



**HOMESTAY STUDENT HANDBOOK
2024**

CANADIAN FAMILIES:

- Canada is a multicultural country. Your homestay family might be from another country or speak another language, but they are still a Canadian family. The purpose of Homestay is not to teach you perfect English, but to give you the experience of living with a Canadian family.
- There are many differences between your family and your homestay family. These differences are part of your Canadian experience.
- Communicate with your homestay family. This is the best way to practice your English and get to know them.



FOOD:

- Breakfast and lunch may be self-serve; some host families may make this for their students, but others may provide you with the food and ask you to make your own. Either is acceptable.
- Dinner should be a sit-down meal with your host family. This meal will be prepared by your host family. If your host father or mother is making dinner, you may want to offer to help. It is polite and you can practice your English.
- **Please call your host family if you are going to be late or will not be home for dinner.**
- Go food shopping with your host family. You can show them what foods you like to eat.
- If there are any questions or concerns you have about the food, please communicate with your homestay parents about them or come see the Accommodation Coordinators. We are happy to help, and there is often an easy compromise.



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TELEPHONE:

- Local phone calls from one phone in Victoria to another phone in Victoria are free.
- Please connect your mobile phone to your family's Wi-Fi and confirm with them the rules for internet use.

HOUSE HOLD CHORES:

- The typical Canadian family does not have maids or cleaning services. In Canada, each family member is expected to help with keeping the home clean.
- **You are responsible for cleaning up after yourself. This is not a chore – it is common respect for your host family.** Clean and tidy your room and bathroom at least once a week.
- Discuss with your homestay family how laundry is done in their home.
- You can always offer to help your homestay family with chores such as washing the dishes, setting the table, and clearing the table.



COMPUTER USE:

- Keep the computer in ENGLISH only.
- You **must not** make any changes to the computer or download any programs.

SMOKING:

- Smoking is NOT permitted inside your homestay.
- Smoking (of any kind) is NOT permitted by students under age 19 at any time.
- At school, please ask a staff member where you are allowed to smoke outside.

SHOWER:

- Discuss with your host family how showers work in their home.
- Please take a shower for only 10-15 minutes once a day.
- Please clean up the bathroom after yourself. Wipe up any water spilled on the floor and counter.

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RECYCLING:

- In Canada, recycling is very important! Please talk to your family about what things can be recycled. We usually separate paper, glass, and cans and place them in separate blue containers.



TRANSPORTATION:

- Your host family will show you how to use the bus to come to school and how to get home.
- You can buy a monthly Bus Pass at the lotto center inside the Bay Center on Douglas Street. You can acquire a UMO card at Victoria City Hall on Douglas St.
- If you need to find out more about the bus, you can go to www.bctransit.com.
- The weather is usually mild in Victoria, but October through March, it can be rainy. Please bring appropriate clothing.



SAFETY:

Victoria is safer than many places in North America; however, you still need to be careful.

- Do not give your phone number or address to strangers.
- Do not get into a car with a stranger.
- If you feel uncomfortable in a situation, leave.
- Talk about any strange people or activities to your host family and to your school.
- Remember, all city buses are part of the emergency network in Victoria. Use them if you ever sense danger!
- **In case of a real emergency, please call 9-1-1 for the ambulance, police, or fire department.**

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Are you thinking of moving out on your own or into a share house? Here are some tips to remember...

- Always ask for a receipt for any money exchanged when renting a room, apartment or suite.
- When visiting a share house or apartment, try to take a friend with you. It is safe and they can help you decide.



HOMESTAY CHANGES, CANCELLATIONS, OR REFUNDS:

- If you need to extend, cancel, or change your homestay, you **MUST LET US KNOW 3 WEEKS BEFORE THE CHANGE. Effective November 1, 2023, move requests will be subject to a \$50 change fee unless the move is at the request of the school or the host.**
- If you have a problem with your homestay, please speak to the Homestay Team. We will be happy to help you.
- Being in a different country with different language and food can sometimes be difficult. Please come and see us even if you want to just talk! **All conversations are confidential!**

DISPUTE RESOLUTION:

Both the host family and student are encouraged to work through issues directly together. This is one of the important challenges presented by the homestay experience. Should those issues not be resolved satisfactorily then both parties should speak to a Global Village staff member. Global Village staff will endeavor to resolve the issue by encouraging the student and host family to discuss the issue. If it is not resolved, Global Village staff will speak to both parties and try to reach a resolution. If there is still no resolution, Global Village staff will take any further action required.

If students have concerns with respect to Global Village Homestay and are unable to clarify them at the school level, they may refer the matter to Languages Canada.

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STUDENT COPIES OF HOMESTAY AGREEMENT:

STUDENT-FAMILY HOMESTAY AGREEMENT

1) Mutual Respect & Understanding

- a) Both the student and host family acknowledge that Canadian culture, customs, food, and family life may be different than in other countries. Students and hosts must try their best to try new things and be open to new experiences without any judgment. Students and host families will try to learn from each other and try not to judge each other based on appearance, accent, gender, language ability or cultural background.
- b) Canada is a country that prides itself in multiculturalism. The host family and students will show consideration and tolerance towards each other, as well as sensitivity to cultural differences and varying levels of English proficiency.
- c) The host family must treat the student as a guest in the home. The Student must behave as a guest in the home and will follow the host family guidelines (rules) in the home.

2) English in the Homestay

- a) The host family and student acknowledge that one of the many benefits a language student gains from Homestay is the exposure to the natural use of English in a non-classroom environment. For this reason, all GV host families must agree to speak English in the presence of their Homestay students, even if the family speaks another language as well.
- b) The host family will not host two students who share the same language unless specifically requested to do so by GV Victoria. Example: Mexican and Colombian students share Spanish as a common language; therefore are not matched with the same host family.

3) Student Rooms

- a) Each student will be provided with a private room, unless specifically requested by the student or GV Victoria. (GV Victoria does offer shared room options to students but hosts will be made aware of such special requests at the time of booking).
- b) The host will provide a student room with all basic furnishings required to create a comfortable environment which is conducive to studying. Furnishings shall include a proper door, bed, bed linens, closet, dresser, desk, chair, ceiling light, reading lamp, curtains or blinds, etc.
- c) The student will respect the property of the host family, including all items in the student room as well as in the common areas of the home. If the student damages or breaks anything in the home, they will pay for it and cover any costs incurred.
- d) The student is required to keep his/her own bedroom and bathroom clean and tidy. Once per week, the student will vacuum and clean his/her own room, and will tidy the student bathroom.

4) Food, Drinks & Snacks

- a) The Host shall provide and the student shall receive three (3) healthy, well-portioned meals per day, every day of the week. Some meals (typically breakfast and lunch) may be self-serve from time to time, but the evening meal should be shared together.
 - i) Breakfast should include a variety of options, ranging from toast, coffee/juice, cereal, or eggs on weekday mornings to bacon and eggs, pancakes, and other brunch-style options on weekends.
 - ii) Lunch should be a bagged lunch on school days (sandwiches, juice, fruit, vegetables, and snack or simple meals, leftovers to be heated) and a fresh-prepared meal on holidays and weekends.
 - iii) Dinner selections may vary depending on each host family's culture and the occasion, but should be healthy and a well-sized portion.
 - iv) The usual dinner time is ____: ____PM and the student must inform the host family by ____: ____PM, if he/she will not be home for dinner. The student is responsible for informing the host family when making plans to go out or if a student will not be home for dinner or any plan that the family is expecting the student to be part of.
 - v) Missed meals:
 - If a host family will *not be home for a dinner or the student will arrive home late* from school, the evening meal shall be prepared and left in the fridge, so the student may reheat it at a convenient time.
 - Students in *GV non-group Programs* are responsible for their own meal arrangements when day-long or afternoon excursions are planned. Example: An adult student going to Vancouver for the day will be responsible for his/her meals on the trip.
 - Students in *GV Teen Activity Programs or Customized Tours* may have day trips or excursions that require them to bring a bagged lunch or dinner, which the host family will provide.

5) Drug & Alcohol Policy

- a) Both students and hosts will have the option of indicating a "smoke free" and/or "marijuana free" home on GV application forms.
- b) Students will be expected to respect their host's House Rules around tobacco, cannabis, e-cigarettes and vaping devices, and will not be allowed to use or store such substances in or around a "smoke-free" and "marijuana-free" home.
- c) To maintain a healthy environment, both hosts and students will be expected NOT to smoke inside the home.
- d) Students must not come to school under the influence of drugs or alcohol. You must inform the director of studies if you have a medical condition which requires medication that affects your academic performance or judgement.

6) Other Guidelines

- a) The student will be provided with a key to the house. The Student shall respect and guard the security and privacy of the host family's home.
- b) To maintain a safe and healthy, smoke-free environment, the student will NOT smoke inside the family's home at any time. If the student is a smoker, he/she must only smoke in an area designated by the host family outside of the house.
- c) The student is expected to take part in activities with the host family. The host family will show the student some places of interest in Victoria during the first two weeks of the student's stay and continue to include the student in the family's activities for the duration of the student's stay (i.e. inclusion in family dinners, especially at times like Thanksgiving and Christmas).

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- d) The student will have access to a computer for internet access for one (1) hour every day. There will be no additional charge for this. Students must not download malicious files or inappropriate content on their host's computer.
- e) Students and hosts should discuss the household shower and bathing schedules, especially when several adults will be sharing the washroom. Some students prefer morning or evening showers or baths. Please make the arrangement that will work for both the student and the family members at a reasonable time of day (i.e. not when the rest of the household is sleeping). To conserve water, showers should be taken for a maximum of 10-15 minutes.
- f) Students and hosts should discuss the homestay laundry routine, the appropriate use of machines, the location of drying rack for hang-dry items, etc. If the student is doing his/her own laundry, it should be done once per week as Canadian laundry machines are too large for daily loads.
- g) The student is not contracted or expected to do household chores. The host family will not require the student to do housework apart from keeping his/her own room and bathroom clean and tidy. Taking one's dishes from the table to the sink is NOT considered a "chore"; it is customary to do this in Canada and all students are encouraged to offer to assist with dishes as a show of respect towards the cook of the house.
- h) The student will ask to use household appliances, such as stove, dishwasher, microwave, blender, espresso maker, etc. The host shall provide a safety orientation on the use of such appliances ONLY IF permission is granted to use such appliances; however, it is recommended that access be restricted and supervised to avoid accidents and/or upsets.

7) Members of the Household

- a) The host family will not host more than a total of three (3) GV and non-GV Students in the home at the same time without the specific written approval of the GV Victoria Homestay Coordinator.
- b) At least one adult member of the host family must be at home every day and night of the homestay period. If such a situation cannot be guaranteed, the Homestay Coordinator must be notified prior to the family being away and the next point (c) shall be followed.
- c) Pertaining to the point above, on the rare occasion that a host family must be away from home, the host family MUST make arrangements for a responsible adult (non-student) to cook, socialize, and perform as a "Host" during their absence. The contact information, police record check and signed Declaration of Suitability for the alternate host will be provided to GV Victoria prior to family's absence.
 - An ADULT Student shall not be left with an "alternative host" in the home for more than three (3) consecutive days. If more is required due to special circumstances, please discuss with the Homestay Coordinator.
 - An UNDERAGE Student must NEVER be left with an "alternative host" in the home, unless the alternate host has undergone the full process of becoming an approved GV host family. With notice of at least TWO WEEKS, underage students may be moved to an alternate host family for the period of absence if deemed necessary by the Homestay Coordinator.

8) Counseling and Conflict Resolution:

- a) Both parties (student and host family) acknowledge that from time to time, through no fault, differences may arise between the student and the host family. These may arise for a variety of reasons including personality mismatch, culture shock or a gap in expectations. If this should occur the student may be moved at his or her request and at the discretion of GV Victoria.
- b) If difficulties arise between the student and the host family, both the host Family and student are encouraged to communicate directly about the issues. This is one of the important challenges and learning opportunities presented by the homestay experience.

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- c) Whenever possible, a two-way verbal discussion of the issues is recommended; however, a kindly-worded letter, card or email may also be appropriate to initiate a sensitive discussion or allow for clarity when language barriers exist.
- d) If the issue(s) cannot be resolved after the first discussion, both parties (host and student) should contact the GV Homestay Coordinator immediately so that the Coordinator's advice can be integrated into the next stage of the discussion. The Homestay Coordinator will approach any situation in a non-judgmental and unbiased way, at the same time, respecting and observing the privacy, trust and confidentiality of each individual.
- e) Do not wait until the issue has grown bigger or has extended more than 2 or 3 days. The Homestay Coordinators want to help you as quickly as possible.
- f) Global Village staff will endeavor to resolve the issue by encouraging the student and family to explore each other's perspectives more and to learn from the experiences of others. Quite often, a student or host feels as if they are experiencing an issue for the first time in his/her life; however, with the volume of students and hosts involved with the GV Homestay Program, the Homestay Coordinator has often seen or heard of similar situations and can offer advice based on what has worked for others.
- g) After the student and host have spoken for the second time, if the issue is still not resolved, Global Village staff will seek permission to share what a student or host has disclosed in the interest of opening up the conversation further. At no time will the GV Homestay Coordinator break the confidentiality of either party (host or student) without permission.
- h) In the case of an issue which cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of both the student and host family, Global Village staff will take further action as seen fit.
- i) A student may be moved from a Homestay as a result of the behavior (on the part of student or host) that GV Victoria in its complete discretion considers unacceptable or dangerous. Such conditions could include but are not limited to abuse of drugs or alcohol, aggressive or abusive behavior, or violating other accepted norms of conduct within a Homestay.
- j) If students have concerns with respect to Global Village Homestay and are unable to clarify these concerns at the school level, they may refer the matter to Languages Canada (LC). Please note that LC serves Students but NOT Host Families.

LC Accreditation Procedure:

- *Languages Canada reviews the observation of the Standards within Language Programs on an annual basis.*
- *The first line of communication for students with respect to concerns is with the School.*
- *The role of Languages Canada is to act as an advocate on behalf of the student and to ensure that full information is available to review the matter with both the student and Member School.*
- *Should a resolution not be possible, the matter is referred to the Board of Directors of Languages Canada for resolution in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Dispute Resolution Policy for Languages Canada. This policy is to be displayed and/or made available to all students*

9) Homestay Bookings, Changes and Fees

- a) The student will make all the Homestay payments directly to the School. The host family will not accept, receive or charge any Homestay fee directly to the Student.
- b) The student agrees to let the School know of any departure date changes and will pay for any extra nights added to the homestay period.
- c) The student will promptly reimburse the host family if he/she causes any damage to the home. No deposit will be required of the student by the host family.
- d) If a student wishes to change the Homestay arrangement or leave the Homestay early, he/she will give the Homestay Coordinator and host family three (3) weeks' notice before

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changing/leaving. The three (3) week notice period is necessary to allow the host family and School to make alternative arrangements.

- e) If three (3) weeks' notice is not provided, the student will be asked to pay the remainder of the nightly fees owing, plus a \$150 cancellation fee. The cancellation fee is not a penalty, but rather is used to compensate the host family and/or School for costs incurred as a result of the change.
- f) After the student completes his/her study period at GV Victoria, the host family and the student agree not to continue the homestay arrangement without previous authorization by GV Victoria, and after that, the student and host shall do so at their own risk. A special release form must be signed by the student and the host family in such rare cases.

10) Hold Harmless Agreement

The host family and the student agree to release and hold Global Village English Centre Victoria Ltd. (GV Victoria) harmless for any damages which may be suffered or claimed as a result of entering into this Homestay Agreement and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, for any action or behavior of the student during his/her stay with the host. Students are bound by the same laws and statutes as Canadian citizens. GV Victoria and our authorized representatives are in no way to be considered as having legal guardianship for students.

11) Notes/Additional House Rules

Please list any rules of the home not covered by the GV agreement but which have been discussed during this review:

I have read the agreement and agree to honor it as a condition of my participation in the program.

Student Name (Please Print)	Signature	Date
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Host Name (Please Print)	Signature	Date
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GET TO KNOW YOU SHEET FOR HOSTS AND STUDENTS

Please complete the following with your host family and keep it at your homestay for reference.

1. Host's Name(s): _____ Please call me/us: _____
2. Student's Name: _____ Please call me: _____
3. Student's Cell Phone Number: _____.
4. I have studied English for: _____ years.
5. My last day in Victoria will be: _____
6. While in Victoria I would like to see or experience:
7. While in Canada I would like to learn about:
8. I don't like to eat: _____
9. I like to eat: _____
10. My medication: _____
11. My birthday is: _____
12. My hobbies are: _____
13. I am a smoker I am a non-smoker
The student will only smoke in this area _____
(ex. back yard, balcony)
14. Shower time: _____ in the morning _____ in the evening
15. All showers will be no more than _____ minutes. (ex. 10-20 minutes, but no less than 10 minutes)
16. Laundry will be done on _____ between _____ - _____
17. All phone calls will be kept to _____ between the hours of _____
& _____
18. Additional rules of the home: (eg. no outdoor shoes not to be worn inside the home.)