



**Onslow College**

**Hosting an  
International Student**

# **Homestay Guide**

# Table of Contents

## Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PREPARING TO WELCOME YOUR STUDENT</b>	<b>2</b>
Before your student arrives	2
<b>WELCOMING YOUR STUDENT</b>	<b>2</b>
When your student arrives in New Zealand	2
<b>SOON AFTER ARRIVAL</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>(SUPPORTING YOUR STUDENT IN YOUR HOME)</b>	<b>3</b>
The first few weeks	3
Emergency plans	3
Rules and Responsibilities	3
First day at school	4
<b>THE STUDENT AND YOUR HOME</b>	<b>4</b>
Adjusting to New Zealand	4
Culture shock	4
Stages of culture shock	4
How you can help	4
<b>MONITORING YOUR STUDENT</b>	<b>4</b>
Supervision	4
Food	5
Kiwi Breakfast	5
Snacks	5
Table Manners	5
weight gain	5
<b>THE HOST FAMILY DIET</b>	<b>5</b>
Your student's bedroom	5
Adjusting to the cold	6

Keeping things tidy	6
Sleep Patterns	6
Technology and internet use	6
Helping out around the house	6
Laundry	7
Socialising and practising social skills	7
Communicating whereabouts	7
Student transport	7
<b>HOMESTAY AND THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>8</b>
The International Department	8
Your Student’s Academic Journey	8
School Bulletin	8
Parent Portal	8
School Interviews	8
Online Learning Programme	8
Attendance and Academic Progress	9
Communication with the school	9
Homework	9
<b>YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A HOMESTAY HOST</b>	<b>9</b>
How you can help	10
Changes in Circumstances:	10
Homestay changes and transfers	11
<b>ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Part time work	11
Personal Money	11
Holidays	11
“At risk” activities	11
Overnight stays	12
Your student’s friends/family staying in your home	12
<b>YOUR STUDENT’S HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>	<b>12</b>
Emergencies	12
Sickness	12

Medical emergencies	12
Bullying and Racism	12
Suspected Bullying and abuse	13
Natural Disaster Contingency Plan	13
<b>CULTURAL DIFFERENCES</b>	<b>13</b>
Cultural awareness	13
Receiving Gifts	13
House rules/etiquette	13
Shoes	14
Touching	14
Saying Yes and meaning No	14
Not talking	14
<b>WHEN THINGS GO WRONG</b>	<b>14</b>
Alcohol	14
Smoking	14
Breaking the law in New Zealand	14
Driving	15
Relationships between students	15
Pornography/Gambling	15
Damage to property	15
ANNUAL HOMESTAY MEETING	15
<b>Complaints</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>We hope you enjoy this experience!</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>CONTACT INFORMATION</b>	<b>16</b>

# INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Education has developed The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 (the Code). All schools must be a signatory to the Code to enroll international students. The Code clearly identifies quality pastoral care (the homestay experience) as being vital for student safety. A key aspect of the homestay experience is a high standard of care that provides safety and support for students. The Code also contains special provisions giving extra protection to students under the age of 18.

This Guide is intended to meet many of the requirements of The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 (the Code), specifically those regarding the provision of homestay services. We hope this guide will help host parents and students to identify possible challenging aspects of the homestay experience and provide host parents with some strategies to make this an enriching and rewarding experience.

# PREPARING TO WELCOME YOUR STUDENT

## BEFORE YOUR STUDENT ARRIVES

The school will work with you about placing a student with your family. Once you have agreed to the choice of student, the school will send your profile to the agent and natural parents of the student. When the placement is confirmed, you may wish to email or write to the student and their parents. You can introduce your family, explain who is at home, and what your work and interests are. You can include photos of yourselves and perhaps your house and any pets. The school also sends a pre arrival letter to the agent/student explaining about their first days at school and information about what to bring to New Zealand.

Basic needs which you are expected to provide for the student:

- 3 meals a day including snacks and fruit
- Bed and bedding
- study desk, chair, small rubbish bin and table lamp
- A well-lit bedroom with adequate space and furniture to store clothes, books, and suitcase
- Adequate heating all year round
- Assistance with transport when necessary
- Bathroom accessories (including soap, shampoo, toothpaste and towels)
- Laundry
- A key to the home

## WELCOMING YOUR STUDENT

### WHEN YOUR STUDENT ARRIVES IN NEW ZEALAND

Please meet your student at the airport on arrival. He/she will arrive feeling tired, anxious, excited, and probably overwhelmed by their first impressions of New Zealand. Everything will seem new and now is not a good time for a tour of the city, or introductions to lots of people. These can all wait until your student has had a rest and is ready to take in something new.

A warm welcome and a quick tour of the house is usually sufficient for the first day to help your student to feel comfortable, part of your family and feel welcomed and respected. Most students need this time to settle in, unpack and personalise their room before they are made familiar about how your things are done in your home.

You may like to give your student a welcome gift when they arrive. Some ideas include a city street map with a guidebook showing activities in the local area, a bus/train timetable and perhaps a small notebook or diary, which can be left in their room. A noticeboard in their room means they can put some photos or pictures up immediately.

# SOON AFTER ARRIVAL

## (SUPPORTING YOUR STUDENT IN YOUR HOME)

### THE FIRST FEW WEEKS

Your student will find New Zealand strange at first. They will have to get used to a different culture and may be a new and different way of doing things.

So, over the next two weeks encourage your student to ask questions, but also make a point of repeating and demonstrating your instructions and checking out their understanding by observing their behavior. Rather than ask if they have understood you (they will tend to say 'yes' regardless), ask them to repeat the instructions or show you, their understanding. Explain that you are available to show them again, then remember to offer - don't always wait to be asked.

Show them how to lock the doors (and how the alarm works) and let them know what time you leave for work in the morning.

Let your student know what time you usually eat dinner and that you expect them to be home before then or to let you know. The school's expectation is that a student will be home by 6 pm from Sunday to Thursday and by 11 pm, the latest on Friday and Saturday. There may be exceptions to the weekday time of 6 pm when a student is working or is engaged in extracurricular activities during the week.

Make sure your student has the following:

- Your home phone number and mobile phone number
- A contact phone number for you at work; and
- The home address

Having this information will be reassuring in case they get lost before they have memorized these. They can store this information on their mobile phone. A paper version to keep in their wallet is useful in case they misplace or lose their phone.

### EMERGENCY PLANS

Discuss your family's emergency plan and show your student where your local civil defence centre is located so they will know where to go in the event of a major earthquake or any other disaster. You can find the Community Emergency Hub for your area on the Civil Defence website at <https://getprepared.nz/my-community/community-emergency-hubs/>

Make sure that you make provisions for your student when you are preparing your family's survival kit. Please ensure that your student knows where to find it in an emergency.

If your student's understanding of written English is better than their spoken English, he/she may appreciate having important instructions and expectations written down too.

### RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

After a few days it is important to discuss the "Homestay Student and Host Parents' Responsibilities" sheet, the Residential Caregiver Student Agreement as well as any family routines or rules that you have.

## **FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL**

Check with the student on their first morning to see if they have any questions or concerns about starting school. You may be able to reassure them yourself. If not, tell the student you will ring the school with the question, so they can be answered as soon as possible.

Please arrange to take your student to and from school on the first day at least. You may have a son or daughter also attending Onslow who can help with this. Make sure your student has your contact details in case they wish to get in touch with you.

As they do not have a timetable, your student may not need to be at school all day after they have completed their assessments and chosen their course. So, make sure that you have someone available to pick them up early or they know how to get back home safely.

Onslow College has an Orientation Programme for new students. This programme is usually emailed to you or mailed to you in the student information pack. Please check with your student that they have the information they need, and let the school know of any problems.

# **THE STUDENT AND YOUR HOME**

## **ADJUSTING TO NEW ZEALAND**

At first the student is likely to think that everything in New Zealand, the city, your home and the school is wonderful. This does not always last. Some things in New Zealand will be great and there will be things from home that they miss. It is important to remember that this is normal and is the result of adjusting to new circumstances. Neither you nor your student should blame themselves. The school talks about this with the students during the orientation programme.

## **CULTURE SHOCK**

Many students experience some kind of “culture shock” at some stage. With some support from you, the school and their friends (both Kiwi and their own culture), this stage will pass, and the student will be more realistic.

## **STAGES OF CULTURE SHOCK**

- Everything is wonderful
- Everything is awful and missing family and friends in home country
- Most things are ok, and the student is coping
- The student starts to thrive.

## **HOW YOU CAN HELP**

You can help by talking with your student about their home, customs, family, and asking them about what they notice as differences. Encourage your student to see the differences as neither better nor worse, just different.

# **MONITORING YOUR STUDENT**

## **SUPERVISION**

The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 states that students must be supervised at all times. Accordingly, students cannot be left home alone overnight without an adult who has been police vetted by the school.

## **FOOD**

Most students struggle with the differences in food, style of cooking and amount offered. It takes time for them to get used to our way of doing meals. Generally, students from all countries enjoy the same foods and snacks that NZ teenagers do.

Students from Asia appreciate servings of rice or noodles occasionally. They may not too keen on potatoes and usually enjoy chicken, pork, and beef. They are also used to eating a wider variety of vegetables.

Speak with your student about what types of food they like or dislike. Whether they have any special dietary requirements (are they vegan/vegetarian etc.) or any food allergies they may have. As well, ask them what they would like for breakfast.

Our most frequent comment from students is that there is not enough food at mealtimes or not having enough snack foods. When providing lunch make sure it is enough, include some protein if you are making sandwiches, for example, egg, ham, or chicken. Noodles alone are not sufficient. Many students like to take leftovers from dinner for next day's lunch. We have a microwave in the international office for them to heat their lunch.

### **KIWI BREAKFAST**

The New Zealand custom of informal breakfast is very unusual for most other nationalities. Often this meal is the most important family meal. Please ensure there is enough food available and provide encouragement, so they become confident enough to help themselves.

### **SNACKS**

Please encourage your student to feel free to snack at any time between meals for example: keep fresh fruit out in a bowl, biscuits and crackers in good supply, fried noodles, and dried fruit as possible snacks.

### **TABLE MANNERS**

It is important that your student becomes aware early on in their stay of the standard that you expect and model in your home in terms of eating and table manners. For example, eating loudly or talking with their mouth full. This is all part of their learning about and adjusting to a new culture.

### **WEIGHT GAIN**

It is common for students to put on weight in their first year. Weight gain can be distressing, and your student may need some advice on eating habits and limiting highly processed foods and sweets to occasional treats. If the weight gain is limited to a few kilos, teenagers usually lose it after a few months at home on their normal diet. Encourage your student to enjoy the outdoors, exercise or play sport as this will limit their weight gain. After the first year, students usually do not continue to put on weight.

## **THE HOST FAMILY DIET**

Please inform the school if your family changes your dietary habits for example if you have decided to adopt vegan, paleo, or keto diets.

## **YOUR STUDENT'S BEDROOM**

Your student is entitled to privacy. Knock before entering their room and encourage other members of the family to do the same. Unless the student makes it clear that they wish otherwise, make the room off limits to pets. This is the student's space, and they will welcome a place to display photos and other items from 'home'. If possible, allow them to

put up posters and otherwise let them arrange the room themselves. Make sure that you explain what is acceptable early on.

## **ADJUSTING TO THE COLD**

Some students will find New Zealand cold as they may be used to warmer houses and climates in their home country. Often, they are surprised at the lack of either central heating or air conditioning. Their room must be adequately heated. Encourage your student to put on extra clothes before they switch on any heating in their room. If you use electric blankets, you may offer one to a student, or else explain how to use a hot water bottle. Please remind your student to turn off heaters and electric blankets when they get to bed at night.

## **KEEPING THINGS TIDY**

Your student should be responsible for their own room - keeping it clean and tidy. You can offer to vacuum their room, but many students will prefer to do it themselves. Likewise, clean bedding can be made available each week with the student expected to change it themselves. You may need to show them how to dust and vacuum and empty their rubbish. Also speak with your student about your expectations about eating in their room.

## **SLEEP PATTERNS**

Due to the time difference with their home country, your student may stay up late to catch up with friends and family with video calls. As a result, they are often very tired the next day and have difficulty getting out of bed in the mornings. There does not appear to be an easy way around this, other than educating the student about good sleep habits and ensuring that they do not disturb the family if they keep late hours.

If lateness to school is a problem, your student may need some help to change their pattern, for example a knock on the door, earlier bedtime, or an alarm clock.

## **TECHNOLOGY AND INTERNET USE**

If your student is using their phone/laptop for social media, gaming or skypeing with friends or family when they should be studying, discuss with the students the consequences for them.

If the use of their devices is disturbing family members, have a conversation with the student about using headphones. Some families turn off the internet so that their student does not have access to the internet after a certain time of the night during the week.

## **HELPING OUT AROUND THE HOUSE**

Your student is a family member while living with you, and as such can be expected to help with house chores. At the very least they will need to pick up after themselves. You may also want them to help with setting the table and dishes. Talking with the student and asking open ended questions while doing the dishes in the evening is an excellent way to practise English.

Helping with family chores can be one of the experiences of living in a homestay as some students are not expected to do any in their home country.

## LAUNDRY

It is reasonable for you to expect your student to do their own washing if that suits you or have a place for students to put out their dirty washing. It may seem unusual to students to hang washing outside, so your student may need to be told that we only use driers in a wet winter. It is important that you tell your student not to hang wet washing in the bedroom or inside the wardrobe.

## SOCIALISING AND PRACTISING SOCIAL SKILLS

Encourage your student to join you in the evenings, for example, for watching TV, playing games, and talking together. Most students seem to spend a lot of time in their rooms on their phones, laptops or doing work. If you feel your student is becoming withdrawn and does not spend any time outside of their room, this may need to be followed up. Let the school know then we can get a native speaker to check out things with your student.

If your student can achieve a balance between time on their own and time with the family, this will help their English and still allow for privacy. Discuss with your student what your expectations are about their friends spending time in their bedroom and whether you are happy to have friends staying. If your student is entertaining friends in their bedroom, ask your student to leave their bedroom door open. Also, encourage your student to use the common spaces in your home such as the lounge and dining areas when entertaining friends.

## COMMUNICATING WHEREABOUTS

You will need to explain your family's expectations regarding times to be home, notification about any after school activities. As a general guide you should expect the same courtesy and respect that you expect of your own children.

We expect the student to inform the host family in advance:

- If they will not be home for dinner.
- What they are doing after school, during evenings and weekends.
- If they want to invite a friend for a meal or to stay over.

During the school term we expect the student to:

- Be home by 6pm during the week (Sunday to Thursday night) for dinner.
- Provide a specific reason (e.g. sports/music practices) for being out past 6pm on a weeknight and to be home no later than 10pm.
- Be home by 11pm at the latest on Friday and Saturday nights. Please keep in contact with your student, particularly if they are in the city. Host parents need to exercise some discretion with our younger students.

Any change of plan must be discussed, negotiated and agreed with the host parents.

## STUDENT TRANSPORT

Please discuss with your student about what transport your family is able or prepared to provide. This may depend on what you feel is reasonable for a teenager or your own availability. Make appropriate arrangements with your student and keep in touch with them. It is important that they are not walking around late in the evening on their own.

If your student is using a bike, remind them they must use a helmet and check that they can follow our road rules.

Make sure your student has your name, address, and telephone number with them in case they get lost.

## **HOMESTAY AND THE SCHOOL**

### **THE INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT**

The Director of International Students is responsible for your student's academic and pastoral care. The Homestay Manager is the first contact regarding any homestay concerns. Some students will also have native speaking counsellors allocated to them. Together we work to make your student have an outstanding and well-rounded experience in New Zealand. Early intervention from all of us can help enhance your student's experience in New Zealand and prevent larger problems developing.

### **YOUR STUDENT'S ACADEMIC JOURNEY**

It is important that you show an interest in your student's progress at school and school life.

### **SCHOOL BULLETIN**

This will be emailed to you each week and is one of the many ways you are able to keep yourself informed about important matters taking place at the school.

### **PARENT PORTAL**

The Onslow College **Parent Portal** is a live system and allows you to access your student's progress at the school including, their attendance, timetable, teachers' comments on a subject, school newsletters, sports notices, general information, and important daily notices etc.

You will receive an email from the office with information about the parent portal when you start hosting an international student for the first time. You will also receive a username and password for each student you host.

Please email [webportal@onslow.school.nz](mailto:webportal@onslow.school.nz) if you do not have a username and password to log on to the portal.

### **SCHOOL INTERVIEWS**

When **parent/teacher interviews** are held, we would appreciate if you could attend with your student.

### **ONLINE LEARNING PROGRAMME**

We now have a new system of reporting called the Learning Program which is online and cumulative. Please check the school website [www.onslow.school.nz](http://www.onslow.school.nz) under Learning and Teaching for details.

You will be alerted by email when the terms 2 and 4 **teachers' comments** are being posted on the **Parent Portal**. Please discuss these with your student. Your student can also access these comments through the students' portal.

Your student's natural parents will receive a translated report in July and December from the International Director.

## **ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

It is the school's responsibility to monitor your student's attendance and progress, and advise their natural parents, homestay parents and agents of any disciplinary issues, unsatisfactory attendance patterns and academic progress. Your student and their parents have signed a Contract of Enrolment which includes the school's Disciplinary Policy. Any disciplinary issue is dealt with by the school using a fair and reasonable process.

If your student is spending most of their time playing computer games or socialising, and this is affecting their school attendance and work, please talk with your student about how their behaviour could affect their attendance and schoolwork. You should tell them that reasonable attendance is a condition of their student visa.

As a condition of their student visa, your student must make a reasonable effort with their study and attendance to continue their enrolment at the school.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH THE SCHOOL**

It is important to remember that while you have a responsibility to the school, it is the school who has responsibility for the student. We are responsible for liaising regularly with your student's natural parents/agent and reporting to them about their son's/daughter's academic progress, their behaviour, their homestay situation, and any discipline issues that may arise. Please contact the International Director in the first instance if you have any concerns about your student. It is the International Director's duty to inform their natural parents or agent.

## **HOMEWORK**

You can encourage, you can help, but as with your own children you cannot do it for them. If your international student is missing school, not doing homework or not handing in assignments, you can talk with them to find out what is going wrong.

If you notice that the work is too difficult, or they are having difficulty with English, there may be extra study support available, or you may be able to help, please contact the school. Often, when the school contacts the student's parents or agent with a study problem there is significant improvement!

## **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A HOMESTAY HOST**

The homestay manager will visit the homestay biannually to meet with the student and family and discuss how the placement is going.

This visit usually involves checking the student's room and discussing any general concerns of the family and student.

Each student is interviewed regularly at school about their homestay, their academic progress, their future career path, their general wellbeing, and happiness. You will probably receive a brief comment about this at your meeting or we will contact you if there are any concerns.

It is important to remember that a homestay parent is NOT the same as your student's natural parent or legal guardian for the purposes of the Education Act. Although you are not the student's parents you are responsible for their day-to-day care and their safety. Your role is to support, supervise, care and guide your student through their time with you.

The same laws apply to international students as for New Zealanders and, if your student is under 14 years, they cannot be left at home on their own.

## **HOW YOU CAN HELP**

- Working through the host parent/student responsibilities sheet with your student as soon as you can when he/she arrives and your own family rules and expectations, as soon as practicable after the student's arrival.
- Including your student in family activities/time so they feel included and part of your family.
- Ensuring that your student leaves for school on time every day.
- Encouraging him/her to do homework and assisting them with it if you are able.
- Encouraging your student to speak English in front of you, with you and with their peers.
- Attending the parent/teacher interviews with your student.
- Attending the annual meeting for host parents organized by the school.
- Informing the international department of any issues or concerns that you become aware of, as soon as practicable.

## **CHANGES IN CIRCUMSTANCES:**

If there is a change in any circumstances within your family, then the school needs to be notified. These may include:

- A change in health.
- A new criminal charge.
- A change in the number of household members: e.g. the return of an adult family member, an adult boarder over the age of 18 or hosting a student from another school.
- Friend/family member staying temporarily or over a total 5 days or more in any one month
- A change in employment.
- A move to a different physical address.
- A request for the student to change the room they sleep in.
- A change in dietary habits
- Acquiring a pet for the first time or changing pets
- A change in your contact details (phone numbers and email address)

Once you inform us of any changes, we will decide if the change in circumstances warrants a repeat of any part of the assessment process or the need for an additional police check.

## **HOMESTAY CHANGES AND TRANSFERS**

We have found that if a student is happy in their homestay, he/she is more likely to be settled and to achieve at school. If a homestay is not working out for a student, a new homestay is often needed.

When a student or homestay parent wants a change of placement, the Homestay Manager should be notified as soon as possible. The homestay parent and/or the student must inform the homestay manager the reasons for asking for the change. A two-week notice period from either party is usually required before a change of homestay will be made. If a change is required immediately, the notice period could be waived by mutual agreement.

The school reserves the right to remove a student from a homestay if there is any safety concern.

## **ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL**

### **PART TIME WORK**

Your student can only work if they are in Year 12 or Year 13 and must have a variation of condition in his/her student visa, to work. School rules only allow students to work 10 hours a week during the school term. Please inform the school if you know your student has part time work.

### **PERSONAL MONEY**

Often students monitor their own spending with their natural parents' help. If you notice that your student is spending a lot or unwisely, please let us know; we are happy to inform their parents about this.

### **HOLIDAYS**

Your student must obtain permission from their natural parents if they wish to travel within New Zealand or overseas. This includes any trip that you may undertake with your student, travel overseas, including to their own country, and organized tours for those under 18 years. Students are not allowed to travel out of Wellington independently or with their peers. They must complete a Student Travel form which can be obtained from the international students' office. If they are missing any school days, then they must obtain the principal's approval.

N.B. If a student is away from their homestay, you will receive the full homestay fee for 1-6 nights inclusive. Thereafter from the 7th night onwards you will receive half the homestay fee. During the summer holiday, no fees are paid to the host families when a student returns to their home country.

### **“AT RISK” ACTIVITIES**

If a student wants to take part in any extreme sport activity, for example bungy jumping, white water rafting or sky diving etc, they need specific permission for these activities from their natural parents and the school.

## **OVERNIGHT STAYS**

Students are only allowed to stay overnight in another Onslow family homestay. It is the homestay parents' responsibility to contact the family who are looking after your student for the night and check that there will be supervision and inform them of the school's no alcohol policy. If your student wants to stay overnight with an Onslow school family who are not our homestay hosts, please notify the Homestay Manager. Your student's parents overseas must give the school permission for the overnight stay. Permission will be given at the discretion of the Principal or International Director. **Advanced notice of at least a week must be given for this to happen.**

## **YOUR STUDENT'S FRIENDS/FAMILY STAYING IN YOUR HOME**

These arrangements (including any payment) are at your discretion and convenience. You have no obligation if it is not suitable for you or your family. Please arrange a separate space or room for the visitor(s) where necessary.

# **YOUR STUDENT'S HEALTH AND SAFETY**

## **EMERGENCIES**

If the student has an accident, please contact the Homestay Manager. We will contact their natural parents and assist with the situation.

## **SICKNESS**

If your student is sick and unable to attend school, please notify their absence by phone (04 478 8189) or email (absences@onslow.school.nz) in the morning before 8.45am. If your student requires medical attention, you need to take them to your doctor or medical centre. For absences more than 2 days, they will need a Doctor's Certificate.

The school is responsible for finding out if an international student has any health conditions that may affect their study or require treatment before we accept their enrolment. We will advise you about any relevant health problems that your student may have. This information should come with the information pack about your new student.

## **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

In the case of a medical emergency involving your student it is important to obtain medical assistance immediately. Liaise with the homestay manager or the school about contacting the student's natural parents. Health authorities in NZ will obtain their consent if there is a medical procedure involved. Please remind your student how to notify the emergency services in New Zealand, as dialing 111 is not universal.

## **BULLYING AND RACISM**

Please check with your student how they are being treated at school and whether they feel safe going to and from school and around Wellington. Please let us know if you have any concerns.

## **SUSPECTED BULLYING AND ABUSE**

Please let us know if you have any concerns about your student being bullied at school. In the event of any suspected abuse in a homestay, the Code requires the school to notify Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police.

## **NATURAL DISASTER CONTINGENCY PLAN**

Please note the separate copy of our International Department contingency plan in your pack. The school needs to ensure that your family is prepared to deal with any potential natural disaster.

Homestay families are expected to have a survival kit that consists of the following items:

- Family Emergency Plan which includes their international student
- Water, enough for at least 3 days (3 litres per person)
- Flashlight and radio (plus batteries)
- First aid kit
- Canned/non-perishable food
- Face/Dust masks
- Toilet paper, plastic bags, and buckets
- BBQ or gas cooker
- Transport

For further information, refer [getready.govt.nz/prepared/household/supplies](http://getready.govt.nz/prepared/household/supplies) on the National Emergency Management Agency website

# **CULTURAL DIFFERENCES**

## **CULTURAL AWARENESS**

It is important to have some knowledge of the cultural background and differences of your student before they arrive so that you are aware of what may be challenging and different for everyone in the household. Listed below are some of these differences:

## **RECEIVING GIFTS**

Your student may give you and members of your family a small gift on arrival. You do not need to reciprocate at this stage as your hospitality is your gift unless you have some item that you would like your student to have. You may want to open it in front of them, but Asian cultures do not normally do this, so it pays to ask the student first!

## **HOUSE RULES/ETIQUETTE**

When you show your student around the house, there are a few things that you may wish to discuss:

Bathroom: length of time to stay in the shower, the use of hot water, making sure the floor is not wet after their shower

Toilet: making sure it is cleaned after use and having consideration for other users.

Sanitary pads: where and how to dispose.

## **SHOES**

Discuss the routine in your home for removing shoes or wearing slippers.

## **TOUCHING**

Personal space and touching vary between cultures. Sometimes physical contact can be uncomfortable for students. Check out early on what your student is comfortable with.

## **SAYING YES AND MEANING NO**

Many students find it hard to say no. Think about how you ask the question, e.g. What would you like to do? Stay home or go to the city with us? Avoid double negatives, e.g. you don't like potatoes don't you?

## **NOT TALKING**

Sometimes your student may not respond at all. In some cultures, it is normal for children to not respond to elders, especially when it sounds like they are being told off.

They may not look at you in the eyes as it can be a sign of impoliteness in their culture.

Please/Thank you/Excuse me: These polite phrases may need to be taught.

# **WHEN THINGS GO WRONG**

If there seem to be problems or misunderstandings developing, contact us earlier rather than later. It may not be the first time the issue has arisen. Your student may also be reluctant to give you negative feedback and may say things are fine when they are not. If you wait, a small problem can become a major issue. Major disciplinary issues will need the involvement of the Director of International Students.

## **ALCOHOL**

Alcohol must not be consumed if under 18 years of age. This is a part of the host parents/student agreement. It is illegal to supply alcohol to individuals under 18 years of age who are not your own children.

## **SMOKING**

Please do not allow a student to smoke or vape in the homestay. If a student smokes, insist they smoke outside. Remember that in New Zealand it is illegal to buy and sell cigarettes, e-cigarettes and vape products to persons under 18 years of age.

## **BREAKING THE LAW IN NEW ZEALAND**

If an international student who is under 16 years of age is arrested or charged with a crime, then the youth justice provisions of the Children Young Persons and their Families Act are invoked. Students need to understand that there will be consequences for their behaviour.

If the crime is very serious, then it may be necessary for the child to be taken into custody pending determination of the matter. The police are usually very careful when arresting a minor. Because the school would be seeking legal advice, the school should be notified if an international student is arrested and charged with a serious crime.

Breaking the law in New Zealand may result in the student being sent home.

## **DRIVING**

Only a person holding a current full NZ driver licence can transport your student. Onslow College requires its homestay parents to support the school in this regard. Students under 19 years of age are not allowed to drive or own a car. However, we do allow students to get their restricted license in New Zealand if they use an approved driving instructor.

## **RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STUDENTS**

If you have any concerns about the safety of your student's behaviour, please let the school know. Please discourage your student from spending long periods alone with another student in their bedroom. Socialising in a group, especially if it includes Kiwi and students of many cultures, may help prevent loneliness for your student, and ensure they remain safe.

## **PORNOGRAPHY/GAMBLING**

If you come across evidence of your student accessing pornography (off the internet or elsewhere) or gambling, you should pass the evidence on to the school. The school will discuss with you how it should be dealt with.

## **DAMAGE TO PROPERTY**

If the student causes damage to your property, he/she is responsible to pay the costs or the insurance excess. If this causes problems, please contact the school and we will write to the parents. Ultimately it is the school's responsibility to resolve the situation.

## **ANNUAL HOMESTAY MEETING**

Onslow College holds an annual homestay meeting, and all homestay parents are expected to attend. It is an opportunity to meet other homestay parents and discuss any issues or concerns that may have arisen. It is also useful to listen to the challenges that other families may have in hosting international students.

## **COMPLAINTS**

We all need to continually make improvements in our policy and practice. If you feel you have been treated unfairly or have a complaint about any aspect of the homestay service, please contact the Homestay Manager, or the Director of International Students. If you are still not satisfied, then the principal needs to be informed.

Your complaint should be handled in a way which:

- accepts your right to make a complaint
- fixes the situation, so that you are comfortable with the school's action

- improves the school's performance in the future.

The school has an internal grievance process for students too.

Usually, things do not go wrong or, if they do, any problems are usually minor and can easily be talked through.

If possible, discuss any concerns that you have with your student directly before contacting the homestay manager, or the school. Often differences can usually be accepted if not changed.

**WE HOPE YOU ENJOY THIS EXPERIENCE!**

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

### **The School**

04 478 8189 (absences)  
absences@onslow.school.nz

### **Principal**

Sheena Millar

021 0207 1174  
principal@onslow.school.nz

### **Homestay Manager**

Shiromi Seneviratne

021 98 93 98  
homestay@onslow.school.nz

### **Director of International Students**

Warren Henderson

04 477 1629 (Wk)  
027 415 1547  
[warren.henderson@onslow.school.nz](mailto:warren.henderson@onslow.school.nz)