

# Homestay

SKY Secondary School does not provide homestay service; however, we can refer our students to our trusted providers. Please contact us at [info@skysecondary.ca](mailto:info@skysecondary.ca) for further details.

## **SKY Secondary School's Homestay Policy**

SKY Secondary School does not provide boarding facilities. Instead, it will provide Homestay services through reputable independent commercial Homestay companies. These companies must abide by the Provincial Homestay guidelines, British Columbia K-12 International Student Homestay Guidelines (2018). SKY Secondary School will keep in close contact with the Homestay students and the homestay providers to ensure the guidelines are followed.

## **Description of a Homestay**

A homestay is a formal arrangement by an international student program or its delegates to house an international student with an approved family during the course of study. This family and its residence are commonly called the 'homestay'. BC's Guidelines refer to this family as the host family. A K-12 homestay student is a minor child (i.e., under 19) from outside BC who pays a fee to stay with a homestay family in return for meals, a private room, family support and various cultural experiences.

## **Definition of a Homestay Provider**

A homestay program provider is an organization or company that arranges homestays. Sometimes, the school will provide the homestay programs, but other times, the provider will be a third-party company or organization.

## **Procedures**

SKY Secondary School will only collaborate with reputable homestay program providers with experience working with international students. The school will ensure that the homestay program provider(s) fulfill their responsibilities as defined in the Provincial Homestay Guidelines:

### Homestay Program Provider Responsibilities:

1. Maintain a homestay screening process for host families and international students to determine suitability. The host family screening process should be published and should include:
  - a. Scheduled home inspections and host parent interviews
  - b. Scheduled criminal records check for all adult household members
  - c. Reference checks for the host family parent(s) where required
2. Gather appropriate and up-to-date personal records/contact information for the student, parent/guardian, custodian and/or host family, including:
  - a. Legal first and last names (i.e., as they appear in a passport)
  - b. Gender
  - c. Age
  - d. Relevant medical information
  - e. Country of residence
  - f. Address
  - g. Contact phone number and email address
3. Ensure that all data collected and any information distributed by the homestay program provider comply with Protection of Privacy legislation.
4. Develop and deliver a comprehensive training program for new host families to ensure familiarity and understanding with best practices and develop a process for regular host families to stay current with best practices.
5. Place no more than two international students with a host family simultaneously.

6. Avoid concurrently placing both adult and minor international students in the same home.
7. Inform the host family of potential student placements using a standardized student profile form that includes the dates of accommodation, special requirements and relevant medical and behavioural background.
8. Liaise with the student, school, host family and parents/guardian and support each.
9. Communicate with international students and host families regularly.
10. Implement and maintain quality assurance and program evaluation mechanisms.
11. Offer conflict resolution services (and the opportunity to reach consensus) to the host family and the international student.
12. Maintain clear, published standards and procedures relating to homestay, including procedures for dismissing host families in warranted cases and transferring students to a different host family.
13. Develop separate reference manuals for host families and international students (and their parents) that describe relevant legislation, standards and procedures. Manuals should contain standards and procedures applicable to the full range of a host family's and an international student's homestay experience.
14. Maintain clear, published fee information including:
  - a. Terms of Agreement – payment of fees to whom and when
  - b. Per diem and monthly homestay fees
  - c. Services included with fees
  - d. Additional fees (e.g., airport pick-up, drop-off, or storage fees)
  - e. Refund policy
15. Provide, as appropriate, the international student with access to a person who can speak the student's primary language.
16. Share medical or mental health concerns that arise during the course of the homestay with the international student program, the host family, the custodian or the student's parent/guardian(s) as appropriate.
17. As appropriate, provide additional standards, procedural supports and requirements for younger homestay students.
18. Publish the homestay program provider's legal limitations.
19. Inform international students who are about to be placed with a host family about the BC Children's Helpline (310-1234), which operates twenty-four hours a day, year-round, and may be called in cases where the international student feels they are being mistreated or unsafe in the home or at school.

#### School Program Responsibilities:

SKY Secondary School's hired staff who are responsible for the international program will meet the following responsibilities:

1. Identify the custodian appointed by the parent/guardian responsible for each international student's care. The international student program should articulate its expectations of a custodian.
2. Develop clear procedures for host family parents to connect with their international student's school. The Host family involvement with ELL/ESL or with French language learning/French as a second language support, attendance and extracurricular activities will promote "school connectedness" and support student learning and success.
3. Develop procedures and templates for communicating with the parent/guardian and custodian.
4. Support host families with conflict resolution procedures and processes to resolve various issues that may arise during the homestay. A clear outline of when and who to contact should additional support be required is highly recommended.
5. Encourage homestay families to be specific and thoughtful regarding the Code of Conduct. Considerations such as curfew, internet use, chores, etc., should be clearly outlined and communicated to the student. Ensuring all responsibilities are developmentally appropriate and suitable within the home context is essential.
6. Provide host families with various resources to support their international students in acquiring English or French as an additional language.

7. Publish the international student program's legal limitations.
8. Develop a participation agreement with the student and parent/guardian that includes student behaviour expectations, conflict resolution processes and grounds for dismissal from homestay and/or the school/district program.

#### Host Family Responsibilities:

The Host families selected by the Host Program Provider are expected to fulfill the following responsibilities:

1. Provide a caring, nurturing and supportive environment for international students.
2. Be 25 years of age or older.
3. Agree to scheduled in-home inspections by either the international student program, the homestay program provider, or both and criminal record checks (for anyone living in the home who is 18 years or older).
4. Have no more than two international students in the homestay at the same time
5. Avoid concurrently hosting both adult and minor international students.
6. Provide food for three nutritious meals per day.
7. Provide a clean and tidy home with a private, adequately furnished bedroom, with access to:
  - a. an area with a desk, chair and adequate lighting for homework;
  - b. a bathroom, linens and use of laundry facilities;
  - c. entry into the home like any other member of the family (e.g. house key and alarm code, if applicable);
  - d. where possible, access to the Internet to support educational goals and consistent communication with home.
8. Ensure the house is safe and complies with the BC Building Code and/or the local building bylaw, as applicable, and with the local fire code.
9. Ensure a student's general well-being, seek medical attention when necessary, and report any significant medical or mental health issues to the school, the homestay program provider and the international student program.
10. Inform the school or international student program if the student drinks alcohol, takes or possesses non-prescribed, illegal drugs or breaks the law.
11. Ensure the home and auto insurance policy adequately covers students residing within their home; some do not cover homestay students.
12. Promote strong connections between an international student and their parents, schools and communities by:
  - a. Using the student's desired language of study (English or French) in the home
  - b. Reasonable limits on the student's personal use of the Internet (i.e. number of hours/day and appropriate times of day)
  - c. Negotiating and enforcing an appropriate and reasonable curfew and house rules for the student
  - d. Assisting the student in seeking extracurricular activities and sports
  - e. Attending school or district orientation for host families and other cultural or educational events

#### International Student Responsibilities:

Students attending SKY Secondary School who are involved in the Homestay program are expected to:

1. Engage with the host family and the school and seek out opportunities to become involved in the school and family life.
2. Communicate regularly with their parent/guardian and with their host family.
3. Communicate significant issues or concerns to the host family, parent/guardian, custodian, school Principal, vice-principal or teachers, homestay program provider or international school program as appropriate.
4. Understand that the school district or independent school international student program may require a student to move homestays or withdraw from the international student program in cases where accommodation arranged privately is deemed unsafe or unsuitable.

5. Respect and be responsible toward the homestay home and property and pay for any damage to family property if found responsible.
6. Understand that there is a BC Children's Helpline (310-1234), which operates twenty-four hours a day, year-round, and may be called in cases where international students feel they are being mistreated or unsafe at home or school.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:

1. Accurately complete the application and in-take materials and disclose all of the student's relevant information, such as medical conditions, to the homestay program provider and the host family so that they can fully support and care for the student for the duration of the homestay.
2. Stay in regular touch with the student to monitor that the student is coping well with the pressures and stresses of living and studying in a new country and learning a new language.
3. Report significant concerns to the homestay program provider.
4. Understand that the school district or independent school international student program may require a student to move homestays or withdraw from the international student program in cases where accommodation arranged privately is deemed unsafe or unsuitable.
5. Understand that there is a BC Children's Helpline (1-800-663-9122), which operates twenty-four hours a day, year-round, and may be called in cases where the international student feels they are being mistreated or unsafe at home or school. In addition, there is a Kids Help Phone (1-800-668-6868) for counselling and referrals.

International Agent Responsibilities:

Provide support to international student programs, homestay program providers, and international students and their families, particularly concerning communicating with the parent/guardian if and when requested by the homestay program provider or the international student program.

