

HOMESTAY HANDBOOK

International Student Education
2026-27



*Love Learning in
Nanaimo Ladysmith!*



*Nanaimo Ladysmith ISE resides within the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the
Snuneymuxw, Snaw-Naw-As, and Stz'uminus First Nations*

International Education Contact Information

International Student Education Office

Nanaimo Ladysmith International Student Education Program

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Dover Bay Secondary School

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Emergency Contacts

In the event of an emergency requiring police, fire/rescue, or ambulance phone

911

Our Urgent Matters Phone – Help is available when you need it 24/7

For urgent matters, when you need the assistance of a Homestay Coordinator, the District Principal, or Vice Principal, call **(do not text):**

250-714-2252

Phoning or Emailing about Student Absences if they are excused to be away from school:

School	Email (best option)	Phone - leave student's first & last name
Cedar	CS-Secretaries@sd68.bc.ca	250 722-2414
Dover Bay	info.dv@sd68.bc.ca	250 756-4595
John Barsby	JB-secretaries@sd68.bc.ca	250 753-8211
Ladysmith	info.ls@sd68.bc.ca	250 245-3043
NDSS	info.ND@sd68.bc.ca	250 740-2000
Wellington	Info.WE@sd68.bc.ca	250-758-9191

Top 10 Things to Remember as a Homestay Parent

1. Build a relationship with your student. One of the best ways to do this is through family meals at least **4 times each week**.
2. Communicate clearly with your student, so they understand the expectations and routines in your home. **Teach your student what you expect** from their chores – laundry, cleaning the bathroom etc.
3. **Do not wait for a crisis before reaching out** to your Homestay Coordinator or our office staff. If you are feeling uncomfortable, or unacceptable behaviour is occurring and you need assistance in managing a situation, please phone, text, or email one of the ISE staff.
4. Ensure your **student has a fully functioning Canadian cellphone and data plan**, so you can contact them. Students must remain under supervision. They need to let their Homestay know where they are, and if a change of plans occurs, they need to text/phone the Homestay and keep them up to date.
5. **Illegal Substances:** Students are not permitted to acquire or consume alcohol, illegal drugs, cigarettes, or vaping products. Alcohol must not be consumed (even when part of a Homestay family celebration. It is prohibited for a student to be in possession of fake ID.
6. **Curfews** – Students must communicate their schedule and recreation plans each day. They are expected to be home for dinner unless they have discussed alternate plans with you. On **school nights**, students with approved plans must be home by 9:00 pm. Exceptions can be made for team athletics and school events. On **weekends**, students are expected home by 9:00 pm. Exceptions can be made for approved social activities such as attending a movie, a sports event, dinner out, movie night at a friend's, etc. The latest a student should be home is 11:00 pm.

Students must communicate their plans including:

- Where the students are
- Who they are with
- Their safe plan for getting home

Students are not permitted to be at the beach, parks, or wandering the community after dark unless they are with an approved adult over 25.

7. **Parties and Sleepovers**
 - Students must obtain the permission of the Homestay family before attending parties.
 - There **must** be a responsible adult (parent of Homestay, 25+ years old) in attendance at all times in order for the student to attend a party or sleep over.
 - The Homestay family must make prior contact with the responsible parent who will be in attendance throughout the duration of the party or sleepover.
8. **Mobile Doctor** - Students are asked to register for the Mobile Doctor during their first week in Canada.
9. **Family Absences** – Homestay families are permitted to take their student on overnight trips outside of Nanaimo Ladysmith. If your student will not be attending, please notify their Homestay Coordinator at least a week in advance with the arrangements you have made for supervision while you are away.
10. **Driving and Being a Passenger** - **International students are not permitted to drive unless they are a multi-year student, in Grade 12 and have received permission from the District Principal to get their Learner's License.** As you would with your own children, be aware of who your student is driving with and remind them that a N Driver may only have one passenger who is not a member of their immediate family

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Principal's and Vice Principal's Message



Larry Mattin
District Principal

Thank you for becoming a vital part of the Nanaimo Ladysmith International Student Program. We are excited to have you be part of our Program as a Homestay parent as we welcome over 500 students from 28 different countries of the world.

By being a Homestay host, you are helping make a young person's dreams come true and helping provide experiences that can enrich their lives. It is our goal that these students will look back on this period of their lives with fond memories of amazing experiences in Nanaimo Ladysmith.

It is our hope this opportunity enables your family to open new experiences while building lasting friendships with the international student(s) who will live in your home. By sharing each other's traditions, trying different foods, and learning each other's culture and language, your entire family will be enriched within the comfort of your own home. The Homestay experience should be enjoyable and rewarding for both students and family.



Naomi Bailey
District Vice-Principal

In the beginning, your student will need extra care and support as they will be experiencing information overload. Remember, your student may speak and understand very little English and may need much repetition and clarification. There will often be a period of adjustment. The family should expect some difficulties in communicating and the need to explain things more than once. This is normal. Most importantly, the family may need to help the student through periods of homesickness and loneliness.



Sunny Hall
Homestay Manager

This handbook is available in hard copy and digitally on our [website](#). It has been written to help explain the Nanaimo Ladysmith's International Student Program and to outline the guidelines and expectations for the Program. There is a lot of information to digest, and we recommend you read it over a few days. It is meant to serve as a guide that you can refer to and discuss with your student. Please keep it on hand for easy reference as needed.

Our Homestay Coordinators, office staff and school staff will always be available to discuss progress or problems. Welcome aboard!

Love Learning in Nanaimo Ladysmith!



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Welcome to the Nanaimo Ladysmith International Education Program!

The Homestay Team

We have over 300 Homestay families who have opened their homes to international students for the 2025- 2026 school year. The Homestay Team includes you, the Homestay family, the Homestay Manager and Coordinators, and the Principal and Vice Principal of the International Student Education Program.

The Principal is the designated Custodian for the students in the Homestay program and the Vice Principal serves as the alternate Custodian.

The Homestay Coordinators place students with families and provide ongoing support for cultural understanding, conflict resolution, problem solving, and parenting advice.

Communicating with the ISE Office

Most of your communications will be with your Homestay Coordinator via their email, text or a phone call; however, the ISE office does send important updates to Homestay Families using the True North online system. These emails will have important information for you to read: information about student field trips and ISE events. The Homestay direct phone line is 250-390-0303 (during office hours).

When you receive an email, it will look similar to this in your Inbox. Note that the sender's name is TRUE North.

TRUE North

Mass Email Summary - Vancouver Day Trips (Nanaimo-Ladysmith S...

2025-09-01

CAUTION: External Message DO NOT REPLY TO THIS EMAIL This

The Homestay Family

We are excited for you to welcome a curious and eager young world traveller into your home and your hearts! As Homestay parents you will be expected to:

- make contact with your student prior to their arrival
- provide a safe, nurturing home environment
- provide regular, nutritious meals and snacks
- ensure the family has at least four meals a week together
- monitor and support the physical and emotional well-being of your student
- support your student to attend and be punctual for school each day
- pick up your student in the evening after an ISE activity or school event
- pick up and drop off your student at the Nanaimo airport
- attend medical appointments
- maintain contact with the school and International Program regarding student progress and attendance
- share your love of Nanaimo, Ladysmith and Vancouver Island generously!



Getting Started as a Homestay Family

As a Homestay family, you are a mentor and guide in a new culture. You are there to capture the awe of new discoveries, celebrate successes, help with decision making, and to provide comfort and support after a long day. It is our hope that the relationships created between Homestay families and students will last a lifetime. To help build the relationship, we ask you to think of your student as a member of your own family.

Our international students are studying in a country far away from home, in a culture that can be confusing, and in a strange language. Just like teenagers everywhere, they do best with caring and patient mentors, clarity, consistency, and good communication.

In the beginning, your student may need a lot of information from you:

- Some of them arrive as a beginning English speaker and your conversations may need to be simplified, clarified, repeated, and sometimes written down. [Google Translate](#) or the app [sayhi](#) can be a big help.
- Cultural differences can seem awkward at times, and it is good to be prepared for mutual misunderstandings. Trust, patience, and humour go a long way in the early days.
- Students arrive with varying levels of independence. Some will have grown up with additional support in their homes while others will have been responsible for much of their own care.
- Students will need to orient themselves to your habits, expectations, requirements, and preferences.
 - Please implement your routines with consistency, respect, and kindness. Students function best when boundaries and expectations are clear, and consequences are predictable. Wording your expectations in positive language will make the learning easier on everyone.

Who's who: Custodians, Caregivers, Guardians, and Natural Parents

The Principal of ISE is the designated **Custodian** while the International student is in our care and the Homestay parents are the daily **caregivers**. Together, there is a joint responsibility for the well-being of the international student. The Homestay parents supervise and direct student behaviour daily but are not legally responsible for the student's behaviour. Homestay parents are expected to act on behalf of the international program with the best interest of the child and program in mind.

Custodian - All minors (age 18 years and under) need to have a Canadian Custodian as a condition of living in BC, Canada. The Custodian makes decisions concerning the student's welfare in the absence of their natural parents or guardian. **For all students in the Homestay Program, the Principal of ISE is the designated Custodian. If the District Principal is absent from the district, the Vice Principal or Homestay Manager is the alternate Custodian.**



Legal Guardian – This is the person who has legal custody of a minor. For most students, this will be their natural parents. **All field trip forms requiring a parental signature MUST be completed by the Natural Parent or the Custodian – not Homestay parents. Schools are beginning to use Caregiver or Homestay on permission slips for low-risk activities. Homestays can sign these forms.**

International Students not in our Homestay Program – International students who are not part of our Homestay Program may live with a relative, a family friend, or private Homestay who act as their Custodian. For these students any concerns regarding student behaviour or student well-being should be referred to the Custodian and to the ISE Office.



The Stages of Homestay

Welcoming a teenager to live in your home can be very rewarding. Here's some information to help you navigate the experience:

Pre-Arrival

Communication and Relationship Building Before Your Student Leaves Home

- Have several Zoom, WhatsApp, or WeChat (popular in China) video meetings to get to know one another (students, natural parents, and Homestay families).
- Add each other's contact information - emails and cell phone numbers into your contact lists on your cell phones.
- Encourage students, where possible, to download WhatsApp or WeChat to help facilitate conversation prior to arrival. (Students from some countries will not be able to download these Apps, from their home country and will need to upon arrival.)
- Take time to Google your student's city, learn some history and cultural background. Showing interest builds a foundation for cultural sharing.
- Download Google Translate to learn some words in your student's language and to help you communicate during those first few weeks.
- Prepare your student's room. Ensure that it is functional, comfortable, and clean. The room must include a window, a comfortable bed, clean linens, pillows, clothes closet or wardrobe, and a desk with room for a computer. Please do not furnish your student's room with valuable or sentimental items. Accidents happen, and the School District does not hold damage deposits for students.
- Confirm arrival plans and flight details. An email will be sent to you from TRUE North. (similar to this one)

TRUE North

Mass Email Summary - Vancouver Day Trips (Nanaimo-Ladysmith S...

2025-09-01

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Completing Arrival Plans



In June, all students receive a pre-departure **Arrival Guide** to help ensure their arrival in Canada is as easy and safe as possible. Students are asked to have your contact information in their phone and on a piece of paper when they arrive. They will also have contact information for our staff.

- All students have been asked to bring a cell phone and are encouraged to have a laptop or tablet. Many students will have a fully functioning phones with data on arrival. Others will depend on Wi-Fi and WhatsApp to connect with you until they receive a Canadian cell phone number.



Arriving at the Vancouver Airport (YVR)

Support is available at the Vancouver Airport

- Customer Care representatives are located at one of many Customer Care counters throughout the airport.
- **A member of our ISE staff will be at the Vancouver airport to assist students all day Monday, August 31, and Tuesday, September 1.**
- If a student misses their connecting flight to Nanaimo please direct them to find our ISE staff located by the information desk located at the end of baggage carousel #4.
- Students have been asked to send you a message before they board the plane to Nanaimo to confirm their flight time. They have been asked to notify you of changes as will our staff as we receive flight updates.
- Please ensure the student knows who in the family is picking them up.

Arriving in Nanaimo

- Please have only 1 or 2 members of the Homestay family at the Nanaimo Airport or Ferry Terminal when students arrive to prevent overcrowding in the Arrival areas. For students arriving by Ferry, please confirm if it is the Departure Bay, Duke Point, or Hullo Ferry terminal. It is important to welcome your student and for it to be easy for them to find you. Having a welcome sign with the student's name is helpful. Be sure your student knows where you will be.
- For students arriving at the airport, please check that their flight is on time before leaving home. Bring your student's flight details with you in the event you need to track flight delays.
- **If you cannot pick up your student for any reason, please ask another trusted adult to be there for you and inform your student. If this cannot be arranged, please contact your Homestay Coordinator**
- Please make sure you have a cell phone with charging cable, and that you previously shared your contact information with your student.

Your newly arrived student will be tired. Encourage your student to rest and rehydrate after their long flight. Jet lag, as well as the stress caused by unfamiliar surroundings and struggles to communicate, can take their toll. The student will likely need time and emotional space to recover. For many students, this takes only a day or two, but for others, it may take a few weeks.

The First Week

Your student may be unfamiliar with Canadian homes and customs and will need frequent, clear, and patient explanations. The student's assumptions may be quite different from yours—they may have no idea why something is important to you. When customs have been clearly explained, the student will be expected to respect and follow them. However, please be patient, and understand that some customs and rules will need frequent reminders and re-teaching from you.



It is helpful for the student to have a written copy of your Homestay guidelines. Please find an example in the Appendix. Some students may not understand English very well and it is helpful for them to have a copy to read on their own. They also may be overwhelmed with new information and will have a hard time remembering everything they are told.



Helpful Tips for Settling In

- Ensure your student can pronounce your family's names. Ensure that all family members can pronounce your student's name.
- Have your student enter your name, home address, and phone number into their phone. Also, have them write it on a card that will fit in their wallet (in case they lose their phone). Practice the information with your student so they remember it and can pronounce it.
- Set reasonable household rules and be sure the student understands them; sometimes they say 'yes', when they don't understand because they don't want to be embarrassed that they don't understand, and they want to be polite.
- Confirm the schedules of your family members and your student **each day**.
- Ensure your student always has a piece of identification (not their passport) on them. Preferably with your street address and your contact information.
- Encourage your student to provide you access to the location function on WhatsApp or on maps to help you locate them if they become lost.
- Help your student learn bus routes to and from school and various community destinations. Show them how to use the Nanaimo or Ladysmith transit [route planner](#).
- Speak English as much as possible and engage the student in conversation. In the beginning, this will require clarification, careful questioning, and paraphrasing.
- Expose your student to all types of social games such as board games, English television, music, etc.
- Encourage the student to come out of their room, to socialize with you, to watch television, to help with family projects, to be a part of activities.
- Ask your student to help you tidy up after dinner. It is a great way to socialize and help them learn where things are in the kitchen.
- Support your student's learning by assisting with homework. Monitor the student's progress through contact with the school advisor.
- **Above all, treat the student like a family member, not a guest.**



If you see that after the first few weeks the student is withdrawn and spending all their time in their room, please sit with them and make sure everything is alright. Please consult with the Homestay Coordinator for additional support.

Contacting us early rather is best. Do not wait until you reach a point of frustration.

New Student Orientation – ISE Program orientation and school orientation occurs between September 2 and September 4. Dates, times, and locations will be sent to students and Homestay families by email.

Adjustment

Once your student recovers from arrival fatigue, there will often be a period of adjustment. For a few weeks, you may need to adjust your routine and spend additional time with your student to teach them our Westcoast lifestyle. In time, they will become increasingly independent and socially adept. This stage is full of communication, understanding, and patience.



Culture Shock

After a while, the excitement of being in a new place can wear off, and a student may experience 'culture shock'. This often sets in two to three months after a student arrives.

Symptoms may include:

- homesickness, withdrawal, irritability, sadness, boredom, feeling overwhelmed, afraid
- disdain or dislike of things 'Canadian', reluctance to attend school
- feeling ill, difficulty sleeping or excessive sleeping, compulsive eating, loss of concentration
- poor hygiene (not showering and/or not laundering clothing.)

Culture shock can often resolve itself with time and understanding. The Homestay family can also experience culture shock. You may find yourself annoyed by the student's opinions and behaviour. It can be helpful to determine if misunderstandings and annoyances have a foundation in cultural differences.

We strongly recommend you approach cultural differences, that may manifest in unexpected behavior, from a position of curiosity. Help bridge that cultural gap by seeking understanding by starting with, "I'm curious, what's going on?" "I'm curious, please let me know why you responded that way ..."

If the student shows signs of withdrawal, depression, or mental health concerns please consult your Homestay Coordinator. If it is an emergency, seek emergency care immediately by phoning 911 and then phone the Urgent Care Number 250 714-2252. Call only, do not text.

Cultural Sharing

This stage is the best period for the student and the family... it tends to last the longest! In this stage, the student adjusts to the new environment, there is mutual understanding and appreciation for cultural differences.

Departure

Saying good-bye can be difficult as students anticipate the end of close relationships. The experience can create 'leaving anxiety' and the student may push away family and host siblings. This doesn't happen for all students, but it is somewhat common to see a change in behaviour as students avoid the complex emotions surrounding the end of their experience. For some students, the anxiety is expressed by taking risks – drinking, staying out late, etc.

Homestay Guidelines

1. **Alcohol and Drugs** – International students are not permitted to purchase or consume alcohol, or non-prescription drugs including cannabis, cigarettes, and vape nicotine regardless of age. Infraction of these rules may result in dismissal from the Program. It is important that students leave any social gathering where illegal drugs or alcohol are being consumed or present. If you suspect that your student is consuming illegal substances, contact your Homestay Coordinator immediately.

Use of alcohol and cannabis by Homestay Hosts:

- Please be discrete
- It is expected that at least one adult member of the Homestay is sober at all.
- There should be no illegal substances in the Homestay home.
- Smoking cannabis must be done outside, and the smoke must not enter the home.

2. **Banking** - Many students access funds via credit and debit cards set up by their parents. Please ask



your student if they have a system in place to access money. Encourage the student not to carry large sums of money with them especially at school. If a student is having ongoing challenges with their credit or debit card from their home country, encourage them to set up a Canadian bank account and get a Canadian debit card.

3. **Bathroom** - The bathroom may be the most puzzling room in your house for students. Bathroom plumbing varies widely throughout the world. The operation of our sinks, toilets, tubs, and showers 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 tucked inside may be new. It may be necessary to explain and demonstrate how to use the shower several times. It is also important to set boundaries for the length of showers. We recommend that showers should be no longer than 10 minutes.
 - Using the toilet - explain that only toilet paper goes in the toilet. Disposing of feminine hygiene products should be reviewed. It is also good to explain what to do if a toilet becomes plugged.
 - Discuss the schedule for bathing so the student knows when and for how long they can use the bathroom.
 - The Homestay parent must provide soap, toilet paper, and towels; show your student where these are kept. Personal toiletries (toothpaste, shampoo, feminine hygiene products) are the responsibility of the student.
4. **Cultural Norms** - Customs vary greatly from culture to culture, so your student may require some guidance from you to avoid embarrassment as they adapt in Canada. For example, Canadian expectations around table etiquette need to be taught explicitly but with sensitivity. Again, we recommend you approach these discussions from a point of curiosity. 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.
5. **Curfews** - Students must communicate their schedule and recreation plans each day. They are expected to be home for dinner unless they have discussed alternate plans with you.



On **school nights**, students with approved plans must be home by 9:00 pm. Exceptions can be made for team athletics and school events.

On **weekends**, students are expected home by 9:00 pm. Exceptions can be made for approved social activities such as attending a movie, a sports event, dinner out, movie night at a friend's, etc. All students are expected home by 11:00 pm.

Students must communicate their plans including:

- Where they plan to be
- Who they are with
- Their safe plan for getting home

Students are not permitted to be at the beach, parks, or wandering the community after dark unless they are with an approved adult over 25.



6. **Driving and Being a Passenger - International students are not permitted to drive any motor vehicle.** As you would with your own children, be aware of who your student is driving with and remind them that an N (novice) driver may only have one passenger who is not a member of their immediate family.

7. **Departures**

End of Semester Departure—Semester One - These students are expected to depart on the weekend after the last day of regular classes. Students must not remain in Canada once their semester has ended unless they have prior approval of the District Principal.

End of Semester Departure—Semester Two - Students are expected to depart on the weekend after the last day of regular classes or as soon as possible. Students must not remain in Canada once their semester has ended unless they have prior approval of the District Principal.

At the Nanaimo Airport - When dropping students at the Nanaimo Airport for their departure home, we kindly ask that you discourage the student's friends being at the airport. Goodbyes should be finished at home or school before students leave. The airport is small, and overcrowding can be disruptive. **Hosts should not leave the airport until their student is through security.**



8. **Students Wishing to Extend Their Stay** - Students requesting an extension require a letter from the natural parent to the District Principal of the International Student Education Program **prior to October 31 for the next semester or prior to May 31 for the next school year.**
9. **Family Absences** - The Homestay family is expected to be in Nanaimo/Ladysmith throughout the student's Homestay period, and the student **is not to be left alone in the house overnight.**
- Emergencies can arise, and the Homestay family should designate a close family friend or relative to be a respite person in the event the Homestay family needs to unexpectedly leave Nanaimo. Note, all temporary respite care givers must be over the age of 25 and have a current Criminal Record Check prior to providing respite. Please contact your Homestay Coordinator to give details about your respite person. Please keep in mind that maintaining continuity in the student's life is extremely important and we will work with you to support the student during an emergency.
 - If a Homestay family has a planned absence (a holiday away) that does not include the international student, the Homestay family will make arrangements for the student to have alternative accommodation or alternative adult supervision, with a valid Criminal Record Check, and have those arrangements approved by the Homestay Coordinator. **We respectfully ask that Homestay Families avoid being away from their students during holidays and at arrival and departure times.**
 - Please contact your Homestay Coordinator as soon as possible for Criminal Record Check paperwork and to advise of dates and who is providing respite.
 - Any respite accommodation requires the Homestay host to arrange pre-payment of the daily honorarium to the respite host. The Homestay host who is requesting respite must also drop-off and pick-up the student(s) and share these details with the ISE office staff.



10. **Home and Automobile Insurance** - Please contact your insurance providers to be sure that you have adequate coverage, particularly in the area of liability. You will also want to review with your insurance agent the coverage they provide for the international student's property in your house as the student is not a relative. If the student causes property damage, GuardMe provides limited Damage to Property coverage. Please take a picture of the damage and send it to your Homestay Coordinator. Be sure to keep receipts for replacement items.

11. **Laundry** - Please inform students about arrangements in your home for personal laundry. Arrange a schedule and a process that suits everyone. We recommend the student's towels and sheets are laundered regularly.



12. Food and Eating

- **Variety:** The host family is encouraged to ask the student what kind of foods they like and dislike, and to take the student shopping to select a few favourite items. Encourage students to try the dishes you prepare and be open to cultural and individual preferences.
- **Meal Etiquette:** What may be considered bad manners may simply be a cultural difference. It can be helpful to understand the meal etiquette in your student's culture. In Chinese culture, 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. Making a noise while eating may be your student's cultural manner of showing appreciation for the food served. It is appropriate for you to, gradually and gently, help your student understand dining customs in Canada. If it is a routine in your family, show your student how to load a dishwasher. Many countries do not have dishwashers, and students may need instruction a few times.
- **Breakfasts and Lunches:** While the family must provide three meals a day, it is reasonable to ask the student to prepare their own breakfast and lunch. Some students may not have experience with making a lunch, so show your student some basics such as making a sandwich, and wrapping foods in plastic wrap/foil etc. Ensure that the student understands the use of appliances, your expectations regarding which foods are available, and expectations for clean-up.



Students Cooking in the Kitchen: Set boundaries and guidelines with your student(s) early on. If students are interested we recommend that students cook with you a few times before they cook on their own. **It is important that you set clear kitchen guidelines for the times students can cook and if they are permitted to cook when you are not home.**

- **Family Dinners:** It is important that the student is included in the family evening meal, if not every day, at least four times a week. Meals are a good time to discuss the day's activities, develop English language, learn about each others' countries and traditions. If a student occasionally wishes to dine elsewhere they should get your permission in advance.
- **It is helpful for students if a plate is made up and placed in the fridge for when a student is active with sports practices, or afterschool activities.**
- **Snacks:** Your student will require access to snacks. Please 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.

- **Marking Food that is “Off Limits”:** You may have food in your refrigerator that you are saving for a specific purpose (e.g., leftovers that you intend to use for the next dinner or lunch the next day.) It is a good idea to put a sticky note on such items that warn all family members, including the student, that these items have a future purpose, and are not available for taking.
- **Restaurant Meals:** You may wish to take your student out to eat in a restaurant. Because Homestay fees include meals, the Homestay family is expected to pay for restaurant meals that they initiate. This includes when you are taking students on trips. Discuss your expectation on meal costs before ordering.

13. **Gym Memberships** - Students require NATURAL parental consent. Gyms require minors and their adult co-signers to complete the gym application in person. As Custodian, District Principal of ISE can act as a signatory. We will request written consent from the natural. Once we have received this email, District Principal will accompany the student to the gym to act as a co-signer. **We kindly ask Homestays NOT to act as a co-signer for gym memberships, nor pay for gym memberships.**



14. **Money Matters** - The Homestay family member is not permitted to borrow money from the international student nor is the international student permitted to borrow money from any Homestay family member

15. **Names** - Review with your student the names of all family members and pets and what everyone prefers to be called. If you find after a few days that your student is not using names, it may be because they are uncertain of the pronunciation and does not wish to risk the embarrassment of a mistake.



- Respect your student's name. Be sure to ask about the proper pronunciation. The excuse, “It’s too hard for me to pronounce,” may be interpreted as, “Your name isn’t important enough for me to learn.”

16. **Parties** - While parties are part of teenage socializing, the following guidelines apply:

- If there is no responsible adult (parent or Homestay 25+ years old) in attendance, the student is not permitted to attend and they must obtain the permission of their Homestay family before attending
- The Homestay family must make prior contact with the responsible parent who will be in attendance at the party throughout the duration. **Homestays must have personal contact with the responsible adult. A text/email is not enough.**
- The Homestay family must have the address and phone number where the party is to be held
- Overnight attendance at parties is not permitted except in cases pre-authorized by the Homestay parent who has contacted the supervising adult. ISE rules prohibit sleepovers involving students of the opposite sex or chosen partners.

17. **Privacy and Security** - Privacy is essential when people live together. Please make it clear to your 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 restriction.



The student's room is also a private place, and we ask that host families respect their privacy, unless you have a safety concern. We recommend that host parents do a room check after the student cleans their room once a week. It is also recommended that you have the student present when entering the room for their weekly check.

- Carefully explain to the student which family and household items are open for use and whether some are not. Similarly, be sure to seek permission before borrowing your student's things (computer, sound system, etc.). Permission once does not imply permission on an on-going basis. 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.
- In terms of personal privacy, remember that physical contact can be less or more common within other cultures, and your practice may make the student uncomfortable, particularly at first.

18. You must inform your student upon their arrival if you have security cameras on your property.



19. **Public Transit Information** - Knowing how to use public transportation will increase your student's independence and may be needed for your student to get to school. As of September 6th, students will get to ride the transit for free. Students will need to get a Fare-Free Youth Umo pass (available at Nanaimo Transit vendors). Information is available at [Nanaimo Transit](https://www.nanaimotransit.com/).

- Please help the student determine bus routes and schedules to and from school and various other locations in the city. Depending on the student's language level, the family may wish to prepare cards to show 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 them the first time or two.
- Please ensure your student is familiar with Canadian bus etiquette, including not sitting in reserved seats, giving up their seat to allow seniors to sit down, and how to signal the bus driver when they wish to depart the bus.
- Although the student will be expected to become independent in getting around, the family needs to arrange to pick them up if an activity ends late in the evening. **It is inappropriate for the student to rely on public transit after an International Student Education Program activity that ends in the evening. Please collect your student and let them know where you will be picking them up.**

Here are links to the schedules for Nanaimo and Ladysmith:

Nanaimo - <https://www.bctransit.com/nanaimo/schedules-and-maps/>

Ladysmith - <https://www.bctransit.com/cowichan-valley/schedules-and-maps/>

There is a transit route (70 NCX Nanaimo -Cowichan Express) connecting Ladysmith to Nanaimo and to Duncan providing seven trips Monday to Friday and six trips on Saturday. [The schedule is found here.](#)



20. **Transportation for Students Who Participate in Extra Curricular Activities** - Many students get involved with after school clubs, sports teams, and community activities. We want this positive activity for our students! Some students may need Homestay parent support getting to/from these activities. **We recommend that you talk with your student(s) coach to see if you can carpool with other parents. (Students may feel uncomfortable doing this on their own, that is why we recommend host parents initiate this conversation.)** We encourage you to attend some of their games or presentations, as you would with your own children.
21. **Religion** - Respect your student's religious beliefs. If your student wishes to attend a church, please assist them in making suitable arrangements. If your family is religious, it is important to respect your student's rights not to participate in your religious practices.
22. **School Bus Transportation** - Students attending schools within their catchment area and those living beyond the established walk limits are eligible for school bus service. Established walk limits are 4.3 km for students in grades 4-12. Students may be required to walk up to 3.2 km to the nearest bus stop. Registration for school bus passes is online on the school district website under the Families tab, Getting to School, Bus Registration. Please follow this link for [Bus Registration](#). A bus pass will be printed for each student once the registration package is submitted, and approval completed. Passes will be available for pick up the third week of school, at the front office, or from the bus driver.
23. **School Holidays** – Most students will choose to remain in the Homestay for the two-week Winter vacation. This is an excellent opportunity to share Canadian culture. The Homestay family is expected to include the international student in all aspects of holiday celebrations. The international student is also expected to participate in family activities. International students generally stay in the Homestay during Spring Break as well.
- If an international student intends to return home during these holidays, they will require a Letter of Enrollment from the Principal of International Education. The letter is needed to clear Immigration upon returning to Canada. They must also complete the Overnight Travel form and share travel details (flights, etc.) with their Homestay Coordinator.
 - Students are expected to return to their home countries for the Summer break. Departure should be on the weekend after the last day of school unless other arrangements have been made through the District Principal's office.
24. **Sexual Activity** – In the Student Agreement that both the student and the natural parent sign, international students are expected to abstain from sexual activity with a partner during their participation in the ISE Program.
25. **Sleeping Patterns and Arrangements** – Etiquette for bed linens and their use should be explained early so that the student knows how to sleep in the bed (how the sheets and covers work), and how to make the bed. You may need to give more than one lesson on how to make the bed. Some students may only be used to a single mattress cover and a duvet. Let them know what time the family goes to bed and when quiet time is. The student may be accustomed to different sleeping patterns. It is important that you help them establish routines that are compatible with your family's lifestyle. Please do not allow the student to be up late at night on the internet. If need be, turn off your WIFI at 11:00 pm on school nights or ask your student to hand in their devices at a designated time on school nights. This will help ensure the student is rested for school the next day.
26. **Sleepovers** - It is good to get to know your student's friends to determine the kinds of social choices





they are making. If your student asks to go to a friend's home for a sleepover, it is the Homestay parents' responsibility to talk on the phone to the parents who will be hosting your student to confirm that your understanding of the plan is accurate and that there will be a parent home throughout the night to supervise. It is up to your student to provide the phone number, address, and names of the parents. International Student Education Program rules prohibit sleepovers involving students of the opposite sex or chosen partner.

If your international student wants to stay overnight at a friend's, we request:

- Homestay parents to be in contact with the other parent to determine who will be responsible for supervising the students. **You must make phone contact, do not text.**
- All regular ISE rules apply while away – e.g., no drinking alcohol, curfew, no driving, etc.

27. **Summer Storage** – For students returning for another year of study, the Homestay family may agree to store the student's personal belongings. Please notify the ISE office of these plans **by June 1st** so we can inform the student's agent. If the student's belongings are left in the room, it is expected that the room will not be used during the student's absence, and a storage fee of \$150/month will be paid. Monthly Storage Fees:

- If the student's belongings are boxed and stored in a safe, dry place, a storage fee of \$75/month will be paid. This is for a student with the equivalent of 2 large suitcases and 2 small bags (carry on luggage size)
- Students who have more than 2 large suitcases and 2 small bags will be invoiced at \$25 per additional suitcase/bag
- When the student returns at the end of August, the family may submit to the ISE office a claim for this storage fee, and payment will be issued with the September or October Homestay cheque. The deadline for submission of this claim is September 30 of the same school year.

28. **Phone and Internet** – All ISE students are required to have a Canadian phone number with a data plan. Using WhatsApp is not sufficient, as there are locations that will not have Wi-Fi readily available. **This is a SAFETY issue.**



- Students were given information about purchasing a Canadian plan in their Arrival Guide. We will also have representatives at the Orientation from PhoneBox. Students need to bring a credit card to sign up with Phone Box.
- If students change their cell phone number, please share this with the Homestay Coordinator so we can update our records.
- Ensure that your student adds your numbers and the Urgent Matters phone number to their contacts on their phone. Also, ensure that your student understands the use of 911.
- Please set definite guidelines regarding phone and internet usage. Monitor your student's use of the computer and phone as you would for your own children. Should you feel that use has become excessive, and the student is unwilling to cut back, please contact the Homestay Coordinator.
- If you are concerned that frequent and lengthy calls to natural parents are hindering your student's adjustment, contact the Homestay Coordinator for assistance and advice. It is okay to restrict incoming or outgoing calls to natural parents at inconvenient hours (i.e., before 6:00 am or after 10:00 pm).



29. **Visiting Parents** - Homestay families are not required to tour and entertain visiting parents. We encourage you to meet them and establish a connection. Visiting natural parents or the student's friends must secure their own accommodations.
30. **Visitors** – Your student may wish to invite a friend home. Please discuss this in advance with your student and agree on notice, times, snacks, and which rooms are suitable for hosting. Students are not to entertain friends of the opposite sex or chosen partners in their bedrooms. When having a student visit for dinner or inviting them for a sleep over, the visiting student does not pay the respite fee.
31. **Room Clean up** – Students are responsible for cleaning their rooms on a regular basis. Once a week they need to remove any trash, put away clothes, change sheets and towels, do their laundry, dust, and vacuum. **We strongly recommend you do a weekly room check with your student present.**
 - **Prior to departure, students are to clean their room and invite you to assess their room for any damage with them.** If damage is discovered, please take a photograph, and notify the Homestay Coordinator.
32. **Garbage and Recycling** - Not all countries have the same recycling and garbage services that we do. Take your time to explain to your student about what compost, garbage and recycling is.
33. **Departure Planning** – Please assist your student to prepare for their departure. Any extra baggage, or baggage exceeding size or weight allowances, are subject to extra fees. Please make sure your student understands these limits.
 - Most students will have purchased items in Canada and may have too many to take home. Encourage them to donate, sell, or gift items they will not be taking home.
 - It is the Homestay's responsibility to ensure that their student(s) is dropped off at their departure location.



Student Travel Beyond Nanaimo Ladysmith

We hope you will share our community and surrounding areas with your student.

Day trips – Day trips require the permission of the Homestay parents.

General guidelines are:

- Students must have demonstrated maturity, responsibility, and are in good standing at school
- Students must never travel alone
- Students have a safety plan including transportation routes, destinations, and contact numbers **that are verified by the Homestay host**
- Students have enough English to be able to ask for assistance and directions if required
- Students are not permitted to travel to Vancouver or Victoria, unless accompanied by a responsible adult during their first month in the program.
- Students going to Vancouver are required to be on the **2nd to last ferry back to Nanaimo** and must go with a friend or responsible adult.. Homestay hosts please confirm the Ferry Schedule before departure and check the weather for the potential of ferry cancellations.
- Students are discouraged from making frequent trips to Vancouver



Out-of-town trips with the Homestay Family - Homestay parents do not require permission from International Student Education Program staff to take a student out of town. If, however, the family is planning an **overnight trip**, they must inform the Homestay Coordinator of their intentions in case the student must be reached due to an emergency in the student's natural family.

- If you travel together (for a sightseeing trip, or a ski weekend, etc.), you are expected to cover the cost of transportation (in the family vehicle), meals, and accommodation. 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, confirm in advance, that the student wishes to participate in activities and is aware any additional expense.**

Overnight Trips Without Homestay Family – Outside of Nanaimo Ladysmith Under no condition is the student permitted to be away from Nanaimo Ladysmith overnight without their Homestay host without the approval of the Homestay Coordinator.

- After discussion with their Homestay Parent, the student must complete an "Overnight Travel Application" and submit it to the Homestay Coordinator **at least 7 days prior** to the departure date (**sample form in the Appendix and [on our website](#)**).
- This application is signed by the Natural Parent prior to being submitted to the Homestay Coordinator. The Homestay Coordinator **will contact 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 an approved adult (25 years of age or older) present.

Overnight Stays Without Homestay Family - In Nanaimo Ladysmith

Students wishing to stay overnight with a family friend or relative (25 years of age or older) within the boundaries of Nanaimo Ladysmith and **outside of our Homestay program** need to complete an Overnight Travel Application and submit it to the Homestay Coordinator 7 days in advance.

Travel Outside of Canada – A student travelling with a Host family to an international destination (this includes the United States), will require documentation that may include a "Letter of Enrollment", Visa, ESTA, and others, to present at the Canadian border upon re-entry.

- Natural parents must authorize the travel through written permission
- The "Overnight Travel" form must be submitted to the Homestay Coordinator **at least 3 weeks in advance** so that the details can be verified. Forms can be found [here](#).
- Students will receive a confirmation from the International Student Education office that the travel is approved by the Homestay Coordinator.
- Students returning to their home country during a school break, also need to complete the "Overnight Travel" form.

The Homestay Agreement

1. **Homestay Fees** - The Homestay fee of \$1,200 per month is paid to the Homestay Family **on the second Friday of each month. The August per diem will be paid with the September payment.**

You will receive an email indicating an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) has been deposited in your



bank account. If you have not received the funds within five days of the second Friday of the month, please contact Devon Slater at devon.slater@sd68.bc.ca.

- The Homestay stipend is intended to cover room, board (consisting of three meals a day and snacks) and parental guidance. If you take your student to a restaurant, you are expected to pay for the student's meal. If your student takes part in a school ski trip, the student will pay for the outing, but the family would provide a bag lunch. If your student joins you on a family vacation, holiday expenses (lift tickets, equipment rentals) are borne by the student. Similarly, extra expenses for train/plane/ferry, and an additional hotel room if required, would be borne by the student while meals and snacks would be paid by the Homestay.
 - Students who have a special diet are required to pay an additional fee.
2. **Summer Homestay Fees** – With prior approval of the District Principal and agreement with the Homestay Host, students may arrive early, or ask to leave later than the requested dates. The Homestay stipend is \$50 per night slept in the Homestay. For early arrivals in August, the summer Homestay stipend of \$50 per night.
3. **Homestay Damage** - The ISE Program does not keep a Homestay Deposit to be applied against any damage incurred by the student. If damage occurs to the home or the family's belongings the Homestay Family must notify the Homestay Coordinator **as soon as possible**, and provide pictures before the student leaves the country.

All damages must be inspected by the Homestay Coordinator and approved for payment. Receipts for cost and repairs are required. The Homestay Coordinator can be consulted when a claim is submitted through GuardMe.



4. **Student Moves** - The Homestay Coordinator will make every attempt to find a suitable match between a student and the Homestay family and will monitor the satisfaction of both parties through regular contact. Although most Homestay placements are successful, 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 discussions with both the family and the student have failed to produce satisfactory results. If issues are the result of incompatibility between the student and the Homestay family, the Homestay Coordinator will locate a new Homestay.



- Under most circumstances, the Homestay family is given two weeks notice, or provided payment in lieu of notice, that the student will be moving to a new Homestay.
- When Homestay families initiate the move, it can be traumatic for their student. We ask that host families contact the Homestay Coordinator when issues first arise, rather than waiting until the situation becomes intolerable.

When things are not working out with your student:

We encourage all Homestay Parents to have a conversation with their student about any issues they are having. Students are also encouraged to have conversations with their Homestay Parents if issues arise.

If such conversations do not resolve the issue, please seek the intervention of the Homestay Coordinator. If the situation remains unsatisfactory a student move may be considered.

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 immediately be moved from the home. In these cases, the Homestay family cannot expect any notice from the Program or payment in lieu.

Supporting Your Homestay Student

Supporting Language Development - A significant reason for students to study in Canada is to learn/improve their English. Please engage your student in regular conversation. Paraphrase regularly and check that they understand clearly.

Here are some tips for communicating with an individual who is an English Language Learner: *(Author: J. More, University of British Columbia)*

Assume:

- The other person speaks at least one language well
- The other person is probably just as intelligent as you
- The other person is translating into his or her own language; this slows response time
- Non-verbal communication is even more important than usual

Tips:

- Speak clearly, avoid raising your voice
- Take your time, speak slower than usual, and avoid 'talking down'
- Communicate words in order of importance
- Avoid idioms and sarcasm, or explain them
- Use your best Canadian accent; do not imitate their accent
- Use Non-verbal communication
 - Make sure it's consistent with your verbal language
 - Remember that gestures in one culture may have a different meaning in another
- A smile, nod, or 'yes' from an English Language Learner often doesn't mean 'I understand'.
- When you ask a question look for an accurate response
- Information gathering
 - Don't get 'down to business' too quickly
 - Empower the other person. Avoid being louder than, or higher than, the other person, and consider personal space.
- Laughter as a response may communicate embarrassment. This response is considered inappropriate in our culture, but not in most other cultures. On the other hand, laughing when a person does not understand, is insulting. If something the student does or says seems amusing, explain the humour.



Support for Learning – The school-based International Student Advisors and the International Program staff, review student academic progress regularly. Student progress is communicated to natural parents four times a year through report cards. Through the Parent Portal in MyEd, Homestays may also access their student's progress.

International Student Advisors - Each school there has a designated International Student Advisor. See page 2 of this handbook. Please phone or email the Advisor regarding academic and attendance concerns.



Report Cards (Written Updates of Learning) – Report cards are issued four times a year and schools publish the report card release dates. You are encouraged to see the report cards of your Homestay students and can have access to the Parent Portal in MyEd. Contact your Homestay Coordinator if you have questions.

Ongoing Communication of Student Learning - Teachers provide ongoing communication of student learning when a student is experiencing academic difficulty. Homestay parents are encouraged to contact the teacher, or International Student Advisor, to discuss an action plan to correct the situation. Teachers may occasionally contact Homestay families about a student's academic. Please forward this information to the student's International School Advisor to support for the student.

Tutors - Contact the school's International Student Advisor for information about tutors. All schools have access to English Language teachers who can provide support and make recommendations. Most schools maintain a list of available tutors and some schools have peer tutors available.

Support for Behaviour - As a school system, we help students grow. We can't prevent every mistake, but our goal is to teach students to not repeat the same mistake. At times, disciplinary action is necessary. Please do not let problems grow. **Contact us early, so we can help, before situations become intolerable.** Do not let students break the rules – develop boundaries and stick to them.

Students are required to follow the Program rules as a condition of remaining in the program. These rules include:

- Attending all scheduled classes and demonstrating a sincere effort to maintain satisfactory grades
- Abstaining from involvement with alcohol, drugs, pornography, sexual activity with a partner, gambling, smoking, or vaping
- Abstaining from criminal activity, being in possession of false ID
- Not driving

Attendance – When your student is absent from school due to illness, a medical appointment, or scheduled appointment, etc., **Homestay parents must phone or email the school and report the absence.** At no time should a Homestay excuse a student from school to be part of a Grade 12 skip-out day, or to go shopping in Victoria or Vancouver with their friends. There will be escalating consequences for students demonstrating attendance concerns.



School Contact numbers for phoning or emailing about Student Absences are on page 2.

Discipline – Serious discipline matters will be referred to an ISE disciplinary panel. The student discipline process has four stages designed to provide the student the opportunity to alter unsatisfactory behaviour. With each stage, the student's agent and natural parents are notified by the ISE office.

1. **Initial Intervention** – An International Student Education staff member will meet with the student to discuss the unacceptable behaviour and the requirements for improvement. If discussion of the concern does not lead to behaviour change, a behaviour plan will be put in place by the Homestay Coordinator. If the behaviour continues, a Stage 1 Letter of Discipline will be issued.



2. **Letter of Discipline** - This letter describes the student's unacceptable behaviour and the requirements for improvement and requires the student's signature indicating the intention of improving. A review date is established. A student may be issued a Stage 2 Letter of Discipline, with consequences, or they may be moved directly to a final warning.
3. **Final Warning** – The student receives a Final Letter of Discipline. This letter describes the unacceptable behaviour and the required solutions. A review date is established. Failure to fulfill the requirements of the Final Warning results in dismissal from the Program and the student is returned to their home country.
4. **Dismissal** – On dismissal from the Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District the student will immediately return home at the student's expense

To initiate an intervention for student behaviour, please contact:

- Homestay Coordinator for **outside of school** behaviour concerns
- School Advisor for **in-school** behaviour concerns
- Or the District Principal and Vice-Principal

Support for Physical Health

Please care for your student as you would your own family. Ask your student what they normally do when they are unwell and have them consult their natural parents for interventions for common ailments like headache, cold, and flu. A great source for guidance is HealthLinkBC.

Please phone or email the student's school office if your student is ill and cannot attend classes.

Medical Insurance – Each student has medical coverage through GuardMe or BC Medical Services Plan (MSP). Students are covered for physical and mental illness and accidents. All students are given medical insurance information upon arrival, including their GuardMe card with the policy number and expiration date.

Students accessing Medical Services must have their Passport, actual GuardMe or MSP card, and credit card with them. Homestay parents should not pay for medical services or products accessed by the student. Please reach out to the Homestay Coordinator if students have challenges making payment.

- **Students must always carry the card with them.** We strongly recommend that students and host parents keep a photograph of the front and back of the cards on their cell phone, should there be an emergency.
- **Five-month students** will be covered by GuardMe for the full five months.
- **Ten-month students** will be covered by GuardMe for the first three months then switched to MSP and a GuardMe top up for the remainder of their stay.

For many medical services in local clinics, Life Labs, etc., students on GuardMe will pay up front for medical services and then complete an online form to request reimbursement. Island Health facilities will bill GuardMe directly.

If asked for an address when accessing services (Pharmacy, Hospital, Urgent Care, Dentist, etc.) provide the ISE school address: E201, 6135 McGirr Road, Nanaimo, V9V 1M1 for billing purposes



Medical Intervention

Online Services - Students and Homestays can call 811 to get answers to health questions any time of day or night. A team of health service navigators will answer 811 calls and, depending on your questions, will direct you to an on-duty nurse, dietitian, or pharmacist. This service is available in more than 130 languages and will help you identify symptoms and provide you advice on when to seek medical treatment.

- For students can book a virtual appointment with a doctor or other health care :
 - Call 811 for referral to an online doctor
 - Visit <https://virtualclinics.ca/#how-it-works> to sign up.
 - Visit <https://vivacare.ca/> to sign up.
 - Visit <https://rocketdoctor.ca/online-doctor-bc/> to sign up

Online GuardMe Services - Students can call a Mobile Doctor to receive medical advice, a diagnosis or prescription. Conditions that can be treated online include allergies, asthma, cold and flu, infections, insomnia, migraines, pink eye, and sore throats.

- Visit www.guard.me/mobiledoctor to sign up. Students must have a Canadian phone number to register for this service.

In-Person Care

- **Nursing Care**
 - Nanaimo Youth Wellness Center – Nanaimo Public Health Unit – 1665 Grant Avenue
 - School Youth Mobile Clinics – see your School Advisor to make an appointment
 - John Barsby Wellness Center – for students attending John Barsby School
- **Doctor Care**
 - Medical Arts Clinic – Port Place Mall – 250-753-3431
 - Central Nanaimo Urgent and Primary Care – 3260 Norwell Drive - 1-833-688-8722
 - You can also make an appointment to see our ISE FAMILY DOCTOR through your Homestay Coordinator.
- **Dental and Eye Care**
 - Emergency dental and eye procedures are covered by the student's medical insurance.

Emergency Care - If the student needs urgent care, go to the Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, Ladysmith Community Health Center, or Oceanside Urgent Care. In emergencies, you can request an ambulance by calling 911. **Please phone (do not text) the Urgent Matters Phone if you have a medical emergency.**

If a student needs to be hospitalized, please to remain with them, just as you would with your own children. The Homestay Coordinator and/or District Principal or Vice Principal will be available assist you if hospital care conflicts with your work schedule or you have young children at home.

- **Host parents cannot make serious medical decisions in the absence of the natural parents, only the student's Custodian can make such decisions.**

Transportation to medical appointments – Arrange a ride with your host family first and Homestay Coordinator second. If you need to use a taxi, keep your receipt for reimbursement.



Support for Mental Health

Living and going to school in a new country opens the door to new experiences, it can also present challenges to mental well-being brought on by homesickness, high expectations, and feeling uncertain about how to navigate new surroundings.

**Help****Through****Crisis**

If you suspect a Mental Health concern, contact your Homestay Coordinator

If your student is feeling down, anxious or stressed and it is affecting daily activities, including school, it is time to seek help.

Encourage your student to practice the following to promote good mental well-being:

- Practice the basics: **get enough sleep, eat well and exercise regularly.** Help students choose wisely.
- Surround themselves with good people: stay connected to friends and family back home while building new relationships here. Participate in school activities, join clubs, purposefully build connections. Having a host parent watch a soccer game or provide carpooling for your student's club is a great way to provide support.
- Stay on track: reduce the potential to become overwhelmed. **Help your student set realistic goals and practice daily organization.** Experience the security of routines.
- Lighten the load: take time for self-care. Slow down to rest and repair, schedule in downtime. **Teach your student how to take care of stress and quiet their mind.** Many students will not have been taught coping strategies such as deep breathing, making a list of things to do, etc.
- Focus on the positive: **practice kindness and find things to be grateful for.** Focussing on the positive releases dopamine in our brains and helps us feel better. **Compliment and encourage students when trying new things.**
- Build healthy social media habits: studies show the more time we spend on social media the greater the chance of developing depression. Social media exposure can lead to comparisons that make us unhappy. **Many students (and adults) have addictions to their phone and creating a balance can be a challenge. Contact your Homestay Coordinator for support if your student shows unhealthy habits.**

School counsellors are available for international students and are a great starting point. The student can ask for support in the Counselling Center, or they can ask their International Student Advisor.

Our community has services in place to respond to ongoing mental health concerns and to provide interventions in crisis situations. If you are concerned about the mental health of an international student, inform the Homestay Coordinator and they will assist you in accessing the right intervention.

Signs of Wellness Concerns

- feeling low, losing interest in life
- feeling more anxious or agitated than usual
- gaining or losing weight
- stop caring about image and hygiene
- do too much or do too little
- have trouble getting up in the morning (beyond normal teenage behaviour)
- become withdrawn – spending too much time in their room
- have sleep problems





- avoiding school

Pathway to Intervention

Making good mental health practices a daily habit – going for a daily walk together, daily conversations

- See your school counsellor
- Visit a doctor
- Contact a counselling clinician for private counselling or therapy
- Contact Child and Youth Mental Health
- Call the Crisis Line, Crisis Chat or Crisis Text.
- [Vancouver Island Crisis Society](#) has great resources
- Visit the Brook's Landing Walk-In Clinic
- Call 911 or access the hospital Emergency Room if a crisis is occurring

If Your Student is Experiencing an Immediate Crisis

- **Call 911** and let the operator know it is a mental health problem
- Go to a hospital emergency room
- The BC Suicide Helpline can be reached at 1-800-784-2433

When to Contact Us:

Our Office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 4:00 pm. You are welcome to call us during these hours with any general questions or concerns at 250-751-0197. For urgent matters occurring any time, please use the Urgent Matters line: 250-714-2252. This number is to be used for emergencies such as a missing student, major illness or injury, a significant behavioural issue, or involvement with law enforcement. For non-emergent matters, we encourage email communication or calling during business hours.

We also provide a homestay contact list so that families can support one another. This can be useful for organizing sleepover, coordinating transportation, or sharing experiences.

For urgent matters, please call the Urgent Matters Phone! Please phone, do not text when:

- Your student is seriously ill, especially where hospitalization or surgery is expected, or if there is a communicable disease
- There is a serious, urgent event, such as a student going missing, being involved in an accident, or being apprehended by the police
- Police attended an incident at your home (e.g., domestic dispute, theft, break-in, etc.)
- Your student has left Nanaimo or Ladysmith or is away overnight in Nanaimo or Ladysmith, without permission or an approved travel application

The Homestay Coordinator MUST hear from you under these circumstances:

- Your student is planning to leave Nanaimo Ladysmith without a travel application
- Your student is planning on changing schools or Homestay, of if they are planning on leaving the program or Homestay
- You are planning to change residence or if your home is listed for sale
- Charges are laid by the police against a resident of your home



form



- A resident of your home turns 19 (They need a Criminal Record Check completed)
- Your student causes damage in your home
- You are leaving town overnight or going on a holiday
- If you will be away from the home overnight, so that we can be sure that adequate supervision has been arranged.

The Homestay Coordinator MUST hear from you if you have these concerns:

- You believe your student may be seriously depressed or suicidal
- You suspect that your student may be experiencing discrimination, harassment, threats, or inappropriate advances
- You suspect that your student may be experiencing a mental or emotional disorder
- You suspect that your student may have an eating disorder
- You suspect that your student may be involved in violent acts or acts of bullying, either as victim or perpetrator
- You believe your student may be experiencing financial difficulty
- You believe that your student is using drugs or alcohol, or engaging in other unsafe behaviours
- You suspect that your student has a physical condition requiring medical intervention.



The Homestay Coordinator WANTS to hear from you:

- If you notice a change in the pattern of behavior of your student.
- If there is a change in the accommodation that you are offering for students.
- If there will be a new resident in your home (student or otherwise) or if someone is leaving your home.
- If there is a change in your home or work contact information.
- If a resident of your home contacts a communicable disease.



We'd like to hear from you anytime that you feel that you would like guidance, support, or feedback. And, of course, it is always nice to hear about positive relationships and events.

Some Closing Thoughts for Homestays ...

Without a doubt, one of the most rewarding aspects of taking part of the Nanaimo Ladysmith Homestay Program, is the chance to learn about a new culture in a new part of the world. Our students come from over 25 countries, and our Homestay families get to "travel the world" without ever leaving the comfort of their own home.

At the conclusion of a student's stay, many host families and students remain long-term friends. Saying good-bye represents only the next phase of the newly developed, lifelong relationship.

**Have fun, and thank you so much for
opening your hearts and your home.**





Important Conversations to Have with Your ISE Student About How to Live in Your Home

*These are some guidelines to explain how we **usually** do things in our house. We hope they will help you. If there is anything you do not understand, please ask us.*

MEALS

We hope you will enjoy our food. Tell us what foods you like or don't like. We will try to accommodate.

Breakfast: In our home, adults and teenagers prepare their own breakfasts on most weekdays. We will help you at first. Please tell us what to you like to eat for breakfast. On weekends we____.

Lunch: On school days, food will be provided for you to make your lunch. On weekends, check with us.

Dinner:

- Dinner will be prepared for you. Sometimes we will ask you to help.
- Dinner with your Homestay family will be at least 4 times a week
- We usually eat dinner at____PM.
- Please help clean the table after dinner.
- If you are not coming home for dinner, phone or text early so that we know how much food to cook.

Snacks: If you are hungry between meals, you will be provided with some snacks in addition to the meals. Please feel free to purchase extra snacks if desired.

Cleaning the Kitchen: You must always clean any mess you leave in the kitchen. Remember to put your dirty dishes in the dishwasher.

LAUNDRY

KEYS

- You will have your own key or be given a key code. **Never** lend this key or tell the key code to anyone else.
- The door is to be kept locked at all times.
- Please remove your shoes when you enter the house.

YOUR ROOM – Let's establish a cleaning routine:

- Your room is your private space. When you are in your room you may close the door if you want to be alone.
- Your room must be cleaned and vacuumed once a week. Please also empty your garbage once a week. We will wash your sheets and towels once a week on__.

THE BATHROOM

- You will share a bathroom with____.
- Please wipe the sink and counter after each use.
- Clean towels_____.
- Showers should not be taken before____AM or later than____PM. because the noise will disturb other members of the family. Showers must be limited to no more than 10 minutes.
- In Canada, we leave the bathroom door open after we are finished. This will help air circulate and will indicate that the bathroom is available.
- If the door is closed, please knock before entering.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFO ABOUT OUR HOME:

Overnight Travel Application

SUBMIT THIS APPLICATION TO THE HOMESTAY COORDINATOR AT LEAST 7 DAYS IN ADVANCE OF DEPARTURE

- ☐ Overnight Trip – Outside or Inside Nanaimo/Ladysmith – Without Homestay Parents (excluding HS approved sleepovers)
- ☐ Overnight Trip – Outside Canada – With Homestay Parents (submit application 30 days in advance of travel)
- ☐ Overnight Trip – Outside Canada – Without Homestay Parents (submit application 30 days in advance of travel)

*** Please see following pages for a checklist and details of requirements**

1. COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION

STUDENT NAME _____ DATE OF APPLICATION _____ STUDENT CELL # _____

DESTINATION _____ NAME OF RESPONSIBLE ADULT YOU ARE STAYING WITH _____
(Must be 25 Years of Age or Older)

RESPONSIBLE ADULT'S CELL # _____ How do you know this adult? _____

Leaving Nanaimo on _____ Returning on _____

PURPOSE for this trip (be specific) _____

2. TRANSPORTATION

☐ Bus ☐ Car (Owner) _____ ☐ Other _____

☐ Airplane (flight number) Departure _____ Return _____

3. ACCOMMODATION

☐ Private Residence

NAME OF OWNER _____ PHONE # _____ ADDRESS _____

☐ Hotel (Students staying in a hotel must be accompanied by a responsible adult)

NAME OF HOTEL _____

*In the event there is a need for medical care please contact the student's Custodian, Larry Mattin at 250 732 0827.

4. OBTAIN PERMISSION FROM YOUR NATURAL PARENT(S)

Information for Natural Parent: Please ensure that you are fully informed of your child's intended whereabouts.

- ☐ I support this request
- ☐ I do not support this request because _____
- ☐ Natural Parent Signature _____ Date _____

5. SUBMIT TO HOMESTAY COORDINATOR

- ☐ Request approved
- ☐ Request not approved because _____
- ☐ Homestay parent notified by _____ Date _____
- ☐ Coordinator Signature _____ Date _____

Overnight Travel Application

Day Trip – Outside of Nanaimo Ladysmith

With the Homestay Parents	• No permission required
Without the Homestay Parents	• Permission from the Homestay Parents required

Overnight Trip – Outside or Inside Nanaimo Ladysmith (excluding HS approved Sleepovers)

With the Homestay Parents	☐ Inform the Homestay Coordinator
Without the Homestay Parents	☐ Inform the Homestay Coordinator ☐ Complete the Travel Request Form to be signed by natural parents ☐ Submit forms to the Homestay Coordinator at least 10 days prior to departure

Overnight Trip – Outside of Canada

With the Homestay Parents	☐ Inform the Homestay Coordinator ☐ Complete the Travel Request Form and submit ☐ Obtain a Letter of Enrollment from the ISE Office ie-secretaries@sd68.bc.ca ☐ Obtain a Parental Consent Letter: travel.gc.ca/letter ☐ Apply for a Travel Visa - if required ☐ Bring Passport, study permit or visa if applicable ☐ Submit forms and letters to the Homestay Coordinator at least 30 days prior to departure
Without the Homestay Parents	☐ Inform the Homestay Coordinator ☐ Complete the Travel Request Form and submit ☐ Obtain a Letter of Enrollment from the ISE Office ie-secretaries@sd68.bc.ca ☐ Obtain a Parental Consent Letter: travel.gc.ca/letter ☐ Apply for a Travel Visa - if required (unless travelling to home country) ☐ Check vaccine and COVID testing requirements for destination and return to Canada ☐ Bring Passport, study permit or visa if applicable ☐ Bring proof of vaccine status ☐ Bring Passport ☐ Submit forms and letters to the Homestay Coordinator at least 30 days prior to departure

Overnight Travel Application

Documentation

Travel Request Form – This form provides the itinerary for the travel request. It ensures that parents are informed of their child’s travel plans and documents their permission for the travel. The form is also signed by the Homestay Coordinator. The form releases the Nanaimo Ladysmith School District of responsibility for the student while the student is on the trip. The form is available from the Homestay Coordinator.

Letter of Enrollment – This letter confirms that a student is studying in Nanaimo Ladysmith and may be requested at border crossings. The letter is available from the International Student Education Office.

Parental Consent Letter for Children Abroad – This letter provides consent from the natural parents for your international student to travel with the Homestay family. The letter may be requested by immigration authorities at border crossings. Search travel.gc.ca/letter for more information.

Visa – Visa requirements to enter countries differ depending on your citizenship. Be sure to check Visa requirements for your student prior to finalizing your plans.

Passport – Be sure to travel with it.