

Homestay Information for Caregivers of International Students

Rosehill College, Auckland New Zealand



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Homestay Programme

Information Booklet for Rosehill College.

Thank you for hosting an International Student attending Rosehill College.

Rosehill College has had students from all over the world including students from Brazil, China, Colombia, Chile, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Spain, Thailand, Vietnam, and India. We find that many of our students experience periods on an emotional roller-coaster during their time in New Zealand. They have a build-up of excitement before leaving home. This is coupled with the anticipation of meeting a new family and making new friends can be very stressful.

Once they arrive in their new environment, they are often tired and jet lagged, understanding the language can be a struggle, and the food is very different, and it may upset their stomachs initially. School can also be very overwhelming, and it can sometimes be very hard to understand other students and teachers. Missing family and friends at home and being in an unfamiliar environment can cause students to become quite homesick. Reassurance and support are very important during these times. Communication with the International team at school is also very important. The International Team are available to help and support you with any questions or problems that may occur. The international Office staff also organise books, school subjects and insurance for the students

We have produced a booklet for students – **“Homestay Information and Guidance for International Students”**. Please check that your student has this. **Please read this yourself** so that you are familiar with our advice to students. Also, we suggest you may find it helpful to read through the whole booklet with your student as it covers a range of issues that may arise for students living in NZ homes for the first time. It also contains a list of questions which you might like to go over with your student in the first few days.

HAVING A HOMESTAY

Minimum Basic Requirements

- **Meals Three** meals a day, including a packed lunch during the school week
- **Laundry** Washing and/or ironing
- **Chores** Board rates are set so that students can spend maximum time studying
- **Toiletries** Students provide their own soap, toothpaste and shampoo
- **Bedroom** Should be equipped with a table or desk and reading light for study purposes
- **Heating** Students will feel the cold and adequate heating should be provided. Your power bill will go up!
- **Personal** Warmth, friendship and support
- **Internet** Please ensure you have sufficient GB's to cover the extra teenager in your home

RESPONSIBILITIES

Student Care

Most problems occur through cultural differences and not bad behaviour, so communication can go a long way to solving many of the potential problems. **Treat the student as you would want your own son or daughter to be treated overseas and you will get it right 99% of the time.**

Students Must Not Be Left Alone Overnight

You are responsible for your student for the school year including holidays. If you are going to be travelling away for any period of time, students cannot be left alone in your home. Whilst most students are trustworthy, accidents can happen to any of us. Students needs to be in the care of an adult (25 years or older) who has been verified by the school. Please contact one of our homestay co-ordinators who will arrange for your student to stay with another family for the period you are away.

Privacy

Please consider the student's need for privacy. If you have children, please prevent them from going into the student's room uninvited or when the student is not there.

Please ensure your student has your name, address and phone number written down on a card in their wallet, especially in the first few days with your family. You would be surprised how many students get lost in their early days here.

Student Behaviour

As you would expect from your own children of a similar age, it is not acceptable for students to stay out all night – consult the school if concerned. Students should tell you where they are going and give you a contact phone number. Students must negotiate with the host parent in advance about whether they will or will not be home for a meal.

Recommended Curfew Times:

AGE	SUNDAY-THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Under 15 years	6 pm	Under supervision	Under supervision
15 Years	6 pm	10 pm	10 pm
16 Years	6 pm	10 pm	10 pm
17 Years and over	6 pm	11 pm	11 pm

Contact Details of Your Student's Friends

It is a good idea to ask your student to give you a list of names (including surnames), addresses and telephone numbers of their friends. This can be useful in times of emergency.

Phone Calls

Please ensure your student has a mobile phone and New Zealand Sim Card as soon as possible, in order for you and your student to be able to remain in contact at any time. Make sure they know your home and mobile phone numbers too. Keep in touch by text when students are out, they must let you know if they change their plans.

Staying Overnight with Friends

The Ministry of Education requires that occupants over 18 years of any home where an International Student

stays overnight are police checked. If your students have friends who ask them to stay overnight, please get their details to us in advance and we can arrange a police check. It is always a good idea to make contact with the family the students want to visit and check who will be at home, just as you would if it were your own child. We recommend you do this in advance.

Computer Use

Students can now bring their laptops to school – see our school’s website for guidelines of use:

<https://rosehillcollege.school.nz/learning/elearning/>. Most students need computer access, for school work and to contact home.

Many students bring their own laptop to NZ with them. You may prefer that they have an extra telephone line in their room or arrange to install wireless. Overuse of the internet can be a problem. It is advisable to explain to your student that internet costs are higher in New Zealand than in other countries and therefore the use of the internet must be limited to research, study and contacting family at home. It is not in place for the playing of games or watching movies. Please discuss the usage charges with the student in advance.

As you are no doubt aware, in 2011 the New Zealand government brought in a law to enforce prosecution of illegal downloading. Failure to comply with this law can result in substantial fines. Please ensure your student is aware of this legality. For a nominal charge an IT technician can install software that will prevent students from accessing sites deemed unsuitable or downloading inappropriate material.

We think one- or two-hours maximum computer use at a time is reasonable. Lights and the computer should be off at midnight at the latest. You might talk to your student about removal of the laptop from the bedroom after midnight, especially if they are constantly sleep-in on school days.

Driving

Please be aware that it is a rule of the college, and a condition of fee-payers’ acceptance here, that students

may not own nor drive a motor vehicle while enrolled here, nor sit for their drivers licence. Please make your student/s aware of restricted licence rules, especially regarding being a passenger in a vehicle.

Safety

- Students should not bring large amounts of cash or expensive possessions to school. We suggest a limit of \$10 cash per day.
- During the winter months, when it gets dark earlier, please remind students that they should not be outside walking by themselves in the dark. If they have sports, tutoring or other evening commitments, please ensure that they are transported by a reliable adult.

Cold Weather

Students can feel very cold over the winter months. They may need additional heating in their bedrooms while

studying. An electric blanket on the bed on a timer may provide extra warmth and help them resist winter colds. You will need to explain the usage of heaters and electric blankets. Wall heaters are a safe and economical option. They are available from most hardware outlets. We discourage hot water bottles.

Smoke Alarms

It is important that all homestay homes have at least two smoke alarms installed.

Students Requiring Urgent Medical Treatment

If your student should require urgent medical treatment, please contact our Homestay Co-ordinators (all numbers are noted on the back page of this booklet) to make them aware of the circumstances. We would expect one of their caregivers to accompany them to the medical centre or hospital.

If a student holds Studentsafe Medical & Travel Insurance and they are admitted to hospital, The Insurance Company needs to be advised immediately. The number to contact is 09 3561650. This is the first assistance team and they are available 24/7. They will liaise with the hospital. They will need the student's full name, and their Policy number.

Please ring in school hours for routine notification of absence due to sickness, telephone 092950661 and follow the voice mail instructions. N.B.: You will be asked for your student's Tutor Group.

School Reports

There are weekly update reports and end of term reports sent by email to caregivers. (juniors). Parents overseas will receive notification of their child's reports by email. Group Conference days are held twice a year and give you the opportunity to talk with the student's Tutor in detail.

Lateness

If students arrive late or need to leave school early they must bring a note and sign in/out at the Student Centre office.

Special Leave

Requests for leave from school should be requested on our "Special Leave Form". Please give as much notice as possible – preferably 2 weeks or more.

Changes of Address, Phones, Personnel, etc

Please let us know if your family moves house so that we can keep our records up-to-date. Also please notify us of any change of phone numbers, emails, etc. If anyone else joins your household, please let us know.

Changing Homestay

Please let us know immediately if a student is going to change homestay. **Students may not change homestay without the knowledge of the college.**

Insurance

All of our students have medical insurance. Most of our students are insured through the school with either

Southern Cross International Student Care or Allianz/Student Safe and they have been issued with details displaying the details of their policy. **It is important that they always carry this information with them and ring the number on it in case of a medical emergency.** This policy is very comprehensive and covers **loss and theft of property** as well as **medical & travel costs**. Claim forms can be obtained from the college.

Household Insurance

Please remember to let your insurance company know you have a student in your home and ensure you hold comprehensive household insurance to cover any breakages or damage to the home by the student. The school

is not liable for any costs, expenses, damages, breakages or other claims against the host arising from any acts or omissions of the student.

POLICE VETTING

Rosehill College is a signatory to the “Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students”. Everyone in a homestay who is 18 years or older, are required to be cleared by the Police Vetting procedure. The Homestay Co-ordinator will give you the form to complete when she visits you. If anyone over the age of 18 comes to live in your home at any time after the student’s arrival, please let us know so we can arrange for them to be police vetted. Police Vets should be updated regularly, usually every three years.

HOLIDAYS

Students

During school holidays, students are the responsibility of the homestay family. There are several school approved companies which run organised trips in the school holidays. Brochures and information are available from the international office. Students need permission from you as the homestay family, their biological parents, and the school, for any travel away from your family. Forms are available from school.

HOMESTAY PAYMENTS

Most students’ homestay payments are made weekly through the school. If students need to change homestay, then they should give one week’s notice, or one week’s rent in lieu of notice. Rosehill College reserves the right to move a student without prior notice if necessary. Should this happen to you, please do not feel offended, as this action is usually due to reasons beyond our control, or the student is too embarrassed and uncomfortable to stay once the decision is made. If this happens, we make every effort to place another student in your household if suitable.

If students travel away from the homestay for up to two weeks, the homestay family will be paid as per usual.

If Students travel away from the homestay for longer than two weeks, then families will be paid \$10 per night after the initial two weeks. This excludes the long Christmas holidays.

Over the Christmas holidays please ask your student to pack away their personal belongings so the room is able to be used over the Christmas period. If you cannot use the room due to excess belongings taking up

the space, please advise the school and we will speak to the student and agent. Please do not ask the student or their family to pay a fee.

If students continue to stay in your home for the long Christmas break, but spend intermittent periods away from the home, please let us know the dates and we will discuss remuneration with you.

Homestay families must notify the school straightaway if a student is not staying in their home or not returning to the home. Any overpayment resulting from non-notification will need to be re-paid.

SCHOOL WEBSITE

The school website, <https://rosehillcollege.school.nz/> is a very important source of information. Here you will find much information about our school, including such things as term dates, report dates and examination dates.

Our school newsletter is published on our website every Friday. Please ensure the school has your correct email address.

ID CARDS

All students carry a Rosehill College ID Card. International students should also carry a card with details of our 24-hour mobile telephone number (027 463 0267) for emergencies outside school hours.

PERSONNEL

Director of International Students

The Director of International Students has overall responsibility for International Students. She can be contacted by phone, 295 0661 ext 824 at the college.

International Students Co-ordinator

Our co-ordinator will visit you in your home a minimum of twice a year. All students are interviewed 4 times a year. If you have any questions that you would like answered the co-ordinator is available by phone: Caroline Booth 09 295 0661 or email: c.booth@rosehillcollege.school.nz
Students also have these numbers for emergency after hours contact.

Counsellor

If a student needs to speak to someone in their own language, we have teachers who speak Chinese, Japanese and several other languages.

FOOD

One of the main problems that may occur for students from Asian countries living in NZ homes is adjusting to the different food. Students may prefer small meals at first. They may not be used to eating large quantities of potatoes, bread or meat.

- If you take your student out for lunch or dinner (McDonalds, etc) it should be treated as a meal at home and paid for by you. If your student chooses to go out for lunch or dinner with their own friends, it is your student who pays.
- Do not 'hide' food, or reserve food for your family. This is a common complaint that really upsets students.
- Generally students from Asian cultures do not like mutton or lamb.
- Hot chilli sauce is a favourite to have available as a condiment. Perhaps provide information on where to buy Asian food.
- Consider giving rice, pasta or noodle meals several times a week. Encourage your student to prepare a meal for you and teach you some recipes. Keep some rice and instant noodles in a cupboard and invite your student to cook for him/herself.
- It is unusual for international students to compliment you on your cooking.
- You might like to ask your student what they like to eat and take them food shopping.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NEW ZEALAND AND ASIA

Cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings. Please understand that many students from Asian backgrounds may feel uncomfortable with physical contact and can misinterpret typical New Zealand expressions of affection. Female students in particular may feel uneasy if left alone in the home with male family members.

To avoid any possible misunderstandings, please ensure that if the host mother is away overnight, female students have a female companion or adult supervisor present in the household. This guideline applies to students of all nationalities.

Common Cultural Differences and Explanations

"My student doesn't help around the house—no bed-making or dishes. How lazy!"

In many Asian households, teenagers are not expected to do chores, and domestic help is common in places like Malaysia or Thailand. Explain kindly that in New Zealand, everyone contributes to household responsibilities, and this includes basic tasks like tidying up, helping with dishes, and keeping personal spaces clean.

“We take our student out often, but they never seem very happy. So unemotional.”

In many cultures, open displays of emotion—such as joy, anger, or sadness—are discouraged, especially in public. Your student may be feeling happy or grateful but may not express it outwardly. Time, patience, and gentle encouragement can help them feel more at ease.

“Our student speaks so quietly—or hardly at all. Are they lacking confidence?”

Possibly not. In some cultures, especially for females, speaking loudly can be seen as impolite or aggressive. Silence is often considered respectful. In contrast, Kiwi culture tends to be more outgoing. Give your student time to adjust, and accept that silence may simply reflect comfort or respect—not disinterest or insecurity.

“They always speak their own language with friends. Shouldn’t they be practising English?”

Your student likely uses English at school and with your family. Speaking their own language with friends is a way to relax and express themselves fully. This is normal and doesn’t mean they are not committed to learning English.

“My student stays up very late and struggles to wake up for school.”

Late-night routines are common in some countries. As long as your student is getting up on time for school and managing their responsibilities, this shouldn’t be a major concern. If it becomes a problem, a respectful conversation can help set clearer expectations.

“They dry their underwear in the wardrobe and spends ages in the bathroom.”

Students may be shy about hanging underwear in public view and may feel uncomfortable about using shared spaces. Suggest alternatives such as using a clothes dryer or a private drying rack. Also, be aware that bathing habits can differ. For example, in Japan, it is normal to spend time soaking in the bath. Clarify your household routines gently.

“Our student eats loudly, slurps soup, or burps after meals. It’s off-putting.”

In some cultures, these actions are signs of appreciation for the meal. Explain New Zealand dining etiquette tactfully and kindly—students are usually happy to adapt once they understand the difference.

“They always stay in their room. I wish would spend more time with us.”

Your student may be focused on study, tired, or simply need quiet time. It can take time to adjust to a new family, language, and environment. Encourage interaction but also respect their need for personal space.

“Our power bill is higher—our student always has the heater on.”

Many international students are unused to the colder New Zealand climate. Let them know that heating is expensive and encourage them to wear warm layers. Discuss heating guidelines early on to manage expectations.

“My student told a teacher they are cold at night instead of telling me.”

Students may avoid bringing up concerns because they don’t want to be seen as troublesome. They might speak to a teacher or another adult instead. Try to check in regularly and reassure your student that you welcome open communication about their wellbeing.

Language

- The visiting student will probably be unfamiliar with New Zealand accents and colloquial expressions, and may take time to adjust.
- Host families should attempt to learn some basic greetings. It can be a good ice breaker, e.g.:

Chinese	Japanese
Ni hao - Hello	Kon'nichiwa - Hello
Zai jian - Goodbye	Sayonara - Goodbye
Xiexie - Thank you	Arigatou Gozaimasu - Thank you

CONCLUSION

Thank you for supporting an international student in your home. This role helps foster understanding across cultures. Your kindness, care, and open communication are vital to the student’s success and wellbeing.

Here is a list of useful telephone numbers:

Name	Number	Contact
International Student Co-ordinator Ms Caroline Booth	0278082481	c.booth@rosehillcollege.school.nz
Emergency Phone – 24 hours	027463 0267	Emergencies Only
International Director	092950661 Ext 824	a.henwood@rosehillcollege.school.nz
Homestay Fee Queries	092950661 Ext 884	d.bl@rosehillcollege.school.nz
Emergency 24 Hours: Fire, Ambulance, Police	Dial 111	
Telecom operator	International Directory Service 0170	
Telecom operator	National Directory Service 018	
Youthline 24 hours	0800 376 633	
Chinese Helpline	0800 111777	
Bruce Pulman Park	0800 785 626	
N.Z. Immigration Service	(09) 914 4100	
Student Safe – medical insurance 24hr assistance	09 3561650	
IRD Student Loan Enquiries	0800 377 778	
Department of Internal Affairs – passport enquiries	0800 225 050	
Accident and Medical Centre – Counties Care	09 299 9380	
Counties Care Pharmacy	09 296 2096	
Alcohol & Drugs Helpline	0800 787 797	
Gambling Helpline – English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean	0800 862 342	
Youth Law – legal advice 10am-4pm, Monday to Friday	(09) 309 6967	
Auckland Sexual Health Services - advice on sexually transmitted diseases	(09) 307 2885	
Auckland Sexual Abuse Help	09 623 1700 (24	www.sexualabusehelp.org.nz
Chinese Lifeline	522 2088 0800 888 880 (24	www.lifeline.org.nz
Lifeline	09 522 2999	

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