

HOMESTAY PROVIDER HANDBOOK



A group of seven students in school uniforms posing with a large Union Jack flag and a blue banner with handwritten messages. The banner includes phrases like "I will miss you", "Thank you so much for being such a lovely and amazing person", and "I will miss you". The background is a whiteboard with various words like "Collaboration", "Teamwork", "Strengthen", "Encouraging", "Understanding", and "Positive".

300 Sealey Street, Thames 3500, New Zealand

www.thameshigh.school.nz





WELCOME

Naumai haere mai, Naumai hoki mai – Welcome to Homestay whānau to Te Kura Tuarua o Te Kāuaeranga / Thames High School.

Thank you for welcoming an international student into your home. We hope that this booklet will be useful and will help to make your home-stay experience positive and rewarding.

Hosting a student will be an interesting, enjoyable and enriching experience. Remember that so much of our every day lifestyle is completely new to your student. Remember that each student is different, even two students from the same country. What is written in this document is a guide only. We hope that it will help you and your student to get the very best of the opportunities that you have from your time together. If you have other questions, or if problems arise, please don't hesitate to contact us at any time.

We appreciate the commitment you are making in providing a home-stay and aim to help you in any way possible.

INTRODUCTION TO HOSTING

We welcome you as a Host family and look forward to a positive and supportive ongoing relationship.

Our goal is to offer you the time and support required for you to provide the students living in your home the best possible experience whilst they are studying at Thames High School.

This homestay handbook has our guidelines set out in a clear and transparent manner to help your hosting experience be as positive as possible. We ask the Host family and the student to adhere to the guidelines in the booklets provided as closely as possible so there are no miscommunications or misunderstandings. This offers both parties some clarity and less confusion around some of the smaller details. This handbook should always be kept in a safe and accessible place for your ongoing reference to it.

Homestay is an opportunity for people of different cultures and languages to live together and learn together. Qualities that we look for when selecting our Hosts are:

- A family who will embrace cultural differences and realise it is an opportunity to learn from each other.
- A family who has the time to involve them in family activities.
- A family who is sensitive and realises that students will need nurturing and support as it is often overwhelming to be so far away from home.
- A family that wants to take part in a positive and mutual learning experience.
- A family where all members are flexible enough to accept a student with a different language and cultural background to their own.

Our students are looking for a home away from home. Hosts are not just providing room and board – but rather a safe, supportive and welcoming environment. Parents of the students you host feel comforted in the knowledge that their child is being taken good care of overseas and they have a warm and safe environment in which to flourish.

HOMESTAY COORDINATOR

All Hosts are visited within their home by a Homestay Coordinator. The coordinator is available to provide advice and guidelines for Host families, as well as answering queries on routine matters. Any families who are experiencing difficulties are encouraged to ring the International Department as quickly as possible. Our aim is to help resolve any difficulties early to allow the positive experience to continue within your home. Families can contact the Homestay Coordinator during office hours (8:30am to 4:00pm) by phoning 07 8688688 ext. 810.

For emergencies only please phone our international mobile 0275361001. There is always one staff member on call at all times but please be aware that this is only for emergencies. Please read this handbook carefully. If you have any questions please contact us.



RESPONSIBILITIES OF A HOST FAMILY

Being a homestay for a Thames High School student is very different from simply having a boarder, accepting a high school student does require a greater commitment in time and responsibility.

We hope that you will treat your student as a member of the family rather than as a “boarder” or “guest”. Some students seem mature and independent while others are shy, and suffer from homesickness. All will appreciate your kindness, concern, interest and conversation. Invite them to join in your family activities and outings, as you would a member of your family.

Of course, being part of your family also brings responsibilities for the student. Please encourage them to help around the house and take some responsibilities. Feel free to establish ground rules that would be fair and reasonable for any teenager - e.g. tidying up, curfews, letting you know where they are going. Check the goals of the student when they arrive. A short term student has different expectations than a long term student. Set up regular contact with the student's parents. Students should be able to have fun while still attempting homework, assignments and exams. Please encourage regular homework habits and don't be afraid to ask what they are doing at school.

Most of our students are still teenagers and need the same firm but fair guidelines as our young kiwis do. Determine your expectations and add these in the section provided to the attached Homestay Code of Behaviour. Discuss this with your student in the first days of their stay. If you feel that a problem with behaviour or consideration is arising, discuss it with your student. It may result unintentionally from a cultural misunderstanding and can often be quickly resolved.

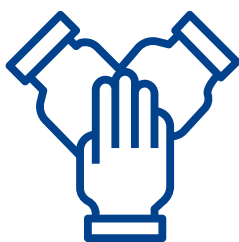
If you are still concerned, please contact us. It is important to nip more serious problems in the bud before they get out of hand and we will support you. The vast majority of homestays work really well and life-long friendships are often made. However, if for any reason you feel that you would rather not continue to provide home-stay or irresolvable personality clashes have developed, we are happy to find alternative accommodation for your student.

The rules and guidelines as listed in the Homestay Host Handbook are good practice for all international students and meet the requirements for Thames High School.

EXPECTATIONS

The home-stay arena involves three main stakeholders.

The Homestay Whānau



The International Student

The School

There are different expectations for each sector.

Students should expect the home-stay parents to:

- Provide three meals a day (including any takeaways or meals out at the homestay expense).
- Attend international functions
- Care for the student as they would for their own child
- Provide a warm, comfortable single room with study facilities
- Encourage the student to participate in the family's activities (eg: chores, family movies, sports and family holidays).
- Set reasonable rules
- Not provide or purchase alcohol for students
- Set a reasonable curfew at weekends and time to be home after school
- Set reasonable fees for internet use if required
- Discuss their rules and expectations with the student – don't assume anything
- Contact the school immediately if there are any serious breaches of the school's rules or health and safety issues (eg: drink, drugs)

If homestay parents are negligent in their care, the student/s will be removed from the home– they will not be offered the chance to re-host.

Students should expect the school to provide:

- Regular contact through the Homestay Coordinator
- School reports
- Support and quick action in case of problems
- Support for school rules
- Information for any queries that crop up (eg: holiday costs etc).

The School and Homestays expect international students to:

Abide by the High School's International rules.

- Participate in the family's activities (eg: chores, family movies, sports and family holidays).
- No drinking alcohol
- No drugs
- No overnight stays with friends during the week.
- Students must give details of any outings with friends to their homestay family, including destination and expected time home.
- Phone/text your homestay family if you will be late home
- No driving cars or riding in cars with other students on a restricted license
- Be at home at night during the week unless you are at a school or family function
- Ask permission of your family and school, to go out of the Thames region. Make sure the application form is completed and given to the Homestay Manager at least two days before you would like to leave.
- Ask permission of you Homestay if wanting to sleep out at any other place other than the homestay.
- Be sensitive to what times the family goes to bed at night.
- Friends are also to pay for all international phone calls / cell phone calls / internet use
- Tell the High School of any problems.
- Be open with your family as to who you invite into the home.
- Follow the Thames High School rules regarding hours of attendance, providing absence notes, uniform and leaving the school grounds.
- Do not lend or borrow money, credit cards or mobile phones.
- Do homework and personal study.
- Share aspects of your culture with your family eg: cook a meal, share your music,
- Talk to them about your country.



Eric Langeneckerl
Germany

"I was really shy before I came here but everyone came to me and talked to me and I made lots of friends really quick. Everybody here is a really keen to so stuff."

My highlight was my host family took me out on the boat and we sailed around the coromandel and we went diving!"



Julie Buehlen
Germany

"My highlights were {the} Outdoor Education. We did a lot of trips like the Tongariro Crossing. Surfing was fun as well and the scuba diving was awesome."

I would recommend Thames High School because the teachers and all the people are very friendly, it's just a good atmosphere here at the school."

My homestay family was really nice. It was really fun. I felt really comfortable after a few days and we did lots of things together like going to the beach."



HOMESTAY RENUMERATION

*2027 prices

Home stay fees of \$350* are paid weekly.

Payment is made retrospectively. If you have a long-term student you will be paid weekly by direct credit into a nominated bank account. Short-term homestays are usually paid by direct credit in the first week of the student visit.

This payment covers three meals a day, the student's own room (with a desk, bed, wardrobe, chest of drawers and all linen and basic toiletries) and a place as a family member. i.e. all the normal snacks and amenities that other family members enjoy should also be provided for the student. Basic toiletries include soap, toilet paper, and tissues.

Personal pocket money, bus fares, extra expenses for outings, exam fees, holiday costs, shampoos etc., are the student's responsibility.

Long term students should advise you, the host family, and Thames High School, at least two weeks in advance if they plan to go on holiday for 5 days or longer. The homestay payment will be reduced by 50% per day for that period. If holding the student's belongings in storage for a period longer than 5 weeks (and the room has been vacated) a payment of \$50.00 per week will be made to you. If storing their possessions during that period is a problem, please advise our Homestay Coordinator.

We will organise alternative storage. In this case no payment will be made.

Two weeks' notice should be given by host families for homestay changes (or terminations) or two weeks payment will be forfeited.

Note: Many longer term students change home stays regularly in order to experience a variety of lifestyles and to meet a larger number of people. (There is no implied criticism of any host family in this event).

During the Christmas holidays most students will have ended their time at Thames High School and so will vacate their room. However, there are a small number of students who will stay over the Christmas holidays, as their time at Thames High will end sometime in the following year. If it is not possible for your student to stay over the Christmas holidays please contact us and we will endeavour to find them alternative accommodation.



Artwork created by International Students which is displayed outside at the International Centre.