



MONASH  
College

# Homestay Host Manual

Homestay Accommodation Services

**Information correct as at 22 September 2021**

Monash College Pty Ltd

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[www.monashcollege.edu.au/homestay](http://www.monashcollege.edu.au/homestay)

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# Homestay Host Manual

## Homestay Contact Details

<b>Phone</b>	9902 0122
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:has@monashcollege.edu.au">has@monashcollege.edu.au</a>
<b>Office Hours</b>	9:00am - 5:00pm (Monday – Friday)
<b>After Hours Security</b>	9905 3059
<b>After Hours Emergency Only</b>	9905 3333
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.monashcollege.edu.au/homestay">http://www.monashcollege.edu.au/homestay</a>

## The Homestay Host Role

Welcome to the Homestay Accommodation Services (HAS) Program.

This manual is designed to assist Homestay Hosts to accommodate homestay students studying at Monash College or Monash University. We want to assist hosts to resolve any difficulties associated with their homestay student that can arise from time to time.

A warm, friendly and flexible approach to your homestay student will ensure an enjoyable experience. Of course, in a program that involves so many people we cannot guarantee everybody's happiness. However, we ensure that both hosts and students are attended to when difficulties arise. We cannot always solve problems but will assist wherever possible.

This manual is updated regularly, incorporating new information based on feedback we receive from hosts, homestay students and other institutions.

In general terms, our expectations of the Homestay Host family are simply that they should:

- a) provide a warm, friendly environment to ensure your homestay student's safety and well being
- b) encourage homestay students to speak English at all times
- c) be flexible
- d) be sensitive to the cultural differences between Australia and your student's country of origin
- e) only make small changes to their daily routine to accommodate a homestay student; for example, discuss food allergies and / or intolerances.
- f) communicate any concerns or problems that arise so as to help solve problems or misunderstandings. Remember, if you don't communicate these difficulties then HAS cannot assist you and your homestay student.
- g) be aware of early warning signs and symptoms of mental illness such as changes in your student's eating or sleeping habits, irritability or restlessness. Contact the Homestay office to discuss.



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## Setting Guidelines

The following questions have been provided to help you to settle your student into an Australian household. These will also help set the ground rules and familiarise the student with their host family and local environment.

### Some questions you may like to ask your Homestay student:

1. What time do you usually get up?
2. What time do you usually have a bath or shower (morning or night)?
3. Do you want to wash your own laundry?
4. What time do you usually eat breakfast?
5. What time do you usually go to bed?
6. What foods do you prefer not to eat?
7. Is there any special information that I should know about? (eg allergies, medication, etc.)

### Some questions your homestay student may wish to ask you:

1. May I use the internet? Do you have any data limits? Can I download movies and music?
2. How late can I call (e.g. WeChat, WhatsApp, Line) my family and friends?
3. Can I take a long shower? When should I shower?
4. Are there any dangerous areas near here?
5. May I invite friends over to stay the night?
6. May I stay over at my friend's house?
7. If I go out at night what time should I be home?
8. If I am not coming home for dinner what time should I let you know?
9. Are there any special house rules that I should know about?

## Finance

- Homestay Hosts are paid each fortnight for the *nights* that your student stays at your home.
- Hosts are paid by direct deposit into their bank account **fortnightly** on a Thursday for the period from the preceding Monday to Sunday as indicate in our [Homestay Payment Schedule](#).
- Processing can take up to 48 hours depending on your bank. Generally, you should receive funds in your nominated account by close of banking on Friday each fortnight.
- You can contact the Homestay office on Monday regarding payments for that fortnight.
- It is your responsibility to provide the correct bank details to enable timely payment.
- Payments are made only by automatic transfer into a nominated bank account.
- Apart from phone calls Homestay Hosts should not charge or accept money from their students for any services.



## Who Pays?

- a) Internet – Homestay hosts will provide an internet connection to students that is adequate for study purposes. Your student will likely use internet to research online, email and to keep in contact with their family. If your student has brought their own laptop, kindly show them how to access your internet connection including a password if required. Your student has been encouraged not to download music, movies and YouTube files. It is important that you advise your student of any internet limits that may impact on your usage availability. If your student requests additional internet for non-academic use, you may encourage them to purchase a mobile broadband USB with recharge card so they can pay for, monitor and control their own internet usage for such purposes. You will not charge your student for access to your internet connection and usage required for **study, family contact and email purposes**.
- b) Public Transport - homestay students will cover their own public transport costs. International students aged 19 and over are generally not eligible for concession travel unless specified criteria is met.
- c) Outings/Excursions - Hosts are not expected to pay for homestay students on family outings etc. Students are advised at orientation to offer to pay for themselves. Hosts are asked to use their discretion in this matter as the weekly cost of homestay includes all meals.
- d) Telephone - all non-local phone calls (international, STD) are to be paid by the student. They generally use their mobile phone to contact family and friends through the internet.

## Homestay Students Going Away on Holiday

If a student request to return to the same host is approved, he/she will leave their belongings set up in their bedroom and will pay a reduced nightly homestay fee from the eighth (8<sup>th</sup>) night of their absence until their return date. During such an absence, the student room will remain set up and will not be used for any other purpose. Host must remain available to host the student during the absence period in the event of an earlier than expected return date is applicable. Host will commit to continue hosting student upon return. HAS will pay the host a reduced nightly fee.

## Homestay Host is absent from home overnight

If, for any reason, the responsible adult or one of the responsible adults is planning to be absent from home overnight, you **must** notify the Homestay office on 9902 0122 or email us at [has@monashcollege.edu.au](mailto:has@monashcollege.edu.au) and where deemed necessary, having regard to the age, maturity and cultural background of the student, suitable alternative arrangements may need to be made for the duration of the their time away from home.

## Insurance/Medical Procedures - Study Group Students

For those students who are properly insured the procedure is:

1. During office hours: student can attend the Medical facility based at each Monash campus.
2. After hours: Homestay Hosts should take their student to their local GP
3. The student is responsible for paying for the consultation and obtaining a receipt for insurance purposes. This allows the student to make an insurance claim on return to their home country.

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## Insurance/Medical Procedures - Individual Students

All students on a student visa must have Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC). OSHC covers out of hospital medical services for doctors, pathology and radiology; in-hospital medical services and ambulance services. Monash's preferred provider is Allianz Global Assistance which offers additional benefits to students such as access to a 24/7 Helpline.

If your student is unwell, HAS recommends you take your student to your local GP. Your student should pay for the consultation and they will be reimbursed by their OSHC provider on production of their receipt. If your student is unwell during class time, they can visit the medical facility at their campus.

## Confidentiality

On Study Group programs involving many hosts of different backgrounds and experience, comparison between different families/lifestyles may be a topic of conversation. This is understandable. However, when it comes to difficulties/problems with a Homestay Host, we ask students not to speak of their problems to their friends or to other hosts, but rather to inform Homestay staff.

## Communication Process

Surveys of Homestay Hosts have revealed that when difficulties occurred most hosts were able to deal with them or in time the problems would sort themselves out. If you have a problem, you should make every effort to resolve the difficulty directly with your student. If the matter cannot be resolved, you or your student should promptly contact the Homestay office on 9902 0122. If you are unhappy with any part of the program, email a Homestay Coordinator on [has@monashcollege.edu.au](mailto:has@monashcollege.edu.au). Please note: at the end of every placement, students are given the opportunity to fill in an evaluation form.

The most common difficulties experienced by Homestay Hosts are:

- Too quiet, too shy, wouldn't talk to us
- Too demanding (asked so many questions all the time)
- Rude/sulky
- Homesickness
- Shower problems
- Unsure how much freedom to give (applicable to over age students)
- Immaturity
- Too studious/Not studious at all or Too social / Out till late every night
- Our homestay student was always tired

## Freedom to Come and Go (Dangers of Living in a Foreign Country)

Of prime importance is the safety and wellbeing of our homestay students. Other countries may be safer than Australia and students may expect the same here or they may be naive to dangers.

Some young people are relatively free and safe to move anywhere in their country by themselves.

Unfortunately, this is not entirely the case here and HAS warns homestay students to avoid travelling after dark

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on public transport. If students are out and about after dark then they must have assistance from the host family or use taxis to get home.

You should treat your student as though he/she is a member of the family/ household. You should apply the same standards as you would to a natural member of the family. Be suitably strict with your homestay student when giving permission for outings, taking into consideration their age, maturity and reliability. It is quite acceptable for students to visit other students from their class and as long as both hosts agree, it is possible for a student (**over 18 only**) to sleep over at another homestay family's home.

On some occasions a student or small group may decide to travel interstate or elsewhere for the weekend. You should ask your student for their address / contact details while they are away. **If your homestay student is under the age of 18, he / she must get permission from their Monash College Guardian.** You are not expected to provide any assistance by way of transport, etc. but you may offer to help.

### What Homestay Students are told (re living with a Homestay Host)

Homestay students are encouraged to approach their Homestay Host if they have a concern or problem and to work through it with their host. They are told:

- a) not to consume alcohol or tobacco, if underage, or drugs at any stage
- b) to abide by Australian law at all times
- c) to adhere to schedules and timetables - especially to wait at the agreed time and place when being picked up by their homestay family. If there are any schedule changes, they are to inform the host family of them. If you do pick your student up after class, give them extra time so you are not kept waiting for them.
- d) you will help your student to buy a **Myki** card. Make sure they purchase the correct zone/s if they are purchasing a Myki Pass. **International students aged 19 and over are generally not eligible for concession travel unless specified criteria is met.**
- e) you will teach your student to use public transport and ensure they are confident before you let them travel by themselves. Give them written instructions eg bus number and any connecting bus number as well as where to get off, especially on the trip home.
- f) to let you know where they are going and approximately what time they will be home. They must phone you if they are not coming home for dinner or if they will be late home. If they will be returning home late in the evening, remind them to take a taxi, rather than walk.
- g) that if they are going to stay out overnight they must let you know where they will be staying and leave a contact phone number for you (NB if your student is Under 18, they **cannot** stay away overnight unless they have first obtained their Guardian's permission).
- h) to confirm with you if they can invite friends home for a meal or to visit
- i) they must obey homestay family directions - yes means yes, no means no, and maybe means yes, if certain conditions are met. In Asian languages the word yes does not always necessarily mean yes, similarly no and maybe are not always as they seem. This should always be made clear between the Homestay Host and student.
- j) that their host will have their wellbeing and safety in mind at all times
- k) Homestay Hosts are not running a hotel service and students should assist with the washing of dishes, keeping their room tidy, assisting with laundry etc.
- l) how to use the shower and bath in Australia. Short showers are mandatory.
- m) they should speak English at all times



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- n) to try their best at speaking English and participating as a family member.
- o) they must offer to pay for themselves on excursions/dining out etc.
- p) that Homestay Hosts are often busy and tired after work and hence to respect their homestay family's situation in this regard.
- q) that all household rules apply to them as they do to other members of the host family.
- r) that their own country may be safer than Australia, and they should be wary about being approached by people they don't know. Homestay Hosts should reinforce this point to the students without making it sound as though Australia is a dangerous country.
- s) If your student asks if their friend of the opposite gender can spend the night with them in your house, we always recommend that you err on the side of caution and let your student know that it is not appropriate. If your student is persistent, please contact us on 9902 0122 to discuss further.

## Guidelines for Appropriate Behaviour by Homestay Hosts

The best way of ensuring appropriate behaviour is to abide by Australian law, comply with Child Safe Standards code of conduct and behaviour expectations, and all other the points agreed to in the HAS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Hosts will exercise common sense and caution with regard to the homestay student in your care. In exercising "common sense and caution" hosts should take into account potential cultural differences between their own ideas of appropriate behaviour and those of their students.

Hosts are reminded that, for the purposes of Victorian laws prohibiting sexual harassment in relation to accommodation, the behaviour of family members towards the homestay student is judged by the student's reasonable perception and interpretation of that behaviour, and not by the intention of the family member. These issues can be managed by considering the following questions:

- ◆ Is the behaviour likely to be unwelcome? Or is it encouraged or accepted by the student?
- ◆ Is it possible that the student finds the conduct humiliating, embarrassing or intimidating?

Examples of behaviour that may be deemed to be discriminatory or constitute sexual harassment are:

- ◆ acting towards, or speaking to a person in a manner which threatens or vilifies that person;
- ◆ making jokes, suggestive comments or offensive gestures related to a person's race, colour, ethnic origin, disability, gender or sexual characteristics;
- ◆ distribution or display of material (including through email) which may be offensive, such as sexually explicit posters or pictures, racist or sexist jokes or cartoons;
- ◆ persistent questions about a person's private life;
- ◆ personal comments about appearance, size, clothing;
- ◆ demands for sexual favours, either directly or by implication;
- ◆ unwanted and deliberate physical contact;
- ◆ indecent assault or other criminal offences.

While it is not our intention to stifle the warm and friendly relationship between families and students, you should be aware that problems in this area do arise from time to time, that there may be a liability, and you should exercise all appropriate care and consideration towards your students. Should an incident be alleged to occur during a Homestay placement, we will notify the Police.



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## Some Practical Points for Homestay Hosts

The following are some practical tips for homestay hosts to manage cultural and lifestyle differences between you and your international students.

- a) You may need to explain to your homestay student how to use the sheets on the bed and to explain where the wet towels go.
- b) Some homestay students may be very shy about having their underwear washed so they may never bring it out. They may want to wash it by hand. Please advise them where to hang it to dry.
- c) Most households overseas have a lock or snib on bathroom and toilet doors. Many homestay students feel uncomfortable without it.
- d) Drains overseas are often built to handle a large quantity of water. Be mindful to point out particular plumbing features or issues so that your homestay student does not inadvertently flood the bathroom.
- e) Some homestay students may find it challenging to adjust to a level of noise at home that is different to what they are accustomed to.
- f) Be mindful of other cultures' dietary preferences. For example, some cultures eat predominantly rice, and your student may appreciate it if you serve rice occasionally.
- g) Different languages answer positive and negative questions differently. English speakers often ask negative questions, for instance "You won't have more to eat?" Your homestay student may reply "Yes" if they don't want more food and "No" if they do. To avoid confusion, it is best to avoid using negative questions when conversing with your student if they have language difficulties.
- h) Some students may feel a little awkward about hugging or other kinds of physical affection expressed between family members. Hosts are encouraged to exercise discretion and be aware that students may often be uncomfortable with physical contact. **Please also refer also to Page 8 of this manual.** Despite this, homestay students will often start to feel quite emotional about their imminent departure a few days before they are due to leave.
- i) Be mindful that in the beginning they may not always feel confident enough to ask for food, drinks etc., so you should offer it to them. Some students can also feel quite sensitive about having the homestay host do their laundry; if possible you can provide a separate bag for them to put their dirty laundry in and let them know which days it will be collected for washing.
- j) You may be surprised if your student forgets to say "please" when asking for something, and "thank you" when something has been done or given to them. This is because in some cultures, family members are not expected to keep thanking each other.
- k) If time permits, make contact with your homestay student before they arrive. This may make the initial meeting feel less awkward.

## Complaints Procedure

If you have any issues in relation to your student, you should first speak to a Homestay staff member. You will be encouraged to discuss the issue with your student, if appropriate. If the issue is not resolved, staff will speak to both parties to try and reach a resolution. If there is still no resolution, Homestay staff will take any further action required.

If the problem does not relate to your homestay student, staff will discuss the issue with you and endeavour to reach a resolution. If you have an issue with a Homestay staff member, you can speak with the Homestay Manager or send your grievance, by email to [mc.governance@monashcollege.edu.au](mailto:mc.governance@monashcollege.edu.au).



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## Emergency only

If your student:

- ♦ is in a life-threatening situation or been the victim of an assault, you should contact the relevant emergency service. You should also call the Monash University Security number (9905 3333) to advise them of the situation, or if your student needs hospitalisation. If it is an emergency situation and you need a **Japanese speaker**, call 0411 475 232. This number is **only** to be used for emergency situations.
- ♦ has either lost a personal item or had something stolen, you should take them to the police station to report the incident. Please call the Homestay office on 9902 0122 and leave a message or email us at [has@monashcollege.edu.au](mailto:has@monashcollege.edu.au)
- ♦ does not return home and you are unable to contact them on their mobile, you should call Monash Security on 9905 3333. Please note: students often get lost on public transport when they first arrive in Australia and might be delayed a few hours in getting home as a result. We would advise you to give your student clear instructions and a map of your local area. Remind them to make a note of your address and contact details. You should also ask them for their mobile phone number and let them know you will text or call them if they are late home.