



Sacred Heart
Girls' College
HAMILTON

Homestay Information for international students

Living with a New Zealand family will help you learn a lot about our New Zealand way of life and will definitely improve your English language skills! Your host family will make you welcome and, when you first arrive, they will help you to find your way about the city and to school.

There will be differences between your life and customs in your home country and those in New Zealand. As you have chosen to come to New Zealand, you must be prepared to make some changes so that you can live happily here. All homestays are carefully checked by the school to ensure that not only is the home warm and inviting, but also that you will be given the best possible care.

Listed below are some guidelines of what to expect when you live with a New Zealand family.

Your Accommodation

You will be placed with a family which will be matched as closely as possible to your requirements.

You will have your own room and your host family will make you feel part of their family. They will provide you with a cooked dinner in the evening and will make sure that food is available for your breakfast and lunch. In most New Zealand families, breakfast consists of toast or cereal which you prepare yourself. You will also be able to make sandwiches or some suitable alternative for your lunch.

Many New Zealand households have pets, usually a cat and sometimes a dog. If you have any strong likes or dislikes your host family should be aware of them from the information you have given on your application form.

The school will not permit you to live somewhere without an adult homestay parent or caregiver.

Payments

Your homestay costs are paid to the school with your school fees. The school then pays your homestay family every two weeks during your stay.



Basic Courtesies

1. Mealtimes

There are usually set mealtimes when family members sit down together to eat and exchange news about their day. It is expected that you will join the family at these times.

If for any reason you are going to be late for a meal you must phone your homestay parents to let them know. If you wish to be away for a meal you must discuss the details with your homestay family in the morning or the day before and have their permission to be absent for that meal.

New Zealand food may be very different from what you are used to, but please try everything. If you decide that you don't like some things, tell your homestay family so that they can give you something different.

Please listen to the advice of your homestay mother concerning social skills such as table manners, e.g., "Do not slurp or burp during meals." Good manners are very important, so remember to say "please"; and "thank you" when appropriate. Wash your hands after visiting the toilet and before touching food. Remember to be considerate of the needs of others in the family.

2. Laptops and other devices

It is important that screen time is not excessive. Please discuss with your homestay parents when your devices should be turned off e.g., by 10.00 pm.

3. Electrical appliances

These include lights, heaters, electric blankets, stereo, TV, radios, and fans. Because of the fire danger and the cost of electricity, these items need to be used with care and respect.

All electrical appliances must be turned off when you are not in the room where they are being used.

4. Bathroom/shower/toilet

Bathroom facilities are used by all the family, so please make sure that you don't stay too long in the bathroom.

If you make a mess, such as splashing water on the floor, please clean up before leaving the room. In most homes there is only a limited amount of hot water, so do restrict your daily shower to five minutes. Leave the bathroom and toilet clean and tidy after use. Also, ask your homestay where you should hang your bath towel to dry.

5. Helpfulness

New Zealand families do not have servants and most New Zealand women work outside the home. As a result, everyday household chores are usually shared among family members. Be prepared to do your share.

As a homestay student you are a member of the family so you could be asked to help clear away and wash dishes after meals. Please do so willingly.

You will be expected to keep your bedroom tidy. This means making your bed neatly every morning, putting away your clothes, keeping the floor clear of items and vacuuming it once a week. Your bed linen should be changed once a week. Ensure that you discuss the arrangements for dirty laundry with your homestay parents. You may choose to do your own light washing and ironing.

As part of the family, you will also need to help keep the house clean and tidy.



6. Discipline

As a member of the family, we expect you to live by the rules of the household. The following is a guide which should be checked with your homestay family:

- On school days you must be home by 5.00 pm or you MUST phone your homestay and let them know when you will be home.
- Later hours may be kept during the weekends or holidays with the permission of your homestay parents.

7. Away overnight

If you wish to stay with a friend during the weekend, you must first discuss this with your homestay parents. If they agree, ensure that the contact name, address and telephone number of your friend's parents have been given to the International Office as staff need to know your exact whereabouts if you need to be contacted.

8. Bedtime

Many New Zealand families go to bed early and you need to respect your family's lifestyle by being in bed by 10.00 pm. Experience has shown that high school students need a minimum of eight hours sleep to be able to concentrate well on their lessons.

9. Insurance

All international students must have full travel/medical insurance cover. This is a requirement of the New Zealand government. Insurance covers medical, emergency dentist and hospital expenses. The school can assist you to arrange insurance. If you feel unwell, please ask your homestay parent to take you to the doctor. Medical and pharmaceutical bills must be paid by you. Keep your receipts and give them to one of the International Office team so a refund can be claimed.



10. Spending money

Most New Zealand high school students have no more than \$50 per week to spend on personal costs and treats. Do not bring large sums of money to school. (All valuables are your responsibility and should be left at home.) You may need extra spending money during school holidays for sightseeing and other activities.

Other Issues

1. Work

If you're studying in Year 12 or 13 (the last two years of high school) you can work up to 20 hours a week during the school year and full-time during the Christmas and New Year holiday break. Permission to work must be obtained from the school, your parents, and your homestay parent. International Office staff will help you apply to Immigration New Zealand to change the conditions of your student visa so that you can work.

2. Smoking

Most public places are smoke-free. (This means that smoking is against the law in these places.) In New Zealand it is illegal for cigarettes to be sold to anyone under the age of 16 years. Smoking is definitely not permitted at school, or in your homestay.

3. Drinking

Drinking alcohol is not allowed in a homestay situation unless you are over the age of 18 and it has been approved by the family. It is illegal in New Zealand for anyone under the age of 18 years to be served alcohol or to be on licensed premises.



Dealing with Problems

1. General

If you have any concerns while staying with your homestay family, please discuss them with the International Office staff. Small problems are easily solved with good communication.

2. Communication

Often problems arise with homestay families because they don't understand how you feel about certain things. If you would like to spend some time by yourself, do tell them this, rather than just shutting yourself in your bedroom. Remember that most problems are caused by people not understanding each other, so please talk about anything that is bothering you.

Should a problem arise, after counselling both yourself and the family in an effort to fix the problem, you may be placed with a new homestay family.

3. Support

There is a strong network of caring teachers and staff at Sacred Heart Girls' College who want to ensure that your time at school is enjoyable and rewarding. As well as your CCM teacher, there are Deans, a Guidance Counsellor and the International Office staff.

We are all here to help you. ■

4. Motor vehicles

Road safety in New Zealand is covered in the school's orientation programme. You must consult with the International Director regarding the use of motor vehicles, especially if you learn to drive while in New Zealand. Anyone with a Restricted Licence may not carry passengers nor be on the road between the hours of 10.00 pm and 6.00 am.

5. Holiday arrangements

There are three holiday breaks of two weeks during each year, in addition to the long summer break which occurs in December and January. If you stay with your homestay during the term holidays, the normal weekly payment will be due. Well before the end of each term you must inform the International Office of any holiday plans or proposed changes in accommodation and fill in the required forms.

