

Staying in a homestay with a Canadian family is an excellent way to improve your English as well as to learn about another culture. See below for more information on what Homestay is like.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Vancouver is a very multi-cultural city and our host families come from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Your hosts should always use English around you. VGC does not move students based on requests regarding ethnicity.
- 3 meals a day = breakfast, lunch and dinner. 2 meals a day = breakfast and dinner only.
- **Breakfast:** This is usually self-serve and consists of toast and/or cereal and coffee and/or tea.
- **Lunch:** Your host family may pack your lunch or ask you to do it yourself. Lunch is usually a sandwich or leftovers plus a snack.
- **Dinner:** This is normally the largest meal of the day and should be eaten together with the host family unless the student is late coming home.
- Students cannot use the kitchen unless given permission by their host family. Food will be different to what you are used to so it is important to be open to trying new things.
- Your homestay will be in Zone 1 or 2 and is generally 35 – 55 minutes from school by public transport. Your host family will explain how to get to school but they are not responsible for driving you.
- Your bedroom will include: Bed (with linens), desk, chair, wardrobe/dresser, a window. Your bedroom may be at the basement level or above ground.
- Students can generally do laundry once a week either independently or their host family will do it for them.
- Students are usually allowed to shower once a day.
- There is a curfew for all minor students.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Communicate with your family if you have any worries or concerns. If you're still having difficulties talk to the Homestay Department.
- Help keep the homestay clean: Clean your room regularly, tidy up after yourself, and wash your dishes after dinner.
- Lock the door when entering and exiting the homestay.
- Ask your family to explain their house rules when you arrive and make sure you follow them.
- Always ask permission if inviting guests to your homestay. Guests cannot stay over night.
- You may be sharing a homestay with other international students and family members so be respectful of them at all times.
- See the Homestay Coordinator as soon as possible regarding cancellation and extension requests. Late requests may affect your refund or your ability to continue staying with the same family.



VGC Homestay: Policies and Guidelines

POLICIES:

1. Homestay Allocation

In order to receive a family profile, students must provide the following:

- Send VGC a signed copy of the Accommodation Contract that states the student has read and understood this document.
- Payment for the homestay placement fee, the full homestay period, and airport pick-up and drop-off (if applicable).
- Flight details.
- Students under the age of 19 must send VGC written permission from the parents if they do not want airport pick-up or drop-off.

Please note: Family profiles are not sent until 2 weeks before the students' arrival.

2. Refund and Cancellation Policy

- For cancellation and refund requests before the commencement of homestay:
 - If a written cancellation notice is given to VGC four (4) weeks or more before the start date of homestay, all homestay fees will be refunded including the homestay placement fee.
 - If a written cancellation notice is given to VGC less than four (4) weeks before the start date of homestay, all homestay fees will be refunded except for the homestay placement fee.
 - Exception to the items above: If a student has provided flight details within 4 weeks of their arrival date and they cancel, VGC will charge the placement fee and 2 weeks of homestay.
 - If a student receives a visa refusal less than four (4) weeks before the start of homestay, all homestay fees will be refunded including the homestay placement fee.
- For cancellation and refund requests after commencement of homestay, no refund will be given for the first four (4) weeks of homestay. However, if the host family has failed to meet the basic homestay requirements, students will be moved to another homestay as soon as possible at no additional charge.
- For cancellation and refund requests after the first four (4) weeks of homestay, students must do the following:
 - Students have to finish their homestay the same day of the week that they started their homestay. For example, if a student arrives on a Saturday, they must finish their homestay on a Saturday.
 - A minimum of two (2) weeks (from the date the homestay started) written notice to VGC must be given if a student wishes to cancel their homestay.
 - Students must read, sign and hand in the cancellation form to the homestay department in order to complete the cancellation process.
- For cancellation and refund requests for airport pick-up and drop-off:
 - Students have to give written notice of cancellation two (2) business days before the date of the pick-up or drop-off in order to receive a full refund.
 - If a student misses a flight or if the flight is delayed, it is their responsibility to contact the emergency number. If the student fails to do so, they will be charged for another airport pick-up or drop-off.

Notes:

- Refunds will be handled within 30 days of receiving the written cancellation notice.
- No refund will be granted to students who are dismissed from homestay due to a breach of law, policy or regulation as determined by the government of Canada or the police.
- Minor student cannot cancel homestay. If they are unhappy with their homestay, they should talk to the Homestay Department in order to reach a satisfactory solution.

3. Requests to move

- If a student requests to move homestays due to a non-emergency reason, they need to provide 2 weeks' notice and pay another placement fee. VGC cannot guarantee that the new family will match the student's preferences exactly.

4. Extension Policy

1. Extension Requests:

- If students want to extend their stay with the same family, they should provide written notice as soon as possible.
- If a student requests to extend their homestay after their first 2 weeks of homestay, they may be charged another placement fee.
- If students cannot extend with the same family and still want to extend, they will have to pay another placement fee.
- Due to the high volume of students in June, July and August, students should plan to pay for the entire time they wish to stay in a homestay as they risk not being able to extend due to the limited availability of homestays.

2. Extension Payments:

- Students must pay for their extensions 2 weeks before their current homestay end date. If they do not, they risk not being able to extend with their family.

5. Damages

- If students cause damage to any property in the homestay, they will have to pay for the replacement and/or repair costs directly to the family.

GUIDELINES:

1. The Canadian Family

- Families have their own house rules and as a new member of the family, students will be expected to follow them. See below for a list of rules that most families will have:
 - Specific meal times. Students should always inform the family if they are going to be away for a meal. Missed meals will not be compensated.
 - It is the student's responsibility to clean up after eating, after using the bathroom/shower and to keep the bedroom tidy at all times. It is not the responsibility of the homestay family.
 - Respect the homestay family and other international students staying in the house. Respect their privacy.
 - Students should always ask the family for permission if they want to invite a friend over.
 - No sleepovers.
 - Many families in Canada do not wear shoes in the house.
 - Always lock the door when entering and exiting the home.
 - Drugs, drunkenness and unauthorized overnight guests are not allowed. Students who violate these rules will be evicted from the home and will not be eligible for a refund.
 - If students are under the age of 19, there is a curfew.

If these rules are continually broken, it is a sign of disrespect to the family and students may, after warnings, be asked to leave the homestay family. Students may not be eligible for a refund depending on how serious the situation is.

2. Your Homestay

- **The bedroom:** The bedroom will contain a bed with linens, a desk or table with a chair, a lamp, and a dresser or dresser combined with a closet. It will be located either in the basement or above ground. Students are responsible for keeping their own room tidy and clean.
- **The bathroom and shower:** Most homestays have a one (1) shower a day rule. Students need to bring their own soap, shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste and towel. Students are asked to always clean up after themselves.
- **Laundry:** Laundry is usually done once a week. The family may do the laundry or they will ask the students to do it themselves.
- **Telephone:** Students should only make local calls for a maximum of 10 minutes. Friends cannot call after 9:30 P.M. To make a long-distance call, students should ask their family first and then either call collect or purchase a calling card.
- **Computers/Internet:** Downloading any material onto the host family's computer (example: music or movies) is not allowed. There will be rules on internet and computer usage.
- **Kitchen use:** For safety and insurance reasons, students are not allowed to cook. Some families will permit students to use the kitchen to prepare cold lunches, however, families are not obligated to allow this.

3. Meals

- Students can pay for 2 meals a day (breakfast and dinner) or 3 meals a day (breakfast, lunch and dinner).
- The food provided may be different than what students are used to. Students are asked to be open to new food options. Students cannot move homestay families based solely on not liking the food. If they are having problems with flavours or spices of food, they should talk to the family to resolve any concerns.

4. Location

- Most homestays are located in Zone 1 and Zone 2 areas around Metro Vancouver. There are no homestays in the downtown area. In order to get to school, students will take public transportation.
- Most families live between 40 – 55 minutes from the school.
- The family is not responsible for driving students to school.

5. Concerns/Questions:

- If a problem/issue/miscommunication arises between students and the host family, they should try to speak with the family directly. If that doesn't work students can notify the Homestay Coordinator/ emergency contact.
- If the situation cannot be corrected (for example, the student is allergic to their pet), students will be placed with another host family at no additional cost.
- If the problem is not an emergency, VGC has the right to determine how serious the situation is and if the student still wants to move families, they may be asked to pay the homestay transfer fee.

