



**University  
of Manitoba**

**English Language Centre**

# **Homestay Program**

**Host Handbook**

**Revised April 2020**



## MESSAGE FROM THE HOMESTAY COORDINATOR AND ASSISTANT

This handbook is designed to give you all the information you need in making the Homestay experience as positive as possible. Read through each section carefully when you first enter the program, and refer back to the handbook if questions come up while hosting a student. After reviewing the handbook, if you have any unanswered questions, please contact me. As the Homestay Coordinator, I am here to ensure that you have all the information and resources you need for an enjoyable time as a Homestay host.

Encourage your student to practice English and not to be afraid to make mistakes. Ask questions. Be patient as you help your student improve with language skills. Also, remember that you may be the first point of contact in Canada for your Homestay student, and as such you and your family will be largely responsible for the student's first impressions about Canadian society and culture.

The handbook for Homestay hosts is updated each year. Throughout the year, you may also receive occasional updates. To ensure that you have the most current information, please be sure to keep all Homestay correspondence that is sent to you, either via email or regular mail. If there is any additional information that you believe should be included, please let us know. Your suggestions and feedback are greatly appreciated.

Please contact the Homestay Assistant with any updates on your home so Homestay host files can be kept up to date.

Sincerely,

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**Homestay emergency cell phone for EMERGENCIES ONLY: 204-228-2280 (after hours)**

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## BEING A HOMESTAY HOST

Homestay hosts are chosen for their keen interest in other cultures and good English language skills. Applicants may be a family or single person, with or without children. Becoming a Homestay host requires a commitment to providing a beneficial living experience to the visiting student as well as room and board.

Hosts considered for the Homestay program will be interviewed in their home. Each adult over the age of eighteen is required to provide a Winnipeg Police Information Check (PIC) at their own cost. In addition to other factors, the English Language Centre (ELC) will evaluate a Homestay application on the basis of proximity to the University and an accessible bus route that involves 35 minutes or less travel time. If you move to a new location, you will need to be visited again in order to keep your file accurate and up to date.

Ideally, a maximum of three students from different countries and language groups will be placed in an individual home. Due to our program population we sometimes place students from the same country in one home. It is the responsibility of the host to inform the Homestay Coordinator when there are any significant changes within the home such as additional people in the home for an extended time, significant changes in work hours, prolonged illness, or if a student from another Homestay program is placed in the home.

Please be advised that a student may be placed in a Homestay but not arrive due to complications with visa arrangements or other unforeseen circumstances. In such situations, Homestay will try to place another student with the host.

Please note that being part of the Homestay program does not guarantee that a student will be placed with you every time you request one, or that a student who is placed in your home will be able to stay the full term. Placement depends on demand and suitability. Please inform the Coordinator before each term begins if you would like to request a student.



The English Language Centre Homestay Program has established guidelines for both visiting students and Homestay hosts. We do our best to match students and hosts and to facilitate good relationships between them. **We encourage hosts to keep open communication with the student(s) and to request mediation from the Homestay Coordinator when necessary.**

The Homestay program organizes orientations for Homestay hosts one or two times per year. Please make it a priority to attend these sessions as they provide you with important information regarding the program, as well as a wonderful opportunity to connect with other hosts in Homestay. In addition, the Homestay program organizes social events throughout the year. These are popular, fun evenings that we hope you and your student(s) will plan to attend.

*The mandate of the University of Manitoba English Language Centre Homestay Program is to provide safe, clean, comfortable, English speaking homestays for international students studying at the University of Manitoba. The University of Manitoba reserves the right to choose hosts and homes that, in the University's opinion, will best meet this mandate and to remove hosts and homes from the program who, in the University's opinion, fail to meet or to continue to meet this mandate.*

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HOMESTAY HOST**

- Pick your student up at the initial point of arrival and assist in departure.
- Give a key and alarm code to the home.
- Orient the student to Winnipeg, to the neighbourhood, and to local services such as banks, post offices, convenience stores, etc.
- Provide an English-speaking environment and encourage the student to speak English in your home.
- Provide **three (3)** healthy meals a day: breakfast and lunch materials so that the student can prepare these independently, and **an evening meal usually prepared by a family member.**
- Help the student learn about Canadian culture.
- Familiarize the student with the rules of your household regarding smoking, drinking, cannabis use, shower use, phone use, mealtimes, etc.
- Respect the rights, privacy, and culture of the student, including sexual orientation, religious, and political beliefs.
- Hosts must not lend money to, or borrow money from, Homestay students.
- Inform the student what the rules and expectations are in your home. It may be helpful for the student to have these written down. (Try to keep this list as short as possible).
- Provide a private room with a comfortable bed, bedding, towels, dresser, closet space, desk, and lamp.
- Respect the privacy of the student’s room. Hosts should not enter without permission at anytime.
- Provide access to the laundry facilities, detergent, and cleaning supplies for the student’s room. Hosts living in apartments must pay for the student's use of coin/ card laundry machines.
- Treat the student like an adult member of your home and provide him/her with full use of the household including Wi-Fi, television, and living areas, and invite the student to participate in host activities.
- Please make sure that each student **receives their Homestay Student Handbook.** The Student Handbook is sent out to hosts in the pre-arrival package.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HOMESTAY STUDENT**

- Students must communicate with the Homestay host and ask questions if there is something they don’t understand.
- Students should always attempt to speak English to the host and any other student in the homestay.
- Students should participate with their host in activities and should help with meal preparation and tidying up; However, students are not expected to babysit, mow lawns, etc.
- Students should keep their own room clean and orderly.
- Student must not smoke in the home without the permission of the host.

Students should supply their own personal toiletries: toothpaste, shampoo, and deodorant.

- Students must respect the rights, privacy, sexual orientation, and the religious and political beliefs of each of the members of the Homestay family.
- If coming home later than expected, or not coming home for dinner, students should call or text the Homestay host as soon as possible to let them know.
- Students must ask host's permission before bringing friends into the home, and will follow the rules of the household, especially in regards to entertaining boyfriends / girlfriends.
- Students must not lend money to, or borrow money from, Homestay hosts.
- Students must notify the host and the Homestay Coordinator if they are no longer attending their academic program.
- When moving out, students must leave their room in the condition it was found when they moved in, or a cleaning fee may be charged.
- Students enrolled in courses at the English Language Centre are given a Homestay orientation a few weeks after their arrival. Students attending regular U of M classes are provided with a Homestay orientation as scheduling permits.

## ARRIVAL

### PREPARING TO RECEIVE A STUDENT

The following is a basic checklist in preparation for your student:

- Check the student's arrival time and be sure to be at the airport, train/bus station in ample time to pick up your student.
- Bring a large sign with your student's name clearly printed on it so you can be found easily.
- Review any additional information that may have been provided to you in anticipation of the student's arrival: emergency contact phone numbers, program dates for your student's courses (*if available*), letters to the student regarding courses or Homestay.
- Provide your student with a card that has your name, address and phone number clearly printed, for the student to carry at all times.
- Complete and return the Homestay pledge and invoice for Homestay payment to the English Language Centre as soon as the student arrives, either by fax, regular mail or email.
- Be sure to show and explain safety routines in your home within the first 24 hours: fire alarms, escape routes, how to lock doors, open bedroom windows, turn off the stove, location of fire extinguisher, etc.
- Take your student on the bus to and from campus the first time. If this is not possible, drive the student to campus and show him/her where to catch the bus for the return trip. It is extremely important that the student understand and be confident about riding the bus: where to get on/off, transfers, etc. Several students have lost their way on their first trips alone.
- Make an appointment for your student to open up an account at a nearby bank (*See page 11*).
- Review the Homestay guidelines and the contents of this handbook. You may find it helpful to prepare a file for Homestay materials, as there will be arrival information, newsletters and orientation information emailed or mailed to you periodically.
- **The first week or two with a student is a critical time of getting to know one another and building trust. Some one-on-one time with the key family members is important.**



*Remember: Your student may have travelled a long way to reach Winnipeg, and may need several days to get over jet lag and to become acclimatized. The students are expected to take in a great amount of information when they first arrive, so don't be surprised if certain things need to be repeated several times.*

*Try to imagine yourself half way around the world, where nothing is familiar. Be patient with your student's attempts to adapt to a new culture, language, food, etc.*



### THINGS TO DO WITH YOUR STUDENT

Homestay hosts are not expected to be tour guides, however, students appreciate and benefit from participating in host activities. Here is a list of ideas that have been popular with students:

- Grocery shopping.
- Cooking/baking.
- Garage sales.
- Value Village, Salvation Army or similar (especially for winter clothes).
- Skating
- Picnic or BBQ in the park.
- Trip to the Forks, Assiniboine Zoo, Fort Whyte Centre, Museum, Art Gallery.
- Outdoor concerts.
- Plant flowers or a garden.
- Take the host pet for a walk.
- Ballet in the park.
- Trip to the beach or lake.
- Board games.
- Let your student do the talking on the phone when you order pizza.
- Sign-up for a class together, doing something neither of you have tried before (consult the City of Winnipeg Leisure Guide for ideas).
- Watch videos together and discuss.
- Read newspaper articles and discuss.
- Have student read to your children.
- Look at student or host photos together.
- Visit your friends and relatives.
- Take pictures of shared activities.
- Invite student's friends over for an occasion: Friday night, birthday, etc.
- Participate in and explain Canadian celebrations: Halloween, Thanksgiving, Canada Day, etc.
- Watch geese heading south in fall or returning in spring.

### ALARM SYSTEM

If your home has an alarm system, be sure your student understands how it works. Be patient as you explain how to use it, as your student may be nervous about it at first, and it may be necessary to explain this several times until your student is comfortable operating the system. Also, be sure to give your student instructions about how to react if the alarm goes off, accidentally or otherwise. You may need to have the student write the alarm code down, rather than expect that he/she can remember it.

## EMERGENCIES

**There is a dedicated Homestay cell phone for emergencies only. The number is 204-228-2280. This number is for telephone calls and voice messages only (no text messaging).**

**The cell phone is usually turned off during office hours. I would respectfully request that you do not call the cell phone for non-emergency matters, except concerning student arrivals (if a student was not on a flight, etc.)**

There are times when other English Language Centre staff will carry the cell phone, so any messages intended for the Homestay Coordinator only should be left at the Homestay office number 204-474-6809. If you are having difficulty reaching the Homestay Coordinator during office hours, you may call the reception desk at the English Language Centre at 204-474-9251.

In case you are ever worried about the whereabouts of your student for any reason, it would be good for you to know the student's cell phone number, the names and phone numbers, and name of the Homestay (*if applicable*) of a few good friends. This is information that the Homestay Coordinator would not routinely know.

Sometimes students lose track of time or may forget to inform you that they will be staying out later than usual, and do not realize that Homestay hosts may be concerned about whether they are lost, need help, etc. The student's orientation to your home should include how to reach each other in case of emergency, and what your expectations are concerning calling if late, leaving messages, etc.

For medical emergencies, please see the section entitled Health Insurance.

## PAYMENT OF HOMESTAY FEES

Homestay fees for the **first four (4)** months are collected by the University of Manitoba, and sent to the Homestay host on the Friday of the last week of the month. An example of 4 month payment period is August 26 — December 25.

**In the package mailed to your home, you will be provided with an invoice to complete and return to Homestay.** The invoice will indicate payment for four months of Homestay, however, you should keep in mind that ELC Homestay reserves the right to relocate a student in cases of incompatibility with the Homestay host. If this becomes necessary, the Homestay program will attempt to do this with consideration to all parties, however, depending on the individual circumstances, it may happen with little or no notice. In such case, the fees paid to the Homestay host will be adjusted and pro-rated to reflect the actual time the student is in your home.

As we do our best to match students and Homestay hosts according to interests and preferences, most placements work out very well, and a change is required in less than 5% of placements done.

## INCOME TAX

Homestay payments are intended to reimburse the hosts for the expenses of having a student in the home. It is the host's obligation to determine whether the host must report the income when filing tax returns.

*While awaiting payment for Homestay, we respectfully ask that you do not pressure your student to investigate if payment is being processed, nor deprive your student of sufficient food or anything else that is to be covered by the Homestay payment. While we understand that providing for the student before you receive payment may be a financial challenge for the host, the student has paid for four months in advance and has no control over the invoicing and payment process.*

*Hosts should be prepared to cover student costs the first month of the program.*

After the first four months, if the student decides to stay with the host, the student should begin paying the host on the fourth month anniversary of the move-in date. For example if the student moves in on September 2, the fourth month anniversary date will be January 2 and the student should pay the host on January 2, February 2, March 2, etc. until the student decides to move out. Whenever money exchanges hands, a written record should be kept to acknowledge the payment and should be signed by both parties.

Please note, that because students usually plan to arrive a few days before beginning their studies, the arrival date will likely not coincide with the beginning of a calendar month. If a student needs to stay for a few extra days after the four month anniversary move out date, they will need to pay you for those days. They can pay the daily rate which is the monthly fee divided by 30. Eg. \$750 divided by 30 = \$25 per day. If you ever have any questions about payment please don't hesitate to contact the Homestay Coordinator.

### PRIVATE ARRANGEMENT

After the first four months of homestay, students and hosts can decide to extend the student's stay in homestay. If the host and student continue following the rules and guidelines of the homestay program, the student will still be considered in the homestay program. If any rules are changed the host and the student will be considered to have a "private arrangement" and will no longer be part of the homestay program. It is not a problem to make a private arrangement, but it is important that the host make sure that the student understands the agreement and understands that it is a private arrangement. If the student does not want to be outside of the homestay program they should be informed that they can ask the program for a new placement for the next term.

Some of the things the host and student might decide to change:

- **Payment schedule** - students should be paying the host monthly after the first four months of homestay. If the student begins to pay the host four months in advance that is a private arrangement.
- **Payment amount**- if the monthly amount paid by the student changes in any way the student is no longer in the homestay program.

- **Living arrangements** – if the student decides to share a room with another student or moves to a room in the house that is not approved for the homestay program (Note: students should never stay in rooms that do not meet the fire code.)

**If you have any questions about private arrangements, please contact the Homestay Coordinator.**

### STUDENT VACATION

If the student is staying with you for the following term and wants to take a vacation for a period of time, you and the student should negotiate a fair rate for keeping the room for the student. This should be discussed in advance with the student, and you should both agree on the fee to be paid. It is acceptable to ask the student to pay for one month in advance before leaving, and the amount will be credited for the first month of Homestay upon the student's return to your home.

### HOST VACATION

Hosts will need to notify Homestay staff of the length and timing of their vacation. Hosts may take a short vacation during the term as long as they make adequate arrangements for the students in their home. Vacations may not be longer than two weeks and should not occur within the first month of hosting a new student. If the Host is leaving a friend or family member to check on the student, please get approval from the Homestay Coordinator.

If a student is under 18 years old, the student may not stay in the home alone while the host is away on vacation. Homestay staff will work with the host to provide adequate supervision for the underage student.

**Before a Host leaves for vacation, they are required to:**

- Ensure that the student is comfortable and capable of staying alone.
- Ensure that if another person is coming to stay in the house with the student, a Winnipeg Police Information Check for that person is acquired and submitted to the Homestay office
- Provide cooked food and/or money for food
- Provide an emergency contact for students in case there are any concerns.

**BANKING**

There is no bank on campus, but there are CIBC ATM machines available. Your student may want to consider opening an account at the CIBC nearest your home or near the campus, to avoid paying a fee each time the ATMs on campus are accessed. There are also CIBC ATMs available at all 7-11 stores - point these out to the student as part of your neighborhood orientation. Many students come to Canada with the funds for a few years of study, so it is very important that they get to the bank as soon as possible. Since it can take several days to get an appointment, you could book one on the student's behalf for one or two days after he/she arrives. The student should be advised not to keep large sums of money on their person or in their room. Also, the student should not borrow money from, or lend money to, members of the Homestay family.



**ACCOMMODATIONS**

**FOOD**

Most international students will find Canadian food very different from what they are accustomed to. Although you are not expected to change your diet to suit the student, please be sensitive to the challenges your student is facing in having to make drastic changes in his/her diet. It is a good idea to discuss with your student food likes/dislikes, and to take your student with you on a few grocery shopping trips so he/she can see what is available and suggest what they might like to try. Keep in mind that students are paying for their meals, and should be provided with food they enjoy eating, as well as with adequate amounts of food. If your student expresses an interest in cooking, encourage participation in meal preparation. Your student may even want to cook a dish for you if you offer to provide the necessary ingredients.

As dinner may be the only meal that you and your student share, please make every effort to be home to prepare and eat the evening meal together. Take the time each morning or evening to discuss plans so that your student knows what the arrangements are. Just as the students are asked to notify you in advance if not coming home in time for dinner, be sure to inform your student well in advance if you cannot be there for the evening meal, and be sure to have something prepared for the student to eat.

Make sure your student is aware of your evening mealtime. If the student arrives late, you are not expected to cook for the student when he/she arrives. Leave something for the student to reheat or that can be easily prepared. It is important to teach the student how to cook in your kitchen as they will sometimes need to prepare their own meals. Make sure they know how to operate all appliances safely, and explain clearly what your expectations are regarding kitchen use (for example, not cooking late at night, cleaning up, no hot pots directly on the countertops etc.).



Regarding breakfast and lunch, ask the student for input as to what they might like. Many are not used to having sandwiches, and it is important to offer some alternatives. Many hosts find it convenient to prepare extra food for the evening meal (rice, pasta, vegetables, etc.) that can be used for lunch the following day. Students are expected to prepare their own breakfast and prepare and pack their own lunch. If leftovers are available sometimes, the student should be aware that this may not always be the case, and be ready to prepare any food they may want to have for lunch.

Discuss with your student the best time for preparing lunch. For example, if mornings are busy with everyone in the household eating breakfast and hurrying to get out the door, suggest that lunch be packed the night before.

Let your student know what is available for snacks right after school or in the evenings. The student needs at least some - milk, juice, fruit, cookies, biscuits... that can meet hunger or perceived hunger needs. It is up to you to let the limits be known and to encourage them to buy what they need or want beyond that.

If you invite your student to a restaurant for the evening meal, you should clarify ahead of time who will pay for the meal. Most times, if the host invites the student, the host should pay for the meal. If you expect the student to pay for his/her

own meal, give an idea of what the menu is and how much it might cost. If the student decides not to go with you, you should provide the student with a meal to eat at home. If your student decides to go out with friends for a meal, you are not responsible for paying for that meal.

### PRACTICAL FOOD TIPS

Based on our experience, we know that food is often the number one challenge for both students and Homestay hosts. Students who rent a furnished room on their own and pay for their own groceries, typically pay about half of what is charged for Homestay. So, using that as a guide, you should expect to use approximately half of the Homestay fee for food. Newly arriving students are not aware of the cost of many things such as fresh fruits and vegetables, which they may have in abundance in their home countries. While it may require considerable time and effort, the following is an example of an exercise that may be beneficial in helping the student get adjusted:

- Sit down with your student and plan a week's menus, getting input from the student on likes, preferences, etc. This should include bagged lunches: available leftovers, sandwich meats, etc. Tell the student how much money will be allotted for a week's groceries.
- Make a grocery list of items needed.
- Take the student with you to the grocery store and have him/her help in selecting the items, show the student how to compare quality, quantities, prices, etc.
- Allow the student to review the grocery bill.
- Let the student know exactly how long the purchased groceries are intended to last.

Most international students are living away from home for the first time. Usually, they have not been involved with meal planning and preparation or grocery shopping, and are unaware of the time, effort and costs associated with food. While Homestay is often viewed by students as a way to

improve their English quickly, and help get adjusted to Canada, many students have also learned valuable life lessons and “survival skills” from their Homestay hosts as well.

There are many grocery stores in Winnipeg that stock items from a wide variety of countries. If your student is looking for a special food, see if you can help them find it.

The Homestay Program likes to use the Canada Food Guide as a standard for healthy eating both in regards to quantity and variety. The Canada Food Guide website is [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide)

### PHONE USE

Many students arrive with their own cell phone or purchase one very soon after arriving. If a student needs to use your home phone, however, it is best if the student uses a phone card for long-distance calls so that calls are not billed to your phone. Pre-paid phone cards are available at most convenience stores – assist your student with this initially or have a \$5 one available for your student to use for that first call home to parents just after they arrive. Look for cards that offer “no connection fee”. If you do allow your student to make long-distance calls without using a phone card, be sure to check with your phone service provider about any outstanding charges when your student moves out.

Discuss with your student about when, how often, and for how long it is appropriate to use the phone. Whether they have their own phone or use the home phone you may want to talk to them about quiet hours in the home when phone use might disturb others in the household. Students should be allowed reasonable access to the phone. If there is a significant time difference between Canada and your student’s home country, it might be better for your student to initiate calls late at night, rather than receiving in-coming calls that would disturb you.

If your home is not equipped with a landline and your student does not have a cell phone, a pre-paid cellphone must be provided in the home for emergency purposes. Pre-paid phones with one year expiry dates are best. Check local convenience stores for products and plans. It is not safe for students to be in the home with no access to a phone.

### BATHROOM USE

It is important to discuss proper bathroom etiquette with your student soon after he/she arrives. Inform your student what is an appropriate amount of time to spend in the shower and using the bathroom. Cultural norms regarding bathroom use vary widely. While it may be awkward to discuss personal hygiene and bathroom behaviour, it’s important to explain things such as: the shower curtain needs to be inside the tub when showering, and what can and cannot be flushed down the toilet. Female students should be given detailed instructions as to how to dispose of feminine hygiene products. Let your student know where you keep the bathroom cleaning supplies and how often these should be used. We suggest 10-15 minutes in the shower.

### LAUNDRY FACILITIES AND USE

Talk about how you want to handle laundry. A laundry hamper in the student’s room is often very convenient. The student is responsible for his/her own laundry so make sure he/she understands how to operate the machines: how much detergent to use in the washer, load size, how to use and clean the dryer. It can be helpful to post a simple list of instructions right on the appliances. You are responsible for supplying laundry detergent, and if you live in an apartment, you are required to pay for the student’s laundry, as this is a service that all Homestay students receive.

Some Homestay hosts offer to include the student’s clothes in the host laundry, however, this is not an expectation. Some students may feel awkward about including personal clothes items with the host’s laundry. Providing laundry bags that can be put directly into the washer and dryer is often a good way to avoid any feelings of embarrassment. Many students are in the habit of hand washing small items. If students would like to hand wash items, make sure you let them know where in your home it is appropriate to wash them and hang them to dry.

## INSURANCE

Please let the student know whether his/her belongings are covered by your insurance. Your student may have many valuable things (such as a lap-top computer, for example); if your insurance does not include the student's belongings, please help your student find out where they can purchase such insurance.

It is the responsibility of the Homestay host to be aware of any insurance implications of having a student in your home. Remember, the student is **NOT** considered to be a tenant, so keep this in mind when discussing your coverage with any insurance company. Some insurance companies require that you provide the name of the student to have him/her included in your coverage. Some insurance companies will include one student but not two, others will accept two but no more, etc. The responsibility of ensuring adequate insurance coverage for your home and property remains with you, the Homestay host.

## PROPERTY DAMAGE

Homestay hosts should expect normal "wear and tear" to occur while students are in the home. The occasional accident is bound to happen. If your student damages or breaks something while staying in your home, they may find it difficult to tell you about it. Please do your best not to react too strongly. If a student causes any major damage while staying in your home, and you are unable to negotiate with the student about covering any costs of repair or replacement, please inform the Homestay Coordinator. It is in these cases that it is very important to know that your home insurance includes damage caused by a Homestay student.

**Always make sure your student knows how all household appliances work, and instruct the student about being careful while cooking not to burn pots and pans or make burn marks on counter tops.**

If you are concerned about possible damages to your home and/or property caused by a student, we suggest that you arrange a damage deposit privately with your student. However, you should not collect a damage deposit from a student until after the initial four-month period of Homestay is complete. This is so that all students entering Homestay start with the same requirements, expectations, costs, etc. If you wish to request a damage deposit in the second term, the student must be informed at least one month prior of your intention to do so.

A damage deposit cannot be more than one-half of the first month's Homestay fee. The principal Homestay Host member holds this money until the tenant moves out. The agreement must be signed by both Homestay host and student, and both parties should have a copy. It must outline exactly what the damage deposit will be used for and when it will be returned to the student.

The following website includes an interest "calculator" that allows you to input the amount of the damage deposit, the dates that it is held, and it will calculate how much interest is owing. The website is: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/cgi-bin/cca/interest.pl> If you do not have access to the Internet, you may also call Residential Tenancies Branch at 945-2476 and ask them to calculate the interest for you.

We have drafted a sample damage deposit agreement (*see FORMS section*) using information from the Manitoba Residential Tenancies Branch, Policies & Procedures Guidebook. The Homestay office can also make copies of the agreement available for your use.

*Neither the English Language Centre nor The University of Manitoba is liable for telephone bills or damage to the home or property.*

## COMPUTER USE

It is the responsibility of the Homestay host to provide adequate high-speed, wi-fi internet access. This access is important for students to keep up with their school work, to stay in touch with family and friends, and for entertainment.

That said, one of the great benefits of Homestay is practicing English by getting to know the host and learning about Winnipeg and Canada, which is difficult if your student spends all his/her time playing or working on the computer! The following guidelines are provided to help students and hosts around this issue.

### GUIDELINES:

- All Homestay hosts should have high speed wireless internet in their home.
- Students are responsible for any hardware or software needed to allow their own computer to function with the connection provided.
- Homestay hosts are discouraged from allowing the student to use the host's home computer.
- The Internet connection is **NOT** intended to facilitate excessive downloading and playing of movies, games, music, etc. Therefore, Homestay hosts may enforce any reasonable house rules to ensure that the Internet connection is being used in a responsible manner. Student use of the internet connection should not adversely affect others using the same connection or exceed the host's monthly limit.
- We encourage hosts to help students engage with those in the home, rather than to spend all of their time in their room.

## ENTERTAINMENT

You are responsible for providing meals and accommodations, not for paying for your student's entertainment. If you are going out for the evening meal, or ordering in, generally, the student should not be expected to pay, as all meals are to be provided by the host (See section on Food). If your student decides to go out with friends, you are not responsible for paying for that meal.

If your student is invited to spend the day at the home of another Homestay host, or is invited on an outing with that host, please consider returning the favour. If you are unable to do so, it would be appropriate to send some food along with your student if he/she has been invited to go on a picnic or similar outing.

If you extend an invitation to the student to join you in an activity, clearly indicate if there is a cost involved. Writing it out on a piece of paper at the same time you talk about it may help avoid embarrassing confusion. However, there may be times when the cost is minimal or it seems appropriate to absorb it. **Note that in some cultures the expectations are very clear - "You invite, you pay." Subtle hints may not be understood, so clearly state the cost involved along with the invitation.**

The Homestay Program holds a social event each term. We have a holiday party in November and a barbeque in the summer. In winter we might go on a sleigh ride, bowling, curling or some other activity. We hope you will bring your student to these events. It's fun to get together with other students and hosts in the homestay program and experience some Canadian activities!

## PHYSICAL CONTACT

Social touching differs from one culture to another. Each culture has unspoken rules about what kind of touch is considered socially acceptable. Handshakes are usually acceptable almost everywhere, even between strangers (though often not between men and women in Middle Eastern cultures) but other types of contact are not. For example, putting an arm around someone, hugging, kissing on the cheek, patting on the shoulder or head, or touching a knee or other bodily part can be considered inappropriate and make a student feel very uncomfortable and even frightened.

For many people in Asia and other parts of the world such actions are interpreted as an offense or even a violation of one's private space. For this reason, we suggest that hosts avoid touching students in any way, at least until you know each other well enough to have had a discussion about your cultural differences and know the comfort level of your student. It is also important to be aware that sexual comments or jokes may be upsetting and offensive to people from another culture.

**For the safety and comfort of students and hosts, romantic relationships between students and any member of the host family are not permitted in homestay. If any should develop a student must be moved to another home.**

## ALCOHOL AND DRUGS ATTITUDES/POLICY IN HOMESTAY

Cannabis use is now legal in Manitoba. The government of Manitoba has adopted the following rules:

- Legal age of consumption is age 19.
- No smoking or vaping in public spaces.
- No growth for personal use.
- Small number of private provincially-licensed vendors.

In accordance with these rules the University of Manitoba has set up their own rules for the campus:

- No smoking or vaporizing will be permitted on campus.
- Growth of cannabis prohibited on campus.
- Sale of cannabis prohibited on campus.

Homestay hosts have always been in control of what substances (e.g. tobacco and alcohol) are allowed in and around their home. Cannabis falls into the same category. If hosts are uncomfortable with cannabis consumption (smoking or eating) it is within their rights to tell students it is not allowed in or around their home. Students under 19 will not be allowed to consume cannabis in any way.

As far as host consumption is concerned, we would expect that if cannabis is consumed it is done in a responsible manner that meets all the provincial rules. We would assume, as in the case of alcohol consumption, hosts will not become impaired and will not drive under the influence.

If a student is uncomfortable living in a homestay where cannabis is consumed, we will move the student.

Please feel free to communicate with us if you have questions or concerns.

## WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE

If you have any concerns about your student, call the Homestay Coordinator. It is best to address any matter early on, before a small problem turns into a big problem. Most issues can be worked out, and the Coordinator is available to help through difficult times.

Living inter-culturally has many challenges. Resources are available to both the students and the Homestay hosts. Students have access to a counsellor through the Student Counselling and Career Centre at the U of M.

If you believe that your student is demonstrating behaviour or attitudes that are more than just culturally inappropriate, please contact the Homestay Coordinator who will work with the student and Counselling Centre confidentially.

At no time should you feel unsafe or stuck with someone until a certain date. Our program will help you to resolve differences and this may mean that the student will leave your home with little notice (refer to section on Giving Notice Leaving Homestay).

**Hosts must contact the Homestay Coordinator if they have asked student to move out immediately.**

## STUDENTS UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE

Students who are under 18 years of age and living in a Homestay are subject to some additional rules until they reach the age of 18. Students who are under 18 must inform the Homestay Coordinator when moving out of homestay. The Homestay Coordinator will inform parents or the custodian of the move. Please read the following sections 1 to 4 carefully:

### 1) Curfew

As a regular member of the home, the student must respect the individual rules of the household. This includes the hours the student is able to spend outside the home. Factors determining this may include: school night vs. weekend; type of activity; and ages of the family members in the home. The Homestay Program suggests a 10:00 – 11:00 pm curfew from Sunday to Thursday and 12:00 – 1:00 am curfew on Fridays and Saturdays for students under 18 years of age. Special arrangements could be made for different circumstances. Students must stay overnight at their host's home or, with permission, at the home of another host in the program.

### 2) Sleepovers

Sleepovers are allowed for students under 18 at the discretion of the Homestay host, providing that the home where the sleepover will take place is also part of our Homestay program. There might be a case when the Homestay host may need to make alternative sleeping arrangements for their student. In such cases, approval must be granted by the Homestay Program and details on the student's whereabouts must be provided.

### 3) Alcohol and drugs

The legal age for drinking alcohol in Manitoba is 18 years. The legal age for cannabis consumption is 19 years. Drinking underage, excessive drinking or drunkenness, underage cannabis use, the use of illicit drugs and/or the use of false identification is strictly prohibited and may result in immediate removal from the Homestay Program with no refund of Homestay fees.

### 4) Travel

Students are encouraged to explore and experience Canadian culture through travel during their stay in Winnipeg. However, the Homestay Coordinator and biological parents should be informed about any travel outside of Manitoba.

### 5) Custodianship

Some students under 18 are asked to produce a custodianship paper in order to receive their visa. The Homestay Program will require a copy of the custodianship papers and will give a copy to the Homestay host to keep in case of medical or legal emergencies. Homestay hosts are not custodians of homestay students in our program.

## HEALTH INSURANCE

University of Manitoba degree students are presently enrolled in a plan called Blue Cross and Student Care. This may change in September, 2019 so students should visit <http://umanitoba.ca/international/healthinsurance> for updates.

English Language Centre (ELC) students enrolled in the Intensive Academic English Program (IAEP) will be required to enroll in the Guard.me Canada Health Care Plan. Students must have health care insurance by the time they travel to Canada.

ICM students will be automatically enrolled in a private plan similar to Manitoba Health. The fees will come out of their tuition and fee payments.

Additional information including “frequently asked questions” is available at:  
<http://umanitoba.ca/international/healthinsurance>.  
*This information will be updated regularly.*

## HEALTH PROBLEMS

If your student has to miss school, he/she should inform the instructor and ask about how to get any course work covered while away. If your student is seriously ill, assist him/her in getting to a clinic or local hospital emergency room. It is helpful to familiarize yourself ahead of time with clinics that accept your student's health insurance. There is also a doctor's office on campus at 104 University Centre.

## STUDENT SUPPORT AT THE U of M

Occasionally, homestay hosts may feel that the student in their home is struggling in some way and needs extra support from the university. It is important that hosts are aware of the supports that are available to all students. It is you who see the students every day and get to know them the best. You may be the first to be aware that they need some extra help. Hosts are always welcome to contact the Homestay Coordinator to discuss concerns, but you may also want to give the information below directly to your student.

Listed below are some of the departments at the University of Manitoba that your student may want to turn to for support:

**University Health Services** 204-474-8411  
104 University Centre

Call for an appointment or drop in at 8:30am for a limited number of same-day appointments to see a medical doctor.

**Student Counselling Centre** 204-474-8592  
474 University Centre

[umanitoba.ca/student/counselling](http://umanitoba.ca/student/counselling)  
Drop in appointments starting at 8:30am.  
Help with anxiety, stress, depression, adjustment, relationships, loss, self-esteem, family difficulties, trauma, procrastination, decision-making.

**Student Accessibility Services** 204-474-7423  
520 University Centre

[student\\_accessibility@umanitoba.ca](mailto:student_accessibility@umanitoba.ca)  
Support for students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, supportive programming.

**Student Advocacy** 204-474-7423  
520 University Centre

[student\\_advocacy@umanitoba.ca](mailto:student_advocacy@umanitoba.ca)  
Help for U of M degree students with appealing grades, deferring exams, voluntary withdrawal, problems with faculty or university systems.

**Academic Learning Centre**

201 Tier Building  
<http://umanitoba.ca/virtualllearningcommons/>  
Study skills, writing skills, handouts, workshops, online workshops, supplementary instruction.

*Employees of the University of Manitoba, legally cannot provide any information about a student without the student's written consent. As a Homestay host, you have the opportunity to enjoy a more informal relationship with your student. It is important to discuss with your student what to do in the event of a medical emergency. The student should provide you with the name and phone number of family in his/her home country. It would also be helpful for your student to give you the name and phone number of a friend in Winnipeg, who could call a family member and speak to them in their own language.*



### So what can a host do to help a student academically?

- Provide lots of opportunity to speak English together.
- Read the newspaper together or listen to the news and discuss world events.
- Play games that involve reading, speaking and listening.
- Watch TV or movies together and talk about them.
- Take students on outings and introduce new vocabulary.
- Help a student write an email or a letter to a friend or to fill out a form.
- Encourage your students to join clubs and groups like Toastmasters where they are challenged to write speeches and do presentations.
- Encourage your students to talk to their instructor(s) when they need help."

### ACADEMIC ATTENDANCE POLICY

All students who enroll in the Homestay Program are assumed to be full time students who attend classes regularly. Students may be asked to move out of Homestay if they:

- Choose to voluntarily withdraw (VW) from their program.
- Drop out of their program.
- Stop attending classes regularly.

### STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

Many hosts want to help students succeed at school, and sometimes offer to help them with their homework. While all kinds of general English practice is helpful and acceptable, there are restrictions as to which kind of help students can receive on their assignments without violating academic integrity rules. These rules are outlined on the University of Manitoba website under "Inappropriate Collaboration".

[http://umanitoba.ca/student/resource/student\\_advocacy/inappropriate\\_collaboration.html](http://umanitoba.ca/student/resource/student_advocacy/inappropriate_collaboration.html)

In short, students cannot use tutors (or anyone) to help them with their work. No one can edit or change a student's work or help a student to re-write a paper. Proof-reading or correcting a student's grammar on their work is not allowed. Student's work must be original and 100% a result of their efforts and theirs alone.

## LEAVING

### Student Giving Notice To Leave

If students leave the Homestay program during the first term, remaining homestay fee payments to hosts will be made at the discretion of the Homestay Coordinator. The Coordinator should always be informed if a student moves out during the first term. If a student plans to leave at the end of the term they should give the host one month's notice before they leave. As one month's notice can be a difficult concept to understand, it is the host's obligation to discuss this with the student in advance so the student will understand and communicate their intentions appropriately at least one month before the end of the term.

**During the second term of homestay, students are paying their host directly on a month-to-month basis.** They must give one full month (30 days) notice before moving out. Students are informed that if they do not give proper notice, they will be expected to pay the host the equivalent of one month of Homestay, or a pro-rated amount for anything less than the 30 days notice. Alternatively, the students may alter their move out date to fulfill the 30 days notice.

Please note that while the policy of giving one-month notice is included in the Homestay guidelines, as well as on the student application form, and is clearly indicated to the students, shared accommodation is not the same as renting an apartment. Homestay DOES NOT fall under the Residential Tenancies Act and the giving of one-month notice cannot be enforced by law. The Homestay Coordinator will endeavor to see that students observe the expectation to give at least one-month's notice. Please keep in mind, most students do respect this requirement.

A form entitled ***“Notice to Leave or Change Homestay”*** is included in both the Homestay Handbook and the Student Handbook (See page 25). This form must be filled out and signed by both the student and the Homestay and submitted to the Homestay Coordinator prior to a move. If a student asks you to accept less than 30 days notice, and you agree, please initial the form next to the date that the student plans to leave Homestay. It is very important for the Coordinator to be aware of all planned changes!

Also, regarding changes, please do not arrange to take in a student from another Homestay host, be it University of Manitoba Homestay, or any other program, without first consulting the Homestay Coordinator. There may be circumstances that you are unaware of, and it is very important for the Coordinator to know if changes are being considered.

The University of Manitoba Homestay Program reserves the right to relocate a student in cases of incompatibility or any other serious problem. This is very rare, as most Homestay placements work out very well. If this becomes necessary, it will be done with consideration of all parties to the best of our abilities, however, it may happen with little or no notice.

Just as we ask students to give proper notice, we also ask our **Homestay hosts to give one month (30 days) notice** if they wish the student to leave. Also, please inform the Coordinator, and your student if your home is unavailable beyond the initial term of study.

It is important for you to understand that international students are trying to cope with cultural values that may be unfamiliar or feel uncomfortable. Giving notice to leave a home may be viewed as giving “bad news”. A student may hesitate in giving this vital piece of information. Be sensitive to your student's feelings and help to ease the awkwardness of the situation.

Students leave Homestay for a variety of reasons: moving into residence, moving into an apartment to be on their own or with friends, studying at another institution, or leaving the city. It is important to reassure the student that the decision to leave Homestay will not be taken as a personal rejection of, or insult to, the Homestay host. It can be helpful to discuss this openly after the initial period of adjustment when everyone is feeling comfortable communicating with each other. Many Homestay students maintain contact with their former Homestay hosts, and periodically visit for dinner or other special occasions. It will be a great relief to the student, and avoid strain and tension for everyone during the final month, if the atmosphere has been one of open and honest communication from the very start.

## PREPARING TO SAY GOOD-BYE

Just as you help your students arrive and adapt to living in your home and in Canada, it is important that they be helped with their departure. An end to any Homestay experience can bring about a wide variety of conflicting emotions. If your student is staying in Winnipeg and moving out to be with friends or on his/her own, the necessary adjustments may be minimal. Many hosts continue to invite former students to their homes for dinners or special occasions.

Students preparing to return to their home countries often experience emotions ranging from overwhelming feelings of sadness and loss in leaving new friends and family, to hope and excitement in anticipation of going home. Assure them that this is normal and that many students experience reverse culture shock once they arrive home. They have gained a new perspective on life, which will influence how they formerly felt about their home culture and how they previously interacted with friends and family. Students should be encouraged to talk about their feelings.

Homestay hosts can ease this transition by planning goodbyes so that the Homestay experience ends on a positive note. Assure your student that you will maintain contact so that your student won't suddenly feel disconnected from his/her new host and language.

Also, help your students with some of the practical things that need to be taken care of. They may need to cancel services such as their cell phone and fill out a change of address form at the Post Office. Check with the phone company to make sure there are no outstanding charges. Bank accounts should be closed, insurance policies cancelled, and any deposits owed them should be collected.

They may want to ship some things home in advance to avoid having to carry everything on the plane. Remind them to return library books, etc.

Collect your house keys and any other items that you may have lent to your student. Also, be sure to get a forwarding address for any mail that might arrive after departure.

Discuss the student's plans for moving. Make arrangements for helping the student move their belongings to the new home or if your student is departing from the airport, bus or train depot, make arrangements for transportation if you are unable to take the student yourself.

At the end of a term of study, or at the end of the Homestay period, students are asked to complete a Homestay Host Evaluation which is returned to the Homestay Coordinator. This form provides valuable feedback to determine what type of student fits best with the host, and to know if there are any changes that need to be made. The evaluation form is confidential and is not shown to the Homestay host. If there are any areas of concern identified, you will be contacted by the Homestay Coordinator. Likewise, Homestay hosts are also asked to provide an evaluation on the Homestay experience. Your comments and feedback are greatly appreciated and will be kept confidential.



## APPENDIXES

### RESOURCES

There are many resources available to you as a Homestay host. The Homestay Coordinator is available to answer questions and provide you with information to assist you and help make the Homestay experience positive and rewarding for both hosts and students. There are publications that are made available to Homestay hosts and students as well as information that you will receive prior to receiving a student in your home. You may find it useful to set up a file to gather all information relevant to Homestay that you can refer to whenever the need arises. This is also a good place to record highlights and special moments shared with your student(s).

### PRINTED MATERIAL

- **Handbook for Homestay Hosts**, and the corresponding **Handbook for Homestay Students**, available from the Homestay Coordinator.
- **The Essential Guide for Homestay Students in North America** by Harvey Schachter, published by ICI Communications Canada. This guide is also available in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese and Spanish. A copy of the guide is provided to all hosts accepted into the program.

### WEBSITES

- **Homestay Program - English Language Centre.** Information about the program as well on-line application forms for both hosts and students interested in Homestay: [www.umanitoba.ca/homestay](http://www.umanitoba.ca/homestay)
- **The University of Manitoba:** [www.umanitoba.ca](http://www.umanitoba.ca)
- **The English Language Centre (ELC) :** [www.umanitoba.ca/elc](http://www.umanitoba.ca/elc)
- **The International Centre for Students (ICS) at the University of Manitoba.** This site is designed to assist international U of M students with pre-arrival information as well as provide ongoing information regarding services and programs available to them at the U of M. As a Homestay host, you may also wish to subscribe to their newsletter to be aware of activities that you could encourage your student to participate in. For example, ICS organizes the Volunteer English Practice Program (VEPP) designed to help international students, scholars and spouses with conversation, reading and pronunciation in one-on-one or small group settings. It is also an informal, friendly support for those adjusting to Canadian culture. You will also find information on how you can be a volunteer for VEPP and other programs offered at the Centre.

## NOTICE TO LEAVE OR CHANGE HOMESTAY

**To: Students and Homestay Hosts**  
**From: Ann Friesen- Homestay Coordinator**  
**Re: Homestay Policies**

It is important that both students in Homestay and the Homestay hosts understand the policy regarding leaving Homestay.

Students who choose Homestay are expected to remain in Homestay for at least **4 months** to benefit fully from the Homestay experience.

**Students who choose to leave Homestay before the first term (4 months) is complete, will not receive any refund for the Homestay fees paid.**

**Remember that Homestay reserves the right to relocate a student to another Homestay due to incompatibility.**

If, and when, a student decides to leave Homestay, the following procedure must be followed:

1. The student must inform both the Homestay Coordinator, and the Homestay host of their decision at **least one (1) month** in advance of leaving.
2. The student must fill out the Notice To Leave or Change Homestay form, and return it to the Homestay Coordinator immediately so that the coordinator can keep a record of the changes in Homestay placements.

This procedure must be followed so that the Homestay host receives proper notice and so that the coordinator is aware of the student's decision to leave Homestay.

If there are any questions about this procedure, please contact the Homestay Coordinator at 204-474-6809.

### NOTICE TO LEAVE CHANGE HOMESTAY

*(Please return this form to the Homestay Coordinator as soon as it has been completed.)*

Student's name *(please print)*: \_

Homestay Host name *(please print)*: \_

Date that student plans to leave Homestay: \_

Student's signature: \_

Homestay Host's signature: \_

**(Note to Homestay host, if you consent to less than a one (1) month notice, please initial next to the planned move out date.)**

Date: \_

**DAMAGE DEPOSIT AGREEMENT**

*(Adapted from the Residential Tenancies Branch, Policy & Procedures Guidebook)*

No damage deposit will be collected until after the initial 4-month period of Homestay. A damage deposit cannot be more than one-half of one month’s payment. The Homestay Host holds this money until the student moves out. The host may make a claim for the security deposit if the student:

- does not pay the month fees
- leaves without sufficient notice
- causes damage beyond normal “wear and tear”
- does not leave room in same condition (clean) as upon move-in
- leaves unpaid phone/internet bills

Name of Host that will hold the deposit: \_

Name of Student \_

Amount of damage deposit collected: \$ \_

Date deposit paid by student: \_

Both parties agree to abide by the terms of this agreement. Both host and student should retain a copy of this agreement.

Host Signature

Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

After the student has moved out, the damage deposit will be returned to the student, plus interest, less any claims, within two weeks of the student moving out.

Date student moved out: \_

Interest owing on damage deposit paid: \$ \_

Any claims made against the damage deposit (provide receipts): \$ \_

Amount returned to student: \$ \_

Date: \_

Host Signature

Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**\*PLEASE NOTE THIS AGREEMENT IS BETWEEN THE HOST AND THE STUDENT AND DOES NOT INVOLVE THE HOMESTAY PROGRAM.**