



# Homestay Host Guide



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## Dear host families,

Thank you for opening your home and your family life to an international student. Hosting can be a highly rewarding experience, and open communication and understanding your role will enable you to build a positive relationship with your host student.

While students look forward to their time in Australia, most have never been away from their families, nor in a foreign country before. Sending a letter or an email to your student helps them feel welcome before they arrive.

Building relationships takes time, it doesn't happen the moment your student arrives and the first two weeks of your relationship are critical, as students can feel anxious being outside their comfort zone. Students respond well when hosts show genuine interest in them

and their culture. Being supportive and patient is especially important while they adjust to life and customs in Australia.

When people live together, there is a chance of unexpected situations arising. If you are in doubt about how to handle a situation with your student, we suggest the following questions be asked;

**“How would I approach this situation if this were my own child?” and “How would I want another family overseas to treat my own child?”**

Please take the time to read through the guidelines and expectations to ensure a smooth transition to accommodating your host student.

**Happy hosting!**

# Support for hosts

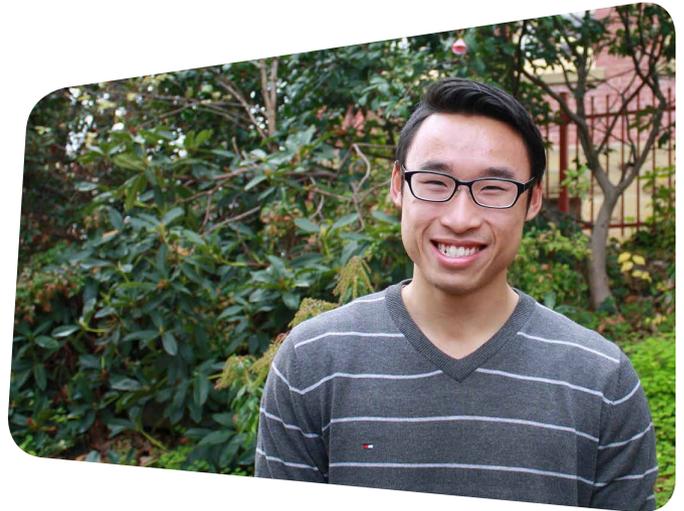
Our homestay coordinators are located in Hobart and Launceston, and provide assistance and guidance to hosts and students as required:

[homestay@geti.tas.gov.au](mailto:homestay@geti.tas.gov.au)

6165 5727 (Hobart)

6777 2540 (Launceston)

For out-of-hours emergencies both hosts and students have access to our emergency telephone service **+61 3 6232 1003**.



Junior High School year 7-10			
South	School Phone	International Student Advisor	
Clarence High School	03 6244 2544	Alasdair Shurman	<a href="mailto:alasdair.shurman@education.tas.gov.au">alasdair.shurman@education.tas.gov.au</a>
Kingston High School	03 6283 1222	Mark Prichard	<a href="mailto:mark.prichard@education.tas.gov.au">mark.prichard@education.tas.gov.au</a>
New Town High School	03 6278 0400	Jeff Andrews	<a href="mailto:jeff.andrews@education.tas.gov.au">jeff.andrews@education.tas.gov.au</a>
Ogilvie High School	03 6228 8800	Julie Bird	<a href="mailto:julie.bird@education.tas.gov.au">julie.bird@education.tas.gov.au</a>
Rose Bay High School	03 6242 9299	Roger O'Meagher	<a href="mailto:roger.omeagher@education.tas.gov.au">roger.omeagher@education.tas.gov.au</a>
Taroona High School	03 6227 7700	Susan Weston-Smith	<a href="mailto:susan.weston-smith@education.tas.gov.au">susan.weston-smith@education.tas.gov.au</a>
North			
Prospect High School	03 6344 4744	Tatiana Hinds	<a href="mailto:tatiana.hinds@education.tas.gov.au">tatiana.hinds@education.tas.gov.au</a>
Queechy High School	03 6341 4455	Brendan Liddell	<a href="mailto:brendan.liddell@education.tas.gov.au">brendan.liddell@education.tas.gov.au</a>
Devonport High School	03 6424 9461	James Sayers	<a href="mailto:james.sayers@education.tas.gov.au">james.sayers@education.tas.gov.au</a>

Senior High College 11-12			
South	School Phone	International Student Advisor	
Elizabeth College	03 6235 6555	Heath Watts	<a href="mailto:heath.watts@education.tas.gov.au">heath.watts@education.tas.gov.au</a>
Hobart College	03 6220 3133	Mary Garland	<a href="mailto:mary.garland@education.tas.gov.au">mary.garland@education.tas.gov.au</a>
Rosny College	03 6244 9200	Sally Press	<a href="mailto:sally.press@education.tas.gov.au">sally.press@education.tas.gov.au</a>
North			
Launceston College	03 6332 7777	Elizabeth Williams	<a href="mailto:elizabeth.williams@education.tas.gov.au">elizabeth.williams@education.tas.gov.au</a>
Newstead College	03 6332 3232	Linda Goss	<a href="mailto:linda.goss@education.tas.gov.au">linda.goss@education.tas.gov.au</a>
Don College	03 6424 0200	John Thompson	<a href="mailto:john.thompson@education.tas.gov.au">john.thompson@education.tas.gov.au</a>

## TasTAFE contacts

If your student is in TasTAFE, please contact the student advisors in the first instance.

TasTAFE		
International Student Advisor	Phone	Email
Edgar Ho	0418 137 801 (shared)	<a href="mailto:isa@tastafe.tas.edu.au">isa@tastafe.tas.edu.au</a>
Peter Dawborn	0418 137 801 (shared)	<a href="mailto:isa@tastafe.tas.edu.au">isa@tastafe.tas.edu.au</a>
Jill Thompson	6777 2516	<a href="mailto:isa@tastafe.tas.edu.au">isa@tastafe.tas.edu.au</a>

# Responsibilities of the homestay host

## Physical space

The student requires their own bedroom, bed, desk, chair, study light, cupboard space and three meals per day. Your host student must be provided with a key to the home and laundry facilities, if separate to the accommodation.

## Interactions

Hosts are required to spend time with the student and display a friendly and flexible attitude. International students should be encouraged to become a member of the family, in a warm, supportive environment. Daily conversation time helps students feel like part of the family. The homestay host is responsible for a student's wellbeing, just as a regular parent would be.

## Arrival

Please contact your student's school to make an appointment for their enrolment on or before their first day at school or college.

The GETI homestay team will contact you soon after your student's arrival to check in, and again within a few weeks to follow up on the settling-in period.

Please contact the school if your student is absent from school due to illness. Please refer to the school contacts section in this guide.

Your student chose Tasmania because they want a genuine learning experience within Australian culture. It is best to gently explain and introduce Australian cultural expectations and etiquette to assist your student as they settle into their new environment, both at school and at home. It is important to explain household rules and any specific expectations (especially around communication, and time set aside as a family) and if required, establish definitions around appropriate behaviour and boundaries within the first few weeks.



## Transport

Students will be required to pay for their own transport, though please help your student learn the transport schedule in your area by obtaining a copy of the Metro timetable relevant to your student's travel between school and home. Please assist them in obtaining and activating their Metro Greencard.

## Laundry

Whether you choose to do a student's laundry or not is up to you. However please explain how to safely use laundry facilities and the times the laundry is accessible.

Females in some cultures are embarrassed if other people see their underwear being washed or drying, even in front of other females. They may prefer to hand wash their underwear and hang to dry in their room.

## Payment of homestay fees

Payments are made by direct deposit to the homestay host's nominated bank account. A remittance advice is emailed to homestay hosts with each payment. Before the first payment is made, homestay hosts must complete and return two forms to GETI:

- Bank account details
- Statement by a Supplier (the original not a faxed or scanned copy)

Please contact GETI if you have any questions about payments.

## Home and contents insurance

We recommend you contact your insurer to find out what your insurance policy will cover. Some insurance companies require that you advise them if there are boarders in your home. Some insurance policies will cover the student's possessions, but others don't.

## Over 18's in the house

All people over the age of 18 living in the home must hold a valid Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) Registration. A copy of the registrations must be sent to GETI via [homestay@geti.tas.gov.au](mailto:homestay@geti.tas.gov.au)

Please see the GETI website for more information <http://www.study.tas.gov.au/homestay/>

To apply visit: [http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/working\\_with\\_children/application](http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/working_with_children/application)



## Sleepovers

International students are permitted to have a sleepover with friends as a one-off, e.g. if they have been invited to a sleepover birthday party. If it's more than one night or on an ongoing basis, permission must be granted by the GETI office. In addition, anyone in the home over 18 years must have a valid WWVP Registration.

## Student travel

GETI will permit students to travel interstate or overseas (both with and without the homestay host) providing the following conditions are met:

- Written approval has been given from their natural parents.
- Students will be staying with a blood relative or an approved carer over the age of 21.
- GETI is provided with the name, address and contact details for the person taking care of the student.
- A completed leave request form is submitted to GETI – signed by student, homestay host and school.
- Flight itineraries are submitted to GETI.

These conditions do not apply when the student is participating in a school excursion.

## Homestay family absences

If your family plans to be away from home overnight, without your host student, please contact the GETI homestay team to arrange alternative accommodation for the student.

## Driving

International students under the age of 18, in Tasmanian Government Schools are not permitted to drive. Students over the age of 18, must apply to GETI in writing for approval.

## Communication with your student

Please keep in mind your student is a teenager who is still learning. From time to time, they may need prompting and a friendly reminder about your household rules and expectations for example, picking up a wet towel or assisting with household chores.

## Student healthcare

International students are responsible for their own medical expenses. Students who are in Australia on a student visa have Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) for the duration of their stay in Australia. OSHC enables students to access healthcare in Australia, similar to Medicare for locals. GETI ensures that all students have OSHC before they arrive in Australia. Please be prepared to assist your student to activate their OSHC upon arrival. This process can be completed online.

If your student is too sick to attend school, please advise the school. If they are absent for more than one day they must (for visa compliance reasons) obtain a medical certificate. In some countries the idea of a 'General Practice' does not exist, so students may ask to go to Hospital when they mean to see a doctor/GP.

## Mental wellbeing

If your student starts to sleep a lot or seems down or flat; there are qualified counsellors at each school. In addition, Headspace is a free mental health service for under 25's in Hobart and Launceston. You can refer a young person if you are concerned about them.

### Headspace - Launceston

Cnr Brisbane & Wellington Street  
Launceston, TAS 7250  
03 6335 3100  
headspace@csys.com.au

### Headspace - Hobart

49 Liverpool Street  
Hobart, Tasmania 7000  
03 6231 2927  
headspace@thelink.org.au



## Who pays?

### Internet

Students use the internet to keep in contact with family and friends, for leisure and for study. Most international students are used to having unrestricted internet access in their home countries.

Hosts are expected to provide internet access to students, as part of the homestay offering.

Hosts are required to address appropriate internet usage directly with students, and recognise students need to be supported to use the internet appropriately whilst in homestay. Appropriate internet use includes homework and study, research and communication purposes. Extensive gaming and downloading of entertainment content is not considered appropriate.

### Activities

Whilst it might be a nice gesture, hosts are not expected to pay for homestay students on family outings, so please discuss any costs a student will incur before taking them somewhere. If your family has a meal at a restaurant, hosts are asked to use their discretion in this matter, as the weekly cost of homestay includes all meals.

### Phone

All non-local phone calls (international, STD, mobile) are to be paid by the student, though this is unlikely as most students use the internet to make phone calls on their phone or computer.

### Food

The homestay payment includes the provision of three meals per day, plus snacks.

### Toiletries

Please advise students they need to purchase their own toiletries and explain to them where they can purchase these, a supermarket or pharmacy for more specialised items. This may not be obvious to them as they may not have been away from their parents before.

## Aussie slang

Australians are infamous for using slang. Expressions such as 'hop in the car', 'grab a jumper' will unintentionally confuse international visitors. It is best to phrase questions positively e.g. "Have you had enough to eat?" rather than "You're not hungry?" as non-English speakers will answer 'yes'; interpreting the words literally.

## Cultural variations

- Eye contact and personal space are very different in some cultures.
- Some cultures bow their head to show respect and regret, instead of verbalising an apology.
- Using the toilet and disposal of toilet paper is different in some Asian and South American countries (some nationalities are used to squat toilets and put the used toilet paper in the bin, rather than flushing it). Please explain how to use the facilities in your home.
- Many countries do not have room for pets, hence students may not understand how to interact with them.
- You may need to explain to your student how to use the sheets on the bed and explain where the wet towels go.
- Most overseas households have a lock on bathroom and toilet doors. Many international students feel uncomfortable without it. You may need to reassure your student that people will knock before entering a bedroom or bathroom.
- Students from humid climates are often used to having multiple showers each day and in addition, drains overseas are often built to handle large amounts of water. Sometimes students can accidentally flood the bathroom. Please explain about water saving and use of bath mats.
- Initially students can feel awkward with physical affection expressed between family members. From about the age of 12 in many Asian families, affection is replaced with a small bow. This is particularly noteworthy for homestay fathers.
- Initially students will not feel comfortable expressing their opinion or saying if they are not comfortable, i.e. warm enough, had enough to eat, as they don't wish to appear confrontational. Please continue to ask them, especially in the beginning.
- Sometimes students forget to say 'please' and 'thank you' since in some cultures, family members are not expected to keep thanking each other.
- We know Tasmanian winters can be harsh, but they really take their toll on students from tropical climates. Some may feel down or flat in the colder months. Please keep an eye on your student's wellbeing.

# Our expectations of international students

Students living in homestay are aware that they are expected to:

- Try their best to develop positive relationships with families, based on mutual trust and communication.
- Be aware of some cultural differences they will experience.
- Take responsibility for their own worship practices
- Be financially independent, meeting all personal expenses for travel, entertainment, phone calls, medical expenses and incidental costs.
- Advise GETI of any concerns for their health or welfare.
- Be aware of and obey Australian laws.
- Contribute to household chores (within reason) and clean up after themselves.
- Discuss with their homestay host if they will be absent or late for meals.
- Respect the homestay's reasonable house rules, behave courteously and communicate honestly.



Government Education and Training International, Tasmania

GPO Box 169 Hobart 7001  
Tasmania, Australia

26 Bathurst Street Hobart

Tel: +61 3 6165 5727

Out-of-hours emergencies (24 hours): +61 3 6231 1003

Email: [homestay@geti.tas.gov.au](mailto:homestay@geti.tas.gov.au)

[www.study.tas.gov.au](http://www.study.tas.gov.au)