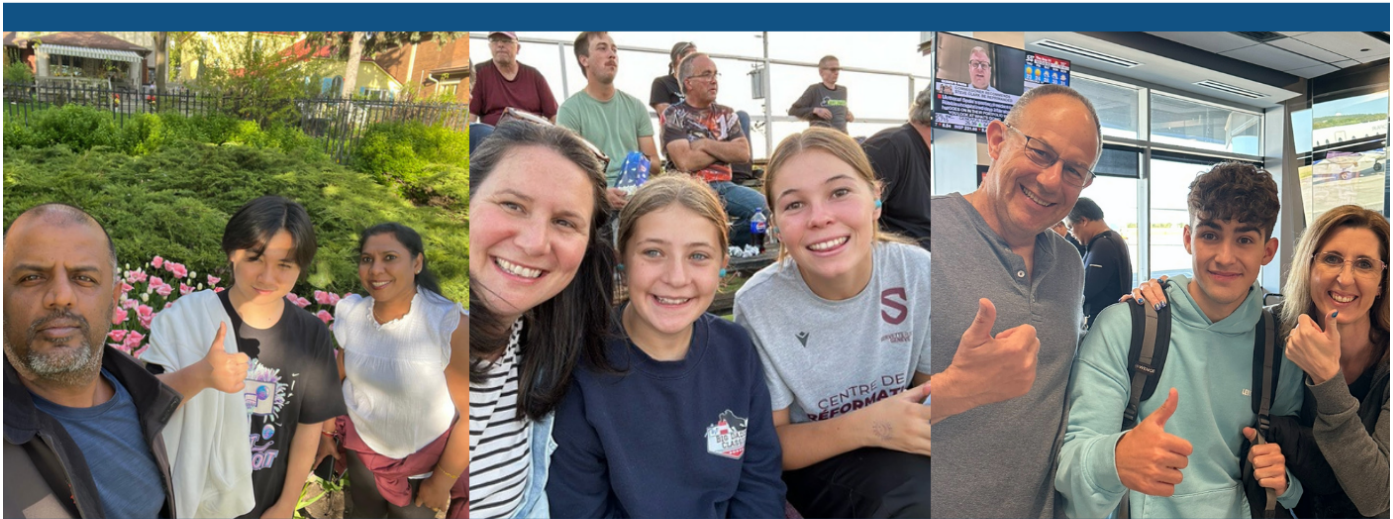




# 2025-26 STUDENT HANDBOOK



Canada awaits you! MLI Homestay has placed thousands of students with caring host families across Canada. We love working with international students and host families to create an unforgettable experience.

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*Living with a local family is the ideal way to integrate into Canadian culture.*

## MLI Homestay

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### MLI

Muskoka Language International is a national organization with offices in Toronto and North Vancouver. Our local coordinators and support staff work in communities across the country.

At MLI Homestay, we believe that international homestay experiences allow participants to gain more knowledgeable, understanding about life in Canada and feel more confident of their own abilities and achievements. Participants will have an experience that will be one of the most valuable in their lives and return home with memories that last a lifetime.

### Student Care Team

Once you arrive in Canada, members of our Student Care Team will support you during your stay. Student Care Managers and Supervisors work in our offices and oversee the team of local staff that live in the community you are in and are close by to support you. Let's learn more about the team:

### Custodian

Your MLI representative who is acting as your custodian while you are in Canada will provide support to you regarding your safety and wellbeing. Some of the support they provide includes:

- Attend student registration or arrange for your host to attend if required by the school board.
- Sign general school permission forms.
- Provide support for emergency purposes.
- Monthly check ins (both in-person and virtual) to ensure that you are doing well.
- Support you for any issues or concerns with your host family, cultural settlement, school or other.

The custodian is **NOT** responsible to:

- Communicate with your natural parents or pay any fees for the arrangements listed above.
- Provide academic support or guidance.

### Local Coordinator (LC)

Our Local Coordinators live in or near the community you will be staying in. Your local coordinator has familiarized themselves with your application and has helped arrange your placement. **This person will be your first point of contact** during your stay and will contact you once you arrive to ensure that you are settling in well. You will have received a 'Meet the Team' document in your Welcome package prior to leaving for Canada. This document has your coordinator's contact information on it. They are available for any questions you have and should be among the first you contact if you encounter any problems. Knowing and

trusting your local coordinator is the best way to ensure that you have the best possible experience.

The local coordinator is also responsible for managing the relationship with the host family. Don't be afraid to reach out and let the coordinator know if you are having any concerns with your host family. They can assist with the communication between you and the family and will assist to troubleshoot issues.

During each semester (5-month period), your coordinator will also visit with you personally to check in on your well-being.

There are many other people that you may not have direct contact with, but who are helping you behind the scenes. Our student care team have processed your application, placed you with your host family, and are in contact with your local agent back home.

## Communication

Your local coordinator will be in touch with you using phone calls, email, text, and various other social media platforms such as WhatsApp, and Line. We are happy to accommodate the method of communication that works best for you both.

**Please reply to your LCs within the same day they contact you, or provide a date for when you can respond.** If you contact your LC, and your inquiry is not urgent, please allow your LC 24-hours to return your message. If you need urgent assistance, please inform them of the urgency. In case of an emergency, please call the MLI Homestay emergency number directly.

## Host Family

Your host family will be your family away from home. Your new host family is ready to look after you, care for you, and treat you as they would their own family members. They will provide you with 3 meals daily, a private room, and a study area in a friendly, supportive, and nurturing environment.

## Who Do I Contact if...

### I HAVE AN ISSUE WITH MY HOMESTAY...

1. If the issue is small and just needs a clarification – speak with your host mom or dad
2. If the issue is larger and you are comfortable – speak first with your host mom or dad
3. Then contact your local coordinator and let her know about the issue and any resolution that you've already come to – OR – ask your LC for help and advise on how to resolve or move forward

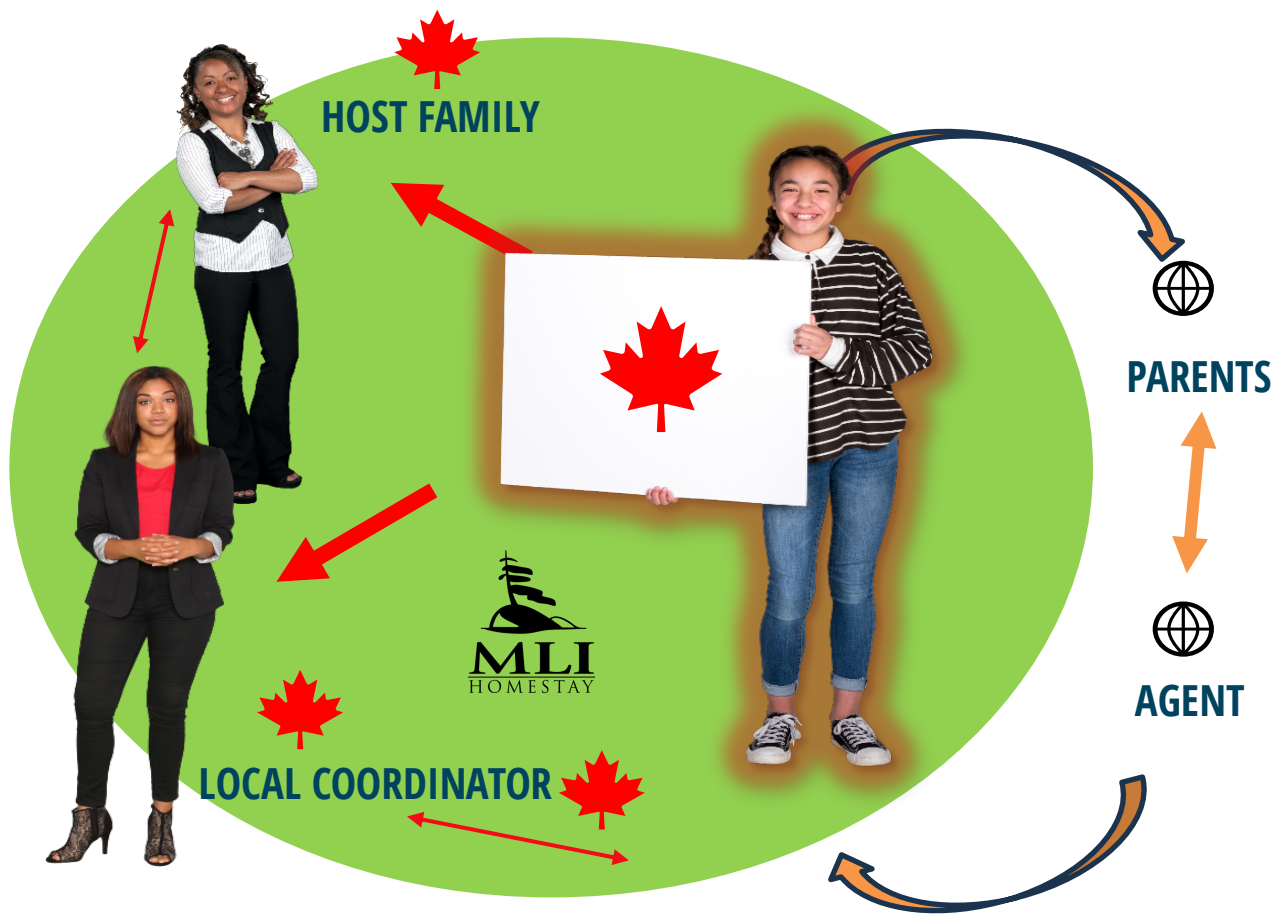
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Always follow up with your LC via call or text to let them know if the issue is resolved or if you need further help

### We are here to support you!

Your Local Coordinator is IN YOUR Community, in the same time zone, and ready to help you!

Let them guide and support you as well as share in your successes!



## About Canada

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Canada has a short and colourful history. From the founding of Québec by Samuel de Champlain in 1608 and the signing of the Confederation Treaty in 1867, to their cognition of Nunavut as a third territory in 1999, Canada is a young but exciting country. Canada is the second largest country in the world. The total land area is 9,976,140 sq. km. It is over 5,500 km long from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean and over 4,600 km from the northern tip of Ellesmere Island to the U.S. border. It stretches across five time zones and has a population of approximately 40 million people.

89% of the land in Canada has no permanent population, with a general average of 5 people per square kilometer. The urban/rural population split is 77% in urban areas and 23% in rural areas. More than 65% of the population lives in the 5% of Canada taken up by the Great Lakes. St. Lawrence Lowland, Québec, and Ontario house Canada's most prosperous cities as well as over half of Canada's population. Crime rates in Canada are much lower than in the USA.

Canada is divided into 10 provinces and 3 territories. The three principal cities of Canada are Toronto, Vancouver, and Montréal.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects all citizens from discrimination based on race, skin colour, ethnic background, religion or sexual orientation. When you come to Canada, you will be welcomed and become part of our inclusive society.

Canada has two official languages which are English and French. The capital city of Canada is Ottawa, and the currency is the Canadian dollar.

Canada has 69 universities and 203 other institutions of higher education. Over 75% of secondary level students pursue some form of higher education - the highest proportion in the industrialized world.

The UN ranks Canada as one of the best countries in the world in which to live.

The climate of Canada ranges from polar and sub-polar in the North, to cool in the South. Winters in the interior are colder and longer than on the coast, with temperatures well below freezing and deep snow, while summers are much hotter. Vancouver has the warmest winters; temperatures rarely fall below zero.



## Becoming a Global Citizen

### Living Abroad: The Adjustment and Progression Cycle



## Arriving in Canada

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### Guidelines for Airport Meet & Greet

CUSTOMS & IMMIGRATION: After arriving, you will first need to go through Canadian Customs and Immigration. It is at this point when your Study Permit will be officially issued (if applicable). Please advise students to check Immigration Canada's website for up-to-date arrival/travel information. Students must have the following documents printed and should not pack these or other important documents in their luggage.

1. Valid Passport
2. Letter of Introduction from IRCC (Study Permit Approval Letter) or eTA
3. Letter of acceptance from School Board (LOA)
4. Notarized Custodian Docs Page 1 & 2
5. MLI Host Family Profile
6. Payment Receipts from School Board & MLI Homestay
7. MLI Emergency contact #
8. MLI Meet the team Doc (Local Coordinator)

**\*A copy of your Study Permit must be provided to your local coordinator upon arrival**

RETRIEVING YOUR BAGGAGE: After you have passed Customs & Immigration follow the other passengers to the BAGGAGE area. Be sure that you retrieve ALL your luggage.

If your luggage is missing or damaged, you must submit a Lost Baggage Claim before leaving this area, airport personnel can assist you. We recommend that you provide the following addresses:

- Living with a host family: Host Family address & phone number

From here, continue to the EXIT where you will enter the ARRIVALS area

—OR—

Follow signs for CONNECTING FLIGHTS, if you are transferring to another Canadian destination. Airport personnel can help guide you to the right location.

**WHO WILL MEET ME?** MLI will arrange one of the following people to meet you at the airport:

- An MLI representative
- Your local coordinator
- Your host family
- Your custodian
- A shuttle representative

Regardless of who is meeting you, always look for a SIGN with either:



-The MLI logo (this is typical for large arrival dates such as the start of the programme in September or February).

-Your name (this is more typical for arrivals during the school year when you might be the only student arriving on a flight).

### **IMPORTANT!!**

**Do NOT leave the arrival area or the airport until you have been greeted by a designated MLI representative, as mentioned above.** Please do not wander off to get something to eat or sightsee around the airport. We expect your arrival and we have made arrangements for someone to meet you and transport you to your home or school.



### **WHAT DO I DO IF I CANNOT FIND THE MLI REPRESENTATIVE?**

**Step 1:** DON'T PANIC!! The ARRIVALS area can be very busy, especially for international flights. Your flight may be early or the greeter may have encountered traffic and is delayed. If you are unable to immediately locate the MLI sign (or a sign with your name on it), we recommend that you move to a side location, away from the crowd of people, and let the crowds clear. Once there are fewer people, it will be easier to locate your greeter. Walk slowly through the arrival area looking for the sign.

**Step 2:** Listen for announcements. Sometimes your greeter will have your name announced over the loud speaker.

Some airports (such as the Toronto Pearson Airport) have a designated Meet and Greet area or Info Desk. This is also a good place to stand and wait.

**Step 3:** After 20 to 30 minutes - if you still cannot locate your greeter, please call our emergency line and one of our staff will be happy to help you.

It's a free call from any phone (mobile or pay phone): **1-866-388-6543**.

MODE OF TRANSPORTATION TO HOST FAMILY HOME: You will either take a hired private car, a shuttle car with several students, or the host family will personally meet you and drive you to their home. Your greeter will advise of which option is arranged for you. In all cases you will be taken to your host family home or to a central meeting point where your family will meet you.

**MLI Homestay does not provide transfers to family members travelling with their child. Airport transfers are only meant for the student themselves.**

**MLI Homestay does not provide transfers from hotels or other locations where a student may be. The transfers provided in your package are only to/from the airport.**

**Airport transfers are mandatory as part of your homestay service. You are not permitted to arrange the transfers yourself or take a self-arranged ride share (Uber) or taxi. As your custodian, we become legally responsible for your safety the moment your plane lands in Canada. We must ensure that you arrive safely to your host family.**

### Travelling with Parents

We discourage natural parents from accompanying their child to their homestay. In our experience when natural parents arrive with their child, it can be awkward. It is important to remember that the host family is also a little nervous to meet their student. Welcoming a student is very different than welcoming the student along with their family and this can create different expectations for the host family. It also depends on what the natural parent's expectations are – do they expect to be invited into the home and shown around, have a conversation with the family, or just drop off their child and say a quick hello? The most important thing is that the student gets off to a good start with their host family and they bond. A natural parent present can throw this off. Parents can meet up with their child and spend some time with them outside of the homestay.

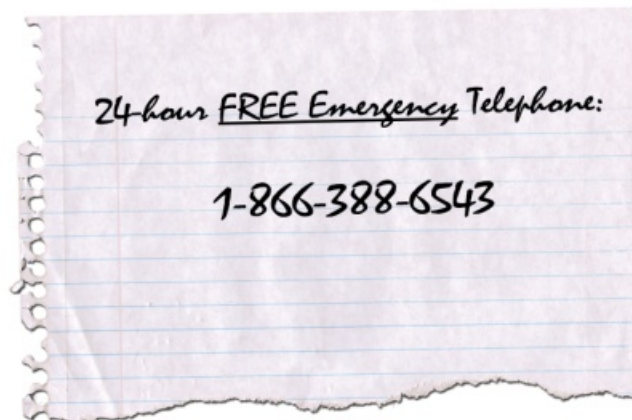
## Emergency Contact

### MLI Emergency

For times when you cannot reach your Local Coordinator, and you have an emergency, you may use this free telephone number, which will connect you to a head office staff member. This person may or may not be your regular contact. Be prepared to give the following information:

- Your name.
- Your community.
- Phone number where you can be reached.
- Brief description of the emergency situation.

We ask that this phone number be used for emergencies only.



**In case of fire, medical or other emergency**

**Call 911**

Free from any phone

## Homestay

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Canadians are well known for their hospitality and friendliness. However, we know that living with your host family will take some adjustment as it may be very different from your own family and culture.

To make this successful, **keep an open mind and an open heart!**

Participate in family events, spend time playing games or just talking to your new host family. The more time you spend with them, the more you will know them and they will know you.

### Your Canadian Family

Your new host family is as excited to meet you as you are to meet them. Canadian families may be parents with young or teen kids, retired couples with grown children, childless couples, single parents or even a single woman or man. Families are also very diverse, coming from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Families often reflect their original culture.

### Homes

Canadians live in a variety of homes. Some may be large, detached, suburban-style homes, while others may be apartments, condominiums or townhomes. Whatever the style, you can be sure that the home will be clean and inviting.

- You will have your own bedroom which you are responsible for keeping clean. You will be expected to make your own bed.
- Expect to share a bathroom with the family, please be sure to keep your personal belongings tidy and clean up after any showers or baths. Your host parents will show you where you can put your personal items.

### The Host Family – Your New Mom or Dad

Your new host family is as excited to meet you as you are to meet them. Canadian families are very diverse, coming from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Families often reflect both typical “Canadian” lifestyles as well as traditions brought from their original culture. Regardless of the outward appearance and demographic of the family, you can be assured that your new host family is ready to look after you, care for you and treat you as they would their own child. They want you to have the best possible experience while you are in Canada and also take seriously the responsibility of your safety and welfare. Your own parents have put trust in this host family, as have you. We encourage you to make the most of this experience, and open yourself to a wonderful, new cultural life.

## Your New Siblings

If you have siblings in the home, please treat them with respect, regardless if they are older or younger than you. If the siblings are younger, be sure to be kind to them – they will likely look up to you as an older sister or brother. Also, don't be afraid to tell them nicely if you are busy or need time to study. If the siblings are close in age to you, be sure to recognize that it may take some time to become friends but with patience you can create a wonderful connection. The more you participate in the everyday life of the family, the faster you will be seen as a member of the family.

## What is provided:

### The host family will offer:

- Family interaction and personal support
- A private bedroom, with a bed, closet/dresser/wardrobe, a desk or workspace (in bedroom or in a quiet area of the house)
- Clean towels and bed linens (not replaced daily!)
- Three (3) meals daily (including a packed lunch on school days)
- Laundry facilities (host parents may require you to do own laundry using the facilities)
- Respect for your culture and a willingness to share theirs

### You are expected to:

- Treat your family with respect and participate as a member of the family
- Obey family rules, especially with respect to curfew and internet usage
- Keep your bedroom clean and respect the common living areas. Keep living space tidy (including any shared bathrooms), and voluntarily help with reasonable household chores
- Respect the family's privacy
- Respect cultural differences - be open to new cultures
- Respect the family's property and treat it as if it were your own. You are responsible for notifying the family of any damages and may be asked to pay for damages caused through willful neglect, or when damage is extensive.
- Speak English (or French if that's your target language) to get the most of your Canadian immersion!

## House Rules and Expectations

When you arrive at your new home, your host family will welcome you and will discuss with you *their* house rules & expectations. These may be different from what you are used to back home. This should be a sharing time, a time for you to learn about life in Canada and for your new host family to get to know you and life in your country.

### Understanding family rules:

Your host family will also discuss with you certain family rules, especially regarding curfew and communication, including:

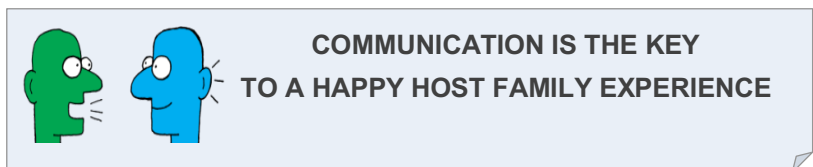
- Curfew on school nights.
- Curfew on weekends.
- Use of phone and/or internet.
- When you can have friends over.
- How and who to call if you will be late for dinner, etc.

Before making plans with friends, be sure to always tell your family:

- Where you plan to go.
- Who you are with.
- How you will get there and back.
- What time you will be back.

Your host family may refuse your request to participate in certain activities because of safety concerns or a conflict with their own plans. Do not assume that you can just do what you wish, even if your friends are doing it. Always discuss plans with your host family – they are your parents!

Remember:



### Expect changes and compromise

Canadians hold a reputation for being friendly and open. Many families have pets in the home, such as a dog, cat, or fish. You will likely notice a casual atmosphere in the home. Most families laugh and joke with each other, and may be openly affectionate (hugs, etc).

Canadian parents encourage independence from their children as it is not common for middle and working-class families to have maids, drivers or other domestic staff. As such, your host mom or dad will encourage you to **keep your room tidy, make your own breakfast or lunch, wash your own laundry, and will show you how to take public transit on your own to get to places in the community.**

**Do not mistake this for indifference or not caring. It is typical for Canadian children to behave this way, so the family will encourage you to do the same.**

### Helping with the home to keep things tidy



**Remember:** since most Canadian families do not employ a full-time housekeeper, each family maintains their own schedule for house cleaning, which may not be daily. This is especially true if both host parents work full-time jobs. This does not mean that the house is 'dirty', as is a common misinterpretation.

**Tidying your own space:** you are provided your own bedroom which is your space. However, the host family will have expectations for keeping that space clean and tidy. You will be expected to:

do a tidy at least once weekly

to refrain from eating and keeping food in your room

for generally tidying your clothes and personal belongings.

Some hosts may opt to vacuum your room, which means that the floor needs to be accessible.

**Tidying other common areas:** your host family will also expect you to help as a member of the family to keep the common areas of the home clean and tidy – in the same manner as they would ask of their own children. You may be asked to help tidy dishes after a meal, to empty or fill the dishwasher, to tidy a living/rec room, take the dog for a walk etc. Please talk with your host family about the expectations. If you have any concerns, your local coordinator is available to talk to you.

## HOME ROUTINES

### *Discuss expectations and how things work*

Your host family will provide you with a house key (be responsible! Keep it safe!) and will show you how all the house appliances and facilities work. Please discuss with your family the following as a START to understanding how things work:

- How and when to lock the doors
- How to operate the security system if they have one – keep code secret!
- The most suitable arrangement for doing laundry - where to keep clothing to be washed, if you should do your own laundry, how to use the machines, etc.
- How to operate the dishwasher / where supplies are kept
- Your role in maintaining common areas - bathroom, living room, and kitchen
- If they have certain “house clean-up” days
- What are the meal schedules; do you need to make your own breakfast etc.
- Any allergies you have/foods you truly dislike

**Showers:** hosts will always allow you to shower at least once daily but please ensure you understand any time limits that hosts may ask you to keep. Showers lasting longer than 10-15 minutes may not be the norm in the family, nor is taking several showers daily. Please speak with your host family about any limits they wish you to follow, or time guidelines that fit within the family routine.

**Mealtimes / call if you will be late:** your host will always ensure that you have an evening meal (supper/dinner). Many families like to eat together as this is a great way to catch up on what has been happening in everyone's day, and for you to practice your general conversation. Please be sure to be home for this meal as often as possible. If you know you have other plans or will be late, be courteous and call your host mom or dad to let them know.

## GETTING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

Generally, students who live within 3-3.5km from the school are expected to walk, take public transit, or otherwise find their own way to school. The actual distance varies by location. It is common for a daily one-way commute to take 20-45 minutes on public transit.

If you live 3 to 3.5km from the school you may be eligible to be on a school bus (the big yellow bus!). You will be assigned a designated pick up/drop off location (the bus will not come to your front door).

Your host mom or dad already know if you are on a bus route OR your local coordinator will confirm this with you soon after your arrival. If you not sure – talk to your host mom or dad, or LC!

### ***Before/after school activities:***

The host family may be available to assist with taking you to activities or events at the school or in the city. **You must make any transportation requests politely and in advance of any activity.** Last-minute requests may not be possible, nor is the host family responsible for daily transit to activities or after school events.

If you intend to join an extra-curricular activity, school sport or activity outside of school

- discuss the days, times and requirements with your host family before making any commitments
- If your family is unable to provide transportation, you may be able to make arrangements with friends or other students in the activity or sport
- You are expected to independently make your way to any activities when possible, but your host family may be able to assist you if necessary.

## Meals

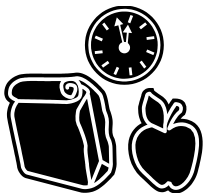


Canadians have adopted many different foods from various cultures and countries. Most families eat standard bread, dairy, vegetables, and meat during their meals. BBQ cooking is common in the warm weather, while hearty soups and pastas are more common in the colder months. Be open to trying new food but also don't be afraid to tell your host family about any food that you truly dislike or are allergic to.

Your host family will provide you with all your meals but that may not always mean that every meal will be served to you.

Breakfast: Some families have various morning schedules so it is important to discuss your schedule with them and establish the best routine. Some families eat a hot breakfast and others prefer to have something cold such as cereal or toast. Your family might leave it up to you to determine what you prefer in the mornings and will show you where the food is kept and allow you to make your own breakfast. Please do not feel that if they do not serve you breakfast that you have nothing to eat. Discuss the meals with them when you arrive or when you are not sure - they will always want you to be fed and certainly don't want you to go to school hungry.

Lunch: Since lunch is eaten at school, your family will provide you with a bagged lunch to take with you. Usually, Canadians have a sandwich, a snack (cookies, fruit) and a drink. Not all schools have a cafeteria, so purchasing a hot meal may not be possible. If your school does have a cafeteria, you may choose to buy a hot lunch on occasion (at your own cost). Please make sure you communicate your preference with your host family. Snack items can also be purchased from vending machines at most schools, and many schools have adopted healthy snacking options.



Dinner: Your hosts will attempt to have a family dinner as often as the daily schedule allows. This is a great time to share stories of the day. It is very important that you communicate with your family the time for dinner (in Canada, dinner is usually eaten between 5:00 and 7:00 pm) and let them know in advance if you will be late or have made other plans (this should

be only occasionally). Please try to take part in the family dinner as often as possible as this is the best time for families to talk about their day and for you to bond with your host family.

**Portions size:** Your family will serve you (or allow you to serve yourself) a reasonable portion at each meal. If you wish to have more – please ask. **It is acceptable to have more than one serving of a meal.** If you feel that portion sizes are not adequate for you, speak with your host parent(s). They certainly do not wish for you to be hungry, but their supply of food is not unlimited.

**Snacks:** **As a courtesy,** always ask or clarify which foods are available for snacks throughout the day or evening. If you are unsure what is permitted, talk to your host family. They will tell you what food is available, and which foods may be reserved for specific reasons (ie. may be intended for a meal the next day or if a family member has allergies, he/she may need to have specific food purchased just for them, etc). If you want certain snacks or food that the family does not typically purchase, you may wish to simply buy these on your own.

If you have a certain meal from your home country, you are encouraged to ask your natural parent(s) for the recipe and ask your host parent(s) to help you make it. Often, sharing of cultural food is a great way to introduce your new family to your culture. *Please refrain from using the kitchen appliances - especially the stove/oven – without adult permission and/or supervision.*

#### REMEMBER:

- **If you will not be home for dinner, you MUST phone your family and tell them before dinnertime.** This way, they will not expect you, they will not worry, and they will most likely leave some food for you in the fridge.
- **Do not invite friends or relatives to the homestay for dinner without FIRST discussing and receiving permission from your host parent(s) to do this.**

BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
<b>Typical: 7am-9am</b>	<b>Typical: 11am – 1pm</b>	<b>Typical: 5pm-7pm</b>
<u>Weekday</u> Cereal Oatmeal Toast/bread Jam, Peanut Butter Fruit <u>Additionally on Weekends</u> Eggs Pancakes / Waffles  <i>On weekends, families often have a larger breakfast or a Brunch which is eaten later and is a combination of breakfast and lunch</i>	<u>Weekday: Packed lunch</u> Sandwiches – with sliced ham, turkey etc. Soup Pastas Snacks <u>Additionally on Weekends</u> Burgers / Hotdogs Rice / Potatoes /Quinoa Vegetables & salads Meats  <i>Hot lunches are more common on weekends, when at home</i>	Meat (Beef, Chicken, Pork, Fish) Pasta Rice / Potatoes /Quinoa Vegetables & salads Stir-fry Soup Burgers / Hotdogs Dessert  <i>Canadians like to vary their cooking to include dishes from various countries BBQ cooking is common in warmer weather</i>

## Washroom and Fixtures

When asking about public washroom you may use the terms: **washroom, bathroom or restroom**. The terms “WC” or “toilets” are not commonly used.

In Canadian homes, bathrooms have a toilet, sink and either shower and/or a tub. Washrooms, however, are not fully waterproof.

- If you have a bath - make sure that water does not overflow the tub.
- If you have a shower - please make sure that the shower curtain is inside the tub and not outside so water does not drip out onto the floor.
- After using the washroom always make sure to leave it clean and tidy. Wipe the water up around the sink and put away your toiletries.

**PERSONAL TOILETRIES:** your host family will provide the basics such as toilet paper, towels, and soap. They may provide shampoo, but if you have a specific brand, you should expect to purchase this and any other toiletries on your own.

Canada has an extensive disposal and sewage system. Toilets should be flushed after each use. All human waste can be flushed down the toilet. **Do not** flush large masses of toilet paper or tissue down the toilet. If the toilet should become plugged and/or overflow, tell your host family immediately.

Sanitary napkins/tampons, feminine hygiene products, etc., should be wrapped in toilet paper and put into the garbage basket, not flushed.

## Manners

Canadians have good manners, and your host will expect the same of you. Remember to say:



- Eat all food prepared for you or apologize to your host if you are unable to finish. Be honest if you dislike certain food.
- Take one serving first to be sure you like it. You may have second servings.
- If you do not like something your host is serving, put it to the side of your plate.
- If something is out of reach, ask for it to be passed. Don't reach over other people to grab food.
- It is rude to slurp, burp or make noises while you eat. Chew with your mouth closed.
- Remain at the table until everyone has finished their meal, or you have been excused.

- Clear your own dishes from the table once you have finished your meal.
- Remove your shoes before entering a house.
- A handshake is the most common way to greet people. However, you can also say a friendly hello.
- Spitting in public is considered rude.
- Sneeze or cough into your arm or sleeve to avoid spreading germs.
- Spitting inside a house (on a carpet) is considered rude and is not acceptable.
- Offer to help with light chores around the house: tidy your room, common areas, assist with a meal etc.



#### How to Address Adults and Peers

- Adults (including teachers) should be referred to as:
  - Mr. or Mrs. + their last name (i.e. Mr. Smith)
- Many adults now ask friends of their children to call them by their first name. They will advise you should this be the case.
- Your host mom or dad will advise how they wish you to call them.
- You can address other students/peers by their first name.

#### Friends & Visitors:

- Always ask your host mom or dad before you invite a friend to the house, especially if you invite them over for a meal.
- Any requests to have a friend (of the same gender) stay overnight must receive approval from BOTH sets of parents – your host parents and your friend's host parents (or natural parents if he/she is a local). Overnights with friends of the opposite sex is not permitted.

### **Resolving Problems with your Host Family**

Your host family has been selected with much thought for you, your lifestyles, and your requests. As such, we hope that your time spent with the family will be very rewarding and enjoyable. There may be moments when you or your family encounters certain problems. **Often, issues arise from lack of communication, miscommunication or an inability to compromise.** If you experience any problems, we ask that you follow this procedure:

Speak with your Host Family Immediately

1. Often, what appears to be a small problem becomes larger when it is not addressed. One small incident can snowball into a larger problem if not discussed right away. Therefore, if you have a problem, if you are unsure about something, if you feel that your family is upset or you are upset by something, **SPEAK WITH THEM**. Ask them to please set aside some time and tell them that you are not sure about a rule or expectation, and that you feel that there may be a problem. You will find that the family will be happy to talk to you and to find out what can be done to resolve the problem. Their first goal in hosting you is to ensure your safety and to provide a caring home environment. Similarly, your host family will also let you know if they wish to speak with you about a concern.
2. If you cannot resolve the problem or concern by speaking with your host family, please **CALL your MLI Homestay Local Coordinator**. We cannot help you if we do not know what is happening. It is best to hear the problem from you directly, and not through your parents or agent because sometimes the information can be distorted. When you talk to MLI Homestay, we can arrange to meet you and talk about your problem. We can then approach the host family and work out a solution.
3. Changing host families is NOT an option unless there has been a severe breach of trust or conduct. If you have issues with your host family, speak with your local coordinator. We promise to evaluate the situation and help as needed.

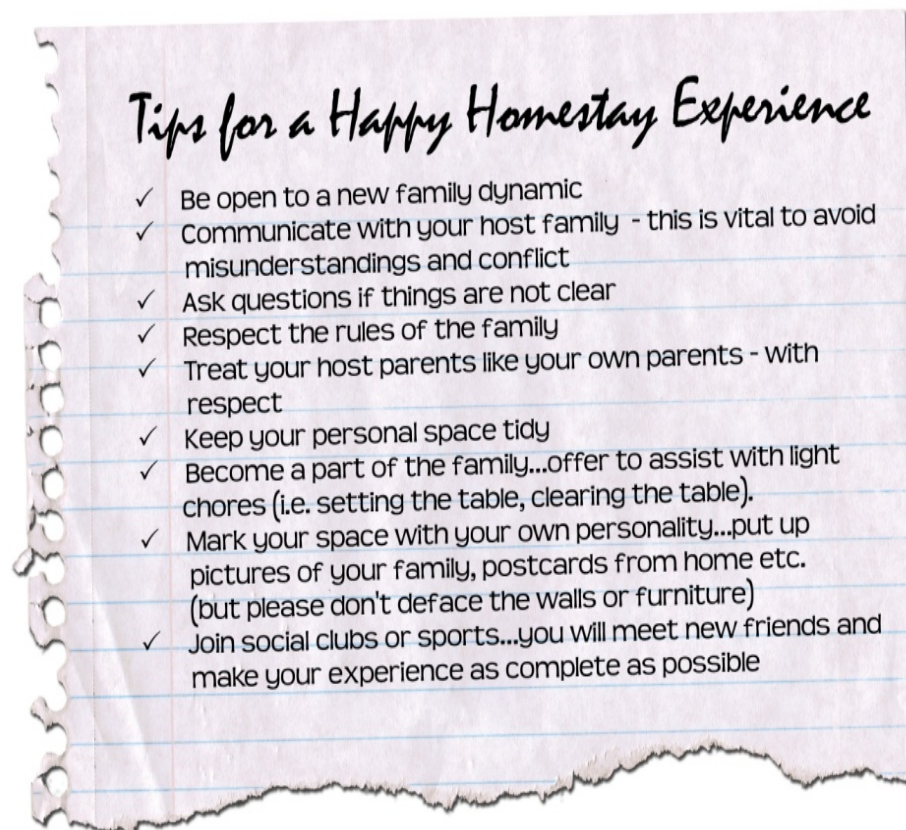
*If it's been a few weeks and you truly feel you have some major issues that cannot be resolved by yourself or the host is not responding to you:*

- Arrange a call or to meet with your Local Coordinator
- Your LC will listen to you and may give you suggestions of methods to try to resolve the issue yourself – how to say things in English, a different viewpoint etc.
- For major issues, your LC may need to investigate from both sides – your views and your host's views
- Your coordinator may arrange to talk privately with the host in a very neutral way
- If your LC in the end agrees that the family is ill-matched for true reasons (example: neglect or severe personality conflict...and not that you want to be closer to a friend or that the family is from a background that is new to you) then your LC and team will take the necessary steps to find you a new home. However, this is a process that takes time!
- It often takes several weeks to arrange for a new home and move date – any new host must still be in the zone for your school. You cannot change schools because of a host move!
- If you are in a very uncomfortable situation at the home or have experienced something truly unpleasant, your LC may arrange for a temporary respite host until a new permanent host is found
- Depending on the validity for the reasons for the move or your request for a new host, charges may be incurred, and will be discussed with your Agency/Parents.

### *What if the host asks MLI Homestay to find you a new family?*

- Your own (constant) misbehaviours, or disregard for family rules may also cause a host to ask the LC to find you a new host. In such events, the LC will always talk with you and the host to try to find a solution
- They will want to know both views for the situation – yours and the hosts
- The LC will follow our Student Discipline method to work with you to understand how your behaviours have been inappropriate and must change once you move into a new home.
  - Our goal is always for you to have a successful experience...and you need to be an active participant in that effort!
- If a move is necessary, in a similar way as above, the LC will work as quickly as possible to find you a new host family, or a Respite Host may be secured until a new permanent host is found
- Depending on the severity of your behaviour, charges may be incurred, and will be discussed with your Agency/Parents.

- ALWAYS...be open, be communicative, and be honest
- Our team will work with you to try to resolve conflict first and only move you if truly necessary



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## Communication

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Your local coordinator will be in touch with you using phone calls, email, text, and various other social media platforms such as WhatsApp, and Line. We are happy to accommodate the method of communication that works best for you both. We accept no excuses for no communication!

It is vital to the overall success of your programme and immersion, that you connect with your local coordinator if you have any problems. We are here to help you AND we are closer to you than your parents while you are in Canada.

- In most cases, if you call your parents first when you have a problem or something is not working for you, they will worry, and the situation will seem worse than it is.
- Call your local coordinator first, together you can solve your problem, come up with solutions, or clarify what can be a misunderstanding.
- If the problem is not something that can be solved quickly, MLI Homestay will connect with your parents through your agent representative, and as a team, we will work together to resolve the issue.

### REMEMBER:

- **When your coordinator contacts you – you must answer or reply as soon as you are able.**
- **Be open and honest – it's the only way we can truly monitor how you are settling in, and how successful you are in your programme.**

### When Can I Expect to Hear From my Local Coordinator?

**September & February** – Each student's LC will set up a check-in with the student within the first 7-10 days of arriving. This timing allows students to settle in with their host family, adapt to their first days of school life and adjust to their new environment.

**Student Support** - Students will have monthly contact with their LC for the duration of the programme; One in person meeting will be scheduled per semester. In addition, monthly support and check-ins will be offered virtually or by phone.

Outside of these formal check-ins and reports, students are asked to reach out to their Local coordinator as needed. This line of communication is the most efficient way to have questions answered expediently and/or resolve any concerns. Students should expect a response from their LC within 24-48 hours. Should a student feel that their situation is an emergency, they should call the Emergency Line, available 24 hours, 7 days a week, at:

**1-866-388-6543** - *Natural parents are asked to communicate all matters to their agent and not contact MLI directly.*

## What happens if I don't get along with my Host Family?

We ask that you arrive with an open mind and open heart. Your host family may be different from your own family. The home may be larger or smaller than what you are accustomed to. You may or may not have your own bathroom. This is all part of your cultural development and one of the reasons you have chosen to participate in this immersion experience in Canada.

We ask you to consider the following:

**In case of FIRE, MEDICAL or other EMERGENCY**

**call 911**

**Free call from any phone**

(but misuse is punishable by large fine or imprisonment)

- Give your host family a chance to show you why they have chosen to bring you into their family.
- Be open-minded about their lifestyle and traditions.
- Understand that your host family home might be quite different from your own home and that's okay – it's all part of the cultural experience.
- Give the home a real try before complaining or asking to move. Please be honest when sharing the details of an incident or situation that may have taken place.
- COMMUNICATE! This resolves many issues.

Your local coordinator will listen to you and will investigate any issues you have. If we find that the family is not a good match for valid reasons (For example, neglect is a valid reason for a move, however, wanting to move closer to a friend or the host family's background being different to yours is not). If it's determined that the move is required, we will take the necessary steps to find you a new home. However, this is a process that takes time and may incur costs.

## Medical issues

### Allergies and Medications

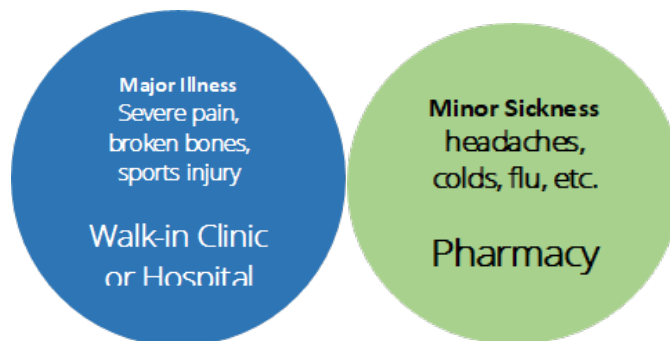
When you first arrive, please be sure that your host mom and dad are aware of any allergies or medical issues you may have. Please give them any prescription medications you are taking – they will store these in a SAFE place and will help administer them if required.

**Do NOT keep any medications in your room**, especially if the family has younger children in the home. Although the family is expected to respect your privacy – small children may be curious and may become very ill should they accidentally ingest your medication.

If you are taking homeopathic medicines or treatments, be sure to fully explain what they are to your host mom and dad, including the active medical ingredients. They will need to know in case of any emergencies.

### Illness

If you are not feeling well, tell your host mom or dad. They will assess you and arrange for you to visit the pharmacy, doctor, clinic or hospital, depending on your situation. No issue is too small. Your host parents are your mom and dad, and they want you to be well. Your local homestay coordinator and/or school advisor must also be advised for serious illnesses.



### Medical insurance

Your insurance is part of your school registration. Once you receive your insurance card or information from the school board, please be sure to share this with your local coordinator and your host family. Most school boards in Canada use either Guard Me or Study Insured.

**If you need to see a doctor, and is not an emergency, please call the phone # on your insurance card first.** When you go to the doctor, please bring with you:

- Confirmation of your insurance – card or document.
- Any claim forms as provided by your provider.
- Credit card.



You may be required to PAY UPFRONT for any medical services.

>> **keep all original receipts** and email or mail them to your family back home (or wait until you return). Your family will have to submit the claim in your home country.

## Money

Canadian currency is the Canadian Dollar (\$CAD), which at this time is about \$0.75 - \$0.80 USD.

**100 cents = 1 dollar**

Canadian Currency:

**Bills – “Dollars”:** \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, \$100

*Note: \$20 bills are most common. Smaller stores may not accept a bill larger than \$50.*

**Coins:** 5¢ cents (nickel), 10¢ cents (dime), 25¢ cents (quarter), \$1 (dollar or “loonie”), \$2 (two dollars or “toonie”).



Dollars are sometimes also referred to as “bucks” (ie. “It’s two bucks for a coffee”).

The 1¢ (penny/cent) has been decommissioned. Stores either round up or down to the nearest 5¢ if paying in cash. Payment amount will be exact if paying by credit/debit.

### Credit card bank

Debit cards/Bank cards: Canadian banks offer Automated Tellers (ATMs), which accept international banking cards. Provided your bank card from your home country operates on INTERAC, CIRRUS or PLUS, you should be able to withdraw Canadian funds directly from your own bank account back home (service fees will apply per transaction).



Opening a Canadian Bank account: It is possible to open a bank account in Canada and your host family can help you if you ask them (TD Bank offers special accounts for newcomers to Canada). This will allow your natural parents to maintain your funds, and you will have a Canadian bank card/debit card, which will allow you to withdraw money, as you need it, from any instant teller / ATM with lower or no service fees.

### Direct Debit/ Point-of-Purchase Payment



Nearly all stores, shops and restaurants in Canada offer a Point-of- Purchase payment option (Direct Debit) using your bank card or mobile phone (Apple Pay, Google Pay, Samsung Pay etc). Contactless payments made by tapping your card (if it has a microchip) is possible in most stores and restaurants.

In some stores (mainly grocery stores), you can also request to have “Cash Back” when paying by debit card. This means that the store acts as an ATM, and will allow you to withdraw a limited amount of cash from your account. Some service fees may apply.



**Credit Cards:** A credit card is also recommended for larger purchases or in emergency situations. If your parents have the option to arrange for a supplementary card or “top-up” Visa card, this is a great way for them to be able to help you manage your funds. We also recommend you have a credit card if you have medical insurance from your home country. Medical clinics or hospitals may require you to pay up front for visits/services, and then claim back from the insurance company.

### Sales taxes on Goods

**BEWARE!** Sales taxes are typically NOT included in the price seen on a tag on merchandise and food. For all goods and services expect to pay a Government Sales Tax as well as a Provincial Sales Tax. Often, these are combined into just one Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) of approx. 13% over the price listed (varies by province). Example: In Toronto you see a shirt for \$19.99, you will pay \$22.59 (\$22.60 if by cash)

Sales tax by  
province

Province	GST (or HST)	PST (Provincial)
Alberta	5% GST	
British Columbia	5% GST	7%
Manitoba	5% GST	8%
New Brunswick	15% HST	
Newfoundland	15% HST	
Nova Scotia	15% HST	
NW Territories	5% GST	
Nunavut	5% GST	
Ontario	13% HST	
PEI	15% HST*	
Quebec	5% GST	9.975%
Saskatchewan	5% GST	5%
Yukon	5% GST	

\*PEI: as of Oct 1, 2016

## Expected Personal Spending

Throughout the school year, you will need to spend personal money on select items necessary for life in Canada. Examples include:

<b>Personal Student Fees at school (<i>varies by school and subjects taken</i>)</b>	<b>\$50-\$400</b>
<b>Gym Uniform (<i>if taking a physical education class</i>)</b>	\$30-\$40
<b>School Uniform (<i>only in Catholic schools or select public schools</i>)</b>	\$300-\$400
<b>School Spirit clothing (<i>optional</i>) – Tshirts, hoodies, hats etc.</b>	Varies by item
<b>Clothes and shoes / cold weather outdoor wear &amp; boots</b>	\$100 ++
<b>Sports (team fees, uniform, equipment, or tickets for pro games)</b>	Varies
<b>Hot lunches in cafeteria (<i>optional – Host family will provide a bag lunch</i>)</b>	\$7 - \$10 per meal
<b>Transportation / bus: monthly pass – <i>students have discounted fare</i></b>	\$50-\$120
<b>Personal care items</b>	As needed
<b>School supplies, paper, binders, pens (<i>text books are typically provided</i>)</b>	
<b>Stamps, postcards, souvenirs, long distance phone cards, SIM cards</b>	
<b>Entertainment (movies, trips, outings with friends)</b>	
<b>MLI Organized Trips</b>	<b>\$300-\$1000</b>



## VOLTAGE

Electrical appliances use 120-volt power, and we have similar outlet shapes as in the USA. Be sure to buy a power converter if your electrical unit (i.e. hairdryer, curling iron, shaver) does not have one built-in, and bring adapters to fit our outlet shape.

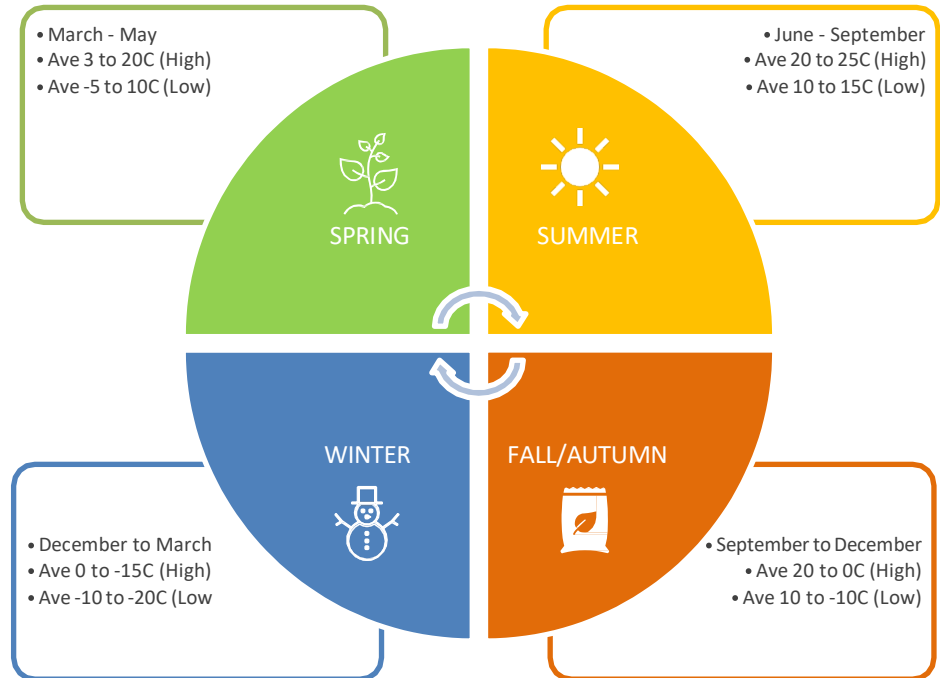
Alternately you may wish to purchase these items or the actual appliances in Canada.

## CONSERVING ENERGY

Please help to conserve energy in your home by taking short (5 to 10 min) showers and doing your laundry after 7:00 PM in the evening. Remember to turn off lights when you leave the room and not leave computers on when not in use. In some location, electricity costs vary based on time of time (ie. in Ontario between 5-7pm). In Canada, a typical home will have a temperature set at about 20C. Please do not adjust the temperature in the home without asking your homestay first.

### WEATHER

Canada is a four-season country. In most locations, you can expect to experience a range of temperatures and weather conditions. As a general guideline:



## Safety

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Canada is in general a very safe country. However, it is important that you use common sense and take certain precautions to avoid any unpleasant experiences.

- **House Key/Entry Code:** your family will entrust you with a key or entry code to their home. Don't lose it! Don't give it to anyone!
- **Home Security Codes:** do not disclose/give out the code to anyone – not even close friends! Again, the family is trusting you.
- **Money/Cash:** Canadians don't tend to carry a lot of cash with them. We advise the same for you. If you have a Canadian bank account, you can pay for most items (food & goods) using your bank card.
- **Strangers:** Although everyone will be a stranger to you at first, be cautious to whom you speak. If someone makes you uncomfortable, walk (or run) away to a nearby store or place of safety.
- **Alone after dark:** Most communities are safe, but it is often advised that students (girls especially) not walk alone after dark.
- **Phone Scams:** You should be very careful of scam calls asking for details like your credit card, bank account numbers, any other payment information, or even asking you for money. If you get a suspicious call, hang up right away and inform your host family and local coordinator.

### Walking

- Know where you are going and how you will get there before you leave. Canadians are friendly and helpful to visitors, but you don't want to mark yourself as a 'stranger' and potential target.
- Trust your instincts. If you feel you are being followed or something doesn't feel right – change direction, go into a store. Use your common sense.
- Avoid walking alone – go in a group.
- Avoid walking in the dark.
- Avoid isolated areas – alleys, vacant parking lots or deserted places.
- Carry a whistle to alert attention if you need it.
- ~~Girls:~~ If you are carrying a purse – across your body.
- ~~Boys:~~ If you have a wallet or money clip – carry it inside your jacket pocket rather than in your back pants or jeans pocket.
- Avoid carrying a lot of money/cash with you.



- **Never approach anyone in a car or on the street, even if they seem friendly or are asking directions.**
- **Never accept a ride from anyone other than your host family or a close friend.**
- **Never hitchhike**

### Friendships

- Be selective in your choice of friends and be wary of engaging in activities that make you feel uncomfortable.
- Be respectful of the decisions of others. You should never pressure nor be pressured into engaging in activities or acts that are uncomfortable. (No means No!)
- If you no longer wish to befriend someone, be clear about ending the friendship/relationship. Should you experience any form of physical or sexual abuse, please seek assistance from a trusted adult, your local coordinator and/or your CISS/MLI Coordinator.

### Parties

- It is very likely that during your stay you will be invited to attend a party. We want you to have fun but also that you stay safe, recognize dangerous situations.
- Accept invitations only from friends you know
- If the party seems too big or out-of-control, leave the party and return home
- Local students could consume alcohol/drugs at parties. If police are called, their consequences may not be as severe as yours! **You may be expelled.** DO NOT consume alcohol or drugs!
- NEVER leave any drink unattended OR accept a drink from someone, as anyone can put an illegal substance into it. This is especially true for girls. BE CAUTIOUS!
- Open your own cans of soda/pop/juice!
- Always be sure you have a safe and reliable ride home. Talk to your host before you go!

### Identifying and Communication Abusive Situations

Abuse (sexual, physical, or verbal) is a rare occurrence on exchange programs. However, as an international student you are a long way from home in a new country and culture. We want you to know how to recognize abuse and to openly communicate about it if it happens to you, or if you see it happening to someone you know.

During your exchange, it may be hard to understand different cultural practices and behaviours. Sharing affection between family and friends is very common and, in most cases, a positive experience. Hugs and kisses on cheeks are common among family members or even close friends, but Canadians, in general tend to be less openly affectionate in public or with strangers.

However, it is possible that someone may show you a type of affection that makes you feel uncomfortable.

**At no time is inappropriate or uninvited touching of private body parts acceptable.**

If you find yourself in this situation, please tell the person to stop immediately as you are not comfortable with the behaviour or situation. Similarly, should you feel that someone is being verbally aggressive or physically abusive towards you, please tell them to stop and seek assistance from a trusted adult, or your Local Coordinator. You may also choose to talk to a teacher, a host parent, or a school counsellor. Regardless of whom you choose to talk to, please understand that the abuser is the responsible party, IT IS NEVER YOUR FAULT!!

- **Claims of abuse are taken very seriously, and all claims will be investigated by CISS, the school and the police.**
- **If you experience or witness any form of abuse, please speak with trusted adult and/or Local Coordinator**
- **If you need immediate medical attention, call 9-1-1 as well as our Emergency Phone**



- **CHOOSE FRIENDS WISELY**
- **HANG OUT WITH GOOD PEOPLE**
- **MAKE GOOD CHOICES**

## Using Telephone, Computer & Internet

### ETIQUETTE AND PROPER BEHAVIOURS

#### TELEPHONES & CELL / MOBILE PHONES:

If you wish to wait to purchase a SIM in Canada, you can ask your Local Coordinator or host family to help you purchase a phone and/or a phone plan. If you have an existing mobile phone from your home country, you may be able to receive an e-SIM or replace the SIM card for Canadian use. Only discuss options with a reputable phone company. Your host family can also advise best options but will not sign contracts for you.

We encourage you to consider purchasing an eSIM through [PhoneBox](#). Other reputable providers in Canada include: *Rogers, Bell, Telus, Freedom Mobile, Virgin Mobile, Fido, or Koodo*.

**NOTE:** in Canada, people use the term “Cell Phone” more commonly than “Mobile”.

**Home phones :** The use of home phones (or land lines) is diminishing, but many families still have this in their home. Your host family will show you how to use the telephone and explain their rules for using the phone. Please respect these rules since some families do not wish to receive phone calls after certain times at night.

Not all home phones have long distance plans connected to the account. Talk to your host family before making ANY calls outside of your city. **Make long-distance calls home using your personal cell/mobile phone, WhatsApp, Line or other web-based services.**

**COMPUTERS:** The use of a host family computer is at their discretion. Please discuss with your host family:

- When you may use the computer and internet, by using it you are using their data plan which may be limited.
- If you feel that there is not sufficient time for use of the computer, please discuss this with your host family or make arrangements to use a public computer at your school, local library or internet café.
- Usage rules / WiFi connection if you are bringing your own laptop.
- Bandwidth limits for their internet and the wireless access codes and security.
- No internet use after 11:00 pm (as a courtesy).

NOTE: If your usage exceeds the allowed limits, you will be responsible for paying for this when the bill comes in. DO NOT make a habit of spending all your time on the computer, you must interact with your host family as well.

**Under no circumstance are you permitted to download or create illegal material, pornography, video games, songs or movies even if you bring your own laptop. If you are unsure about a website or its content, please ask your host family.**



## SOCIAL MEDIA

### Social Networking / Social Media

We know that most of you will use blogs or on-line message boards such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Tik Tok and more to stay in touch with your friends and family.

- **RESPECT** your and others personal integrity on your posts.
- **DO NOT WRITE/POST HURTFUL** or negative messages about any other students, staff or situations that occur at this programme, your host family, or your school.
- **THINK TWICE** before you post anything.
- **REMEMBER:** what is posted remains forever.

## CYBER-BULLYING IS A CRIME

**NEVER agree to personally meet anyone you have “met” online.**

### Online Chat Rooms

It is absolutely forbidden for a student to engage in “chatting” on a chat-room that is not approved by their host family. Students must be aware that chat-rooms pose severe risks if personal information is divulged. Hosts may monitor computer use for this reason.

## Confronting abuse



### **Identifying and communicating abusive situations**

Abuse (sexual, physical, or verbal) is a very rare occurrence on exchange programs. However, as an international student you are a long way from home in a new country and culture. We want you to know how to recognize abuse and to openly communicate about it if it happens to you, or if you see it happening to someone you know.

During your exchange, it may be hard to understand different host family's cultural practices and behaviours. Sharing affection between family and friends is very common and, in most cases, a positive experience. Hugs and kisses on the cheeks are common among family members or even close friends, but Canadians in general tend to be less openly affectionate in public or with strangers.

However, it is possible that someone may show you a type of affection that makes you feel uncomfortable. **At no time is inappropriate or uninvited touching of private body parts acceptable.** If you find yourself in this situation, please tell the person to stop immediately as you are not comfortable with the behaviour or situation. Similarly, should you feel that someone is being verbally aggressive or physically abusive towards you, please tell them to stop and seek assistance from a trusted adult, or MLI Homestay. You may also choose to talk to a teacher, a host parent, or a school counselor. Regardless of whom you choose to talk to, please understand that the abuser is the responsible party, IT IS NEVER YOUR FAULT!!

**In Canada: “No means No”.**

Claims of abuse are taken very seriously, and all claims will be investigated by MLI Homestay, the school and the police.

If you experience or witness any form of abuse, please speak with trusted adult, student adviser or with your Custodian!

### Engaging in Relationships

As a teen, your home culture and family may have permitted you certain freedoms and liberties with regard to socializing with friends and engaging in other relationships.

Coming to Canada on your own, you may feel that you are at liberty to continue with these same freedoms, or you may feel you have more freedom than what you had back home, simply because your parents are not with you.

Your host parents, the school and MLI Homestay all take your personal well-being and safety very seriously. We encourage you to make new friends, but we highly discourage you from entering relationships that may endanger your personal safety or reputation.

- Be selective in your choice of friends and be wary of engaging in activities that make you feel uncomfortable.
- Be respectful of the decisions of others. You should never pressure anyone into engaging in activities or acts that they are not comfortable doing.
- If you no longer wish to be friends with someone, be clear about ending the friendship/relationship.

Should you experience any form of physical or sexual abuse, please seek assistance from a trusted adult, and/or your local coordinator.

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## KNOW THE RULES

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### Understanding Canadian Laws and MLI Homestay policies

To ensure you have the best experience possible, please remember the following Canadian laws and MLI Homestay policies. These are in addition to any already mentioned in this handbook.

#### **HARASSMENT / BULLYING**

Bullying or harassment of any kind is not tolerated by MLI Homestay or any school. Students caught in this act will be sent home. Harassment includes words, acts or gestures of a malicious or abusive nature directed at a person or group of persons, and directed towards: academic ability, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, economic status, language, race, ethnicity/nationality, religion, appearance or colour.

Remember: Canada is a diverse and tolerant country. Under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, all persons deserve to be treated with respect regardless of their race, skin colour, religion, sexual orientation, or mental/ physical capabilities.

**Students involved in acts of harassment or bullying (including cyber-bullying) will be sent home immediately.**

#### **VIOLENCE**

Violence is defined as any use of physical force directed at another person with the intent to inflict pain, cause personal damage or coerce the other.

Students are not permitted to travel with weapons (penknives, caps, cap guns, play guns ect.) These are not tolerated in home or school. **Any of these actions could lead to criminal charges.**

**Students caught inflicting violence on others will be sent home immediately.**

#### **SMOKING**

The purchase of cigarettes and e-juice/e-liquid including but not limited to all vape and juice pens that might be common back in your home country, is regulated in Canada. The legal age to purchase cigarettes or e-juice/e-liquid is 19 years old (18 in Alberta and Quebec). Smoking/vaping is NOT permitted in any public building, including schools and school property, shopping malls, restaurants, movie theatres and public washrooms. Canadians are very strict about enforcing this law. It is also illegal to ask an adult to purchase cigarettes/ e-juice/e-liquid.

## ALCOHOL

It is illegal to purchase or consume alcohol, including beer, if under the age of 19 (18 in Alberta and Québec). It is illegal to ask an adult to purchase alcohol on your behalf if you are a minor or to drink alcohol in a public place including a beach, car, or park.

**Students caught purchasing, consuming or in possession of alcohol will be sent home immediately.**

## DRUGS / CANNABIS

Narcotic drugs are illegal in Canada and are by law punishable by heavy fines or jail. This includes misuse of prescription drugs including opiates.

As of October 17, 2018, recreational cannabis is legalized for adults over the age of 18 and/or 19 depending on which province you are in. (Ontario - 19, British Columbia -19, Quebec -18, Alberta -18) to consume in private residences. It is illegal to purchase or consume cannabis in any form, if under the age of 19 years (18 in Alberta and Quebec). It is also illegal to purchase cannabis on behalf of a minor, or to consume cannabis in any public place as deemed unacceptable by each province. **Students caught purchasing, consuming or in possession of cannabis will be dismissed from the programme and sent home. Purchase, possession, use or sale of cannabis is AGAINST PROGRAMME POLICY.**

*Students caught purchasing, consuming, in possession of, or selling an illegal drug, cannabis or abusing a prescription drug, will be sent home immediately, either by MLI homestay or by Canadian police and/or Immigration Canada.*

## THEFT, VANDALISM & WEAPONS

Stealing any property from a store or person is illegal in Canada.

Willfully defacing or vandalizing public or personal property is also against the law.

Students caught shoplifting items from a store, in possession of stolen items, stealing personal possessions from their host family or other students, willfully defacing, or vandalizing any property not belonging to them, will be sent home.

## BIKING/CYCLING

Students are permitted to use a bicycle with the permission of the host family.

You MUST:

- Wear a CSA approved biking helmet.
- Exercise caution at all times.
- Use bike lanes where available.
- Stop at all stop signs and red lights; obey all traffic laws.
- Use appropriate hand signals when making turns or lane changes.

Cyclists are expected to understand and use driving rules of the road. While drivers of vehicles are expected to respect the space of a cyclist on a road, road sharing can be challenging, especially in more urban and congested cities.

If the host family or MLI Homestay deem your community to be unsafe for cycling, you may be denied permission.

## DRIVING

Students are never permitted to drive ANY motor vehicle while in Canada, including cars, ATVs, motorbikes, snowmobiles, watercraft or any other motorized or battery-operated vehicle, including e-bikes or e-scooters, even if the student holds a valid license from his/her home country.

## TRAVELLING IN A VEHICLE

**UPDATED JUNE 2025:** Students are permitted to ride in a vehicle driven by any host family member with a valid driver's license. This may be a driver under the age of 25 with a valid license rating according to the province – G or G2(Ontario), N(BC), GDL(Alberta), Probationary License (Quebec). In all cases, the driver must be of legal age to hold a valid driver's license in the province of residence and must be authorized to carry passengers. The driver must not have consumed alcohol, cannabis, or any intoxicating substances prior to or during the ride.

Adult drivers outside of the host family or other than a licensed taxi, Uber, Lyft, or other regulated ride-share provider, must be 25 years of age and must be either personally known to the student (e.g., a trusted adult) or school-affiliated individual.

Students are not permitted to be driven by anyone, other than their host family or a licensed taxi/Uber/Lyft driver, who is under the age of 25, at any time. Under no circumstances may another student or friend under the age of 25 - regardless of their driving experience, or programme affiliation - serve as the driver.

By choosing to use permitted transportation options outside of their host family, students and their natural parents acknowledge that they do so voluntarily and at their own risk. The programme, host family, local coordinator, and custodian will not be held liable for any loss, injury, or incident that may occur as a result of third-party transportation.

**UBER® / LYFT® / TAXI / OTHER RIDE SHARE**

**UPDATED JUNE 2025:** Students are permitted to use a taxi, Uber/Lyft or other reputable car-share in cases where the host family is unavailable to drive the student and public transit is not a viable option. The student and natural parent(s)/legal guardians understand that using such services means riding in a car with a driver unknown to the student. Students are urged to use caution to ensure personal safety.

**RISK AND CAUTION**

*This “Travelling in a Vehicle” and “Uber/Taxi / Ride-Sharing” policy modification carries inherent risks for student safety. Natural parent(s)/legal guardians must ensure their child is fully versed in understanding risks and taking necessary precautions and will discuss their comfort level with permitting their child to be a passenger in various scenarios. MLI Education Group does not permit students to become passengers in vehicles driven by local friends who may not have a full license, who do not have extensive driving experience or who are under the age of 25. The only exception will be in the case of host siblings, where the host parent permits their child with a valid class driver’s license to drive their host sibling. This decision to give permission for the student will be at the discretion of the student and their natural parents.*

All students must continue to follow the established travel protocols regarding travel outside of their community, regardless of the mode of transportation to do so.

**EMPLOYMENT / VOLUNTEER WORK**

While Canadian students may find part-time employment at age 16+, your study permit and permissions for entry to Canada prohibits you from obtaining paid employment. Volunteer work or work experience through a co-op school programme is permitted.

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## STUDENT DISCIPLINE

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### STUDENT DISCIPLINE

We encourage you to take advantage of your Canadian experience, but you must abide by the policies of MLI Homestay, your school and Canada. If you violate these rules/policies/laws, you will receive warnings and discipline.

#### **1. FIRST OFFENSE: VERBAL WARNING**

You will receive a verbal warning from your local coordinator, as well as a discussion either face-to face or over the phone to ensure that you understand why your actions were inappropriate.

Depending on how severe the offense (i.e. drug or alcohol use), MLI Homestay may skip this step and you will receive a written warning immediately.

#### **2. SECOND OFFENSE: WRITTEN WARNING / PROBATION**

(Last warning)

If you commit a second offense (of the same nature or by violating a different rule/policy/law), you will receive a written warning outlining the offense. A copy will go to your parents with a request for signature. In addition, you will be placed on a two-week probation. During this time, you are only permitted to leave your host family home for school or other academic reasons. You may NOT attend any extracurricular activities/clubs/sports or socialize outside the home with friends. We expect you to be on your BEST behaviour during this probationary time.

A follow-up discussion will take place either face-to-face or over the phone to ensure that you truly understand why your actions were once again inappropriate. You will be reminded that this is the LAST WARNING. Any further offenses will result in your dismissal from the programme.

Depending on how severe the offense, MLI Homestay may skip this step and you may be dismissed from the programme immediately. Note: Some serious offenses such as use/possession of drugs, overt alcohol use or other criminal activity, may result in immediate suspension from the school and/or the programme, even if this is your first offense.

#### **3. THIRD OFFENSE: DISMISSAL FROM PROGRAMME**

If despite the first two warnings, you commit a third offense (of the same nature or by violating a different rule/policy/law), you will be deemed unable to abide by the policies of the programme and will be dismissed.

MLI Homestay will communicate immediately with your parents and home agency to arrange for the next available flight home.

MLI Homestay will share with your school any offences that result in warnings during your stay in Canada. Further discipline may result from the school and or international programme of the school board.

**Note:**

**Some serious offences such as use/possession of drugs, overt Alcohol use or other criminal activity, may result in immediate suspension from the programme, even if it is your first offence.**

Should a student be suspended or expelled from their school at any time for any reason, immediate withdrawal from the MLI Homestay program will take place and the student will be sent home immediately.

**STUDENT DISCIPLINE - SCHOOL  
DETENTION / SUSPENSIONS / EXPULSION**

Schools reserve the right to discipline students who commit offences that go against school policies - separate from the MLI Homestay discipline.

Detention: minor inappropriate behaviour (i.e. rudeness to a teacher or fellow student, skipping class or other high absences or late arrivals without valid reason) may result in lunch-time or after-school detention. During this time, students report to a specified school room for the duration of the detention. Students are supervised and are expected to use this time to work on homework or assignments. Detention durations may be one day to several days.

Suspension: continued misbehavior or a serious offence (bullying, use or possession of alcohol, insulting a teacher, uttering threats or bodily harm to a staff or other student, theft, fighting, etc.) may result in a school suspension. This may be an in-school suspension (student must arrive to school daily but is removed from his/her peers. He/she is monitored in a specific room/area for the duration of the school day). In this case, students do not attend classes but are given schoolwork to complete. Alternately, students may receive an out-of-school suspension where the student must remain at home for the day. He/she will be given schoolwork or specialized projects to complete. Suspensions may be one day to several weeks.

Depending on the severity of the offence, MLI Homestay and the school may determine at this time that dismissal from the international programme is required.

Expulsion from school: students who continue to exhibit inappropriate behaviour or commit a crime against Canadian law will be dismissed from the school and from the MLI Homestay programme.

## TRAVELLING

### CISS MLI ARRANGED TRIPS

CISS MLI offices in Toronto and North Vancouver may plan overnight or multi-day trips to places of interest. An outline of trips being offered for 2025-26 will be shared with you prior to arriving so you can plan accordingly. Participation is voluntary and details, pricing and sign up deadlines will be shared once you are in Canada.

### SCHOOL TRIPS

Schools often offer trips for students in select classes, sports or extracurricular activities (i.e. school band, debating club, sports tournament, charity work). The school will provide a full outline of the trip itinerary, chaperones and costs. Such day trips within your community can be approved by your local coordinator. Any trips of a longer duration that include travel outside of the community, province or Canada will require approval of your natural parents. Exceptions to permission from the natural parents may apply regionally.

### PERSONAL TRAVEL – Travel Requests / iCent



ALL personal travel requires that you submit the travel request via the iCent mobile app. Request will be reviewed and approved by our team provided it follows the [guidelines for independent travel](#). If your LC has any questions or additional details are needed, they will contact you. Your natural parent will also be able to

provide their required permission directly on the app as well. **Watch the timing for the request!!** A large trip outside of your community, province or out of Canada will need you to send this at least 2 weeks prior to a planned trip.

#### Reminder:

- MLI Homestay permits personal travel only if accompanied by your host family or other responsible adult, such as another host family
- Overnight travel on your own or with your friends is not permitted.
- Students cannot stay in hotels or hostels alone.



### IMPORTANT TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS ON TRAVEL TO USA

Effective as of June 2025 until further notice

The government of the United States of America has, since the spring of 2025, tightened immigration protocols for travellers seeking entry into the USA. Increased scrutiny from American border officials is not widespread but the selection criteria is unclear, unpredictable, and in some cases has caused confusion, delays, or refusal at the immigration point.

**In consideration of some recent occurrences at the Canada/USA border, MLI Homestay has temporarily suspended discretionary student travel into the United States (whether by land, air, or watercraft).**

Our goal is to proactively avoid potential challenges and unnecessary border crossings for both students and host families. This position aligns with the guidance by our partners at CAPS-i (The Canadian Association of Public Schools – International) and with many other school boards. This caution is in the interest of student safety. MLI Homestay is your acting Custodian while you are in Canada, but any difficulties encountered in the United States or other foreign country during the High School experience cannot be supported by MLI Homestay.

Host Families have been advised not to plan unnecessary travel with their international student which requires crossing the American border and we urge you to do the same when planning arrivals, departures and potential visits to relatives or natural parents.

### **SLEEPOVERS**

If you wish to arrange a sleepover at your host home, you must discuss this in advance with your host parent(s) AND your Local Coordinator, obtain their permission and provide them with the name and contact information for your friend's parent(s). Your LC will contact the other parent(s) to confirm the arrangement.

If you wish to arrange a sleepover with a friend at another home you must:

- Send your LC an email/text a minimum of 2 days in advance with the details of the sleepover family.

The following information is required.

- indicate if the student is with another MLI host family, is a local friend or an international student in another programme
- Confirm that a parent will be home during the night
- Does your host family agree to this?
- How do you plan to get to/from this sleepover home?

After you have followed the requirements for a sleepover, you must wait for approval from your LC before going.

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## Packing checklist

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### Essential Items

You are the best judge of what you need and should bring for your stay in Canada. Keep in mind luggage restrictions, and that Canadian stores carry many popular/trendy clothing labels so you can always purchase additional items during your stay. Winter clothing – especially outerwear - may be better purchased in Canada, depending on the available selection in your own country.

**If you are arriving in September**, the weather is generally very pleasant until mid-October, so there is definitely time to change your winter wardrobe once in Canada. Snowfall and skiing season doesn't begin until November at the earliest, but more likely in December. Stores begin stocking fall/winter clothing items in late summer.

**If you are arriving in February**, we recommend that you purchase the warmest clothing possible in your home country prior to arrival. Additional items can be purchased in Canada, but selection by this time may be limited as stores begin to stock spring wear by February. Purchases made online may be sent to your host family home with their prior consent.

### DOCUMENTATION:

- Passport.
- Visa documents.
- Letter of Acceptance from your school.
- MLI Homestay Custodial Declaration.
- Plane ticket.
- Travel insurance (if bringing from home).
- Canadian money / debit card / credit card.
- Photocopy of your passport, visa documents, identification card from your home country.

### SCHOOL SUPPLIES:

- Notebooks or binder with paper (note: in Canada the paper size is 'letter' size: 8.5" x 11") Pens, pencils, erasers.
- Calculator.
- Backpack (expect to carry books, homework to/from school daily).

Most schools will provide/loan textbooks.

Additional supplies can be purchased in Canada throughout your stay as directed by your teachers or by need.

**ESSENTIAL CLOTHING/TOILETRIES**

- All-season clothing: jeans, pants/trousers, shorts, t-shirts, long-sleeve shirts, sweaters (appropriate for school).
- Comfortable shoes.
- Running shoes / sport shoes.
- A few nice outfits and shoes.
- Light jacket if arriving in September (you can also bring a warmer coat or purchase in Canada).
- Warm jacket, hat, gloves, boots if arriving in February (additional winter jackets, hats, gloves etc. can be purchased in Canada but you may be in Canada for a few days before such shopping can happen, and selection may be limited).
- Sleepwear / undergarments.
- Sports clothing if interested in joining a gym or participating in sports / Swimsuit.
- Personal toiletries & grooming items to last at least one month.
- Medications (if needed). Ensure your supply will last for the duration of your stay.

**OTHER ITEMS:**

- Alarm clock.
- Laptop / iPod/ iPad (not required...bring at your own risk).
- Camera & charger (not required...bring at your own risk).
- Power converter/adaptor if bringing electrical units (shaver, hairdryer).
- Pictures of your family to show your host family, teachers, friends.
- Pictures or a book about your country.
- Article of clothing or something representative of your country (sometimes, schools will have cultural theme days to showcase the countries where students are from...or the ethnic background of local students).

**PROM:** If you are entering Grade 12 (or Grade 11 in Quebec) and will be in Canada until June, you can expect to be welcomed to attend the senior prom or grad (formal dance). This is usually held in May or June. Boys tend to rent tuxedos, while girls usually purchase dresses. You may wish to purchase your dress in Canada to match the styles worn here this year.

TO DO:

- Make a list of activities you would like to do and sites you would like to see in your community.
- Make a list of things you want to show your host family and new friends about your hometown.
- Make copies of 3-5 of your favourite home recipes to bring/share/make with your host family.
- Bring a small gift for your host family. This can be a small token/souvenir representative of your country. Lightweight and non-breakable is best!

**And finally...**

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**We can't wait to meet you!**

**[www.mlihomestay.com](http://www.mlihomestay.com)**



**<https://www.facebook.com/HomestayMLI>**

**[instagram.com/mlihomestay/](https://www.instagram.com/mlihomestay/)**

**[youtube.com/muskokalanguageinternational](https://www.youtube.com/muskokalanguageinternational)**

