



Homestay Handbook for Students



Welcome to New Zealand!

This handbook will help you understand what you can expect and what is expected of you during your homestay experience. If you have any questions or concerns please talk to the NZLC Student Services Department.

Staying with a friendly and caring host family is one of the best ways to experience the Kiwi culture and at the same time practise your English outside the classroom. You will have an unforgettable time with your Kiwi family.

It is very important for us and your host family to know if you have any special requests or needs so we can make your stay as comfortable as possible.

Your Room

In your room, you will have a bed, desk, lamp and closet. Twin share options are also available on request.

Meals Options

- **Half Board includes:** Breakfast and dinner during weekdays and 3 meals on weekends.
- **Full Board includes:** Includes 3 meals a day including a packed lunch during weekdays.

Average Travel Time to School and cost

- Adult: 45 minutes – 75 minutes
- Young Learner: 45 – 60 minutes
- Approximately \$40-\$50 per week for public transport

The Homestay Family Experience

Communication

During your stay, there will probably be times when living in a foreign country and using a different language will be challenging. Your host family might have difficulty understanding you, just as you might have difficulty understanding them. Try to be patient and find other ways to communicate. For example, writing things down or using hand gestures. Your host family will help you to learn English so please talk to them as much as you can!

Respecting each other

It is important that you think of your homestay house as your home. But remember that there are other people in the house so please be considerate when using the facilities.

Helping around the house

New Zealanders say “please” and “thank you” a lot and your host family will like it if you do too. They will also like it if you talk to them as much as you can and offer to help around the house.

Shortening your Homestay

If you decide to leave your host family earlier than planned, you must give **two weeks’ notice**. You will need to tell both your host family and the NZLC Student Services Department. If you do not give two weeks’ notice then you may still need to pay for up to two weeks’ extra homestay fee. The remaining amount will be refunded to you after you have left your host family.

You must also let the NZLC Student Services staff know your **new address** and **mobile number**.

Changing your Homestay

You may request to change your homestay under certain circumstances. If you wish to change your homestay, please follow this procedure:

1. Talk to the NZLC Student Services Department and explain the reason why you would like to change your homestay.
2. The Student Services team will help you resolve any issues you are experiencing and help you feel more comfortable.
3. If it is agreed to change your homestay, the current family will be advised and a new family will be arranged after payment of the second placement fee. The usual two weeks' notice may or may not be required, depending on the case.

Extending your Homestay

To extend your homestay, you must advise NZLC two (2) weeks in advance. There is to be no direct arrangements made with your host family. All arrangements are to be made with and through NZLC.

Taking a Holiday

If you want to take a holiday from your homestay for 14 nights or longer and still keep your room, you will need to pay a room holding fee (50% of the usual homestay rate). You need send written notification to NZLC Student Services **two weeks** in advance.

General Rules & Guidelines

Your family will probably have some "House Rules" which are usually polite things that you should do during your stay. Here are some hints and common house rules to help make your stay more enjoyable:

- Please keep your **bedroom clean** and tidy, make your bed and open your curtains each morning. Turn off the lights and heater before you leave for school.
- Please **offer to help** around the house. For example: Take your plate away after eating, help in the kitchen (preparing a meal or washing up) or stack the dishwasher.
- Please **do NOT smoke inside the house**. If you are a smoker, you will have to **smoke outside** the house.
- If you would like a friend to visit or you would like to stay over at a friend's house, you must ask your family in advance.
- **Home Phone** - ask permission before using the homestay landline phone to make overseas calls and calls to mobile phones. Calls to mobile phones cost a lot more than landline calls. Keep your phone calls short.
- **Internet** - some host families have limited internet usage, so please ask your family before using the internet. It is illegal to download movies, songs, and other copyrighted material.

Meal Times

- Typical NZ meals include cereal, toast with fruit or yoghurt for breakfast, sandwiches for lunch and meat and vegetables for dinner. It is Ok to season with salt, pepper or ketchup to your liking at the table
- Tell your host your preference on the portion size (prefer small or large meal)
- Help your homestay family by setting the table, doing the dishes etc.
- Tell your family if you find New Zealand food difficult to eat. They can help you buy some additional food items to add to your meals
- All food and drink should be eaten at the kitchen table. No food/drinks should be consumed in bedrooms

- The homestay family will cook food they normally eat and are not required to cook special meals (unless arranged prior)
- If there is any food/drink you wish to eat/drink that your host family does not provide, then you should purchase it yourself. Ask your host family for the location of the nearest supermarket/Asian grocery store, or you can accompany them on their next shopping trip
- Do not bring cell phones or any devices to the table during meal times
- Do not start eating your food at the table until everyone has got their food and are ready to start eating
- When you finish eating your meal, put your knife and fork together to indicate that you have finished. You should wait until others have finished or the host family says that you can leave the table

Weekday Lunches

Please remember that weekday lunches are not included in your homestay fee if you booked “Half Board”. You can ask the NZLC Accommodation Department to check whether you have requested half board or full board. You are welcome to purchase your own lunch which you can heat in the microwaves at NZLC. Host families may allow students to use their kitchen to make simple lunches such as sandwiches. If you wish to use the homestay kitchen to prepare lunch, please seek prior approval of the family and remember to clean up afterwards.

Eating out or staying overnight

It is important to tell your homestay family any of the following:

- **You are going to be home late** for dinner – please text or phone your host family as least 2 hours before to let them know
- You are eating out and/or staying overnight
- You are spending the night at a friend’s house; provide the address and telephone number
- You are planning to go on a trip; note that no discount on homestay fee is provided
- **Students under 18 years old must have written consent from NZLC to stay out late**

Laundry (washing your clothes)

- Your host family will probably do your laundry together with theirs
- Check with your host family if you prefer to do your laundry by yourself and ask how to do it
- It is common to wash clothes once or twice a week, not daily
- Make sure to place your dirty laundry in the correct place
- During wintertime in New Zealand, clothes take a long time to dry. Only undergarments and T-shirts should be washed frequently
- **Please ask your host family where to hang your wet clothes.** Do not hang your wet laundry in your bedroom or wardrobe

Using the bathroom and shower

- Most New Zealand houses have one small Hot Water Cylinder for storing hot water. Excessive usage of hot water can result in hot water running out quickly
- **Take a quick shower for maximum 5 -10 minutes.** Taking a bath is usually not permitted
- Check with your host family for the best time to take a shower
- When using the toilet please sit on the toilet, do not stand or squat on it. Toilet paper goes into the toilet, not in the bin, but no other objects other than paper should go down the toilet. Put the toilet seat down after use
- **Bring your own toiletries** (soap, shampoo and conditioner). The host family is not expected to provide these items

Keeping safe!

- Heaters, power points, lights and electric blankets need to be **turned off** when you leave the house
- Check with your host family if it is OK to leave heaters on at night in your bedroom
- NZ's electricity is **240 volts** so check carefully before plugging in any appliances you have brought from your country
- Remember to close any windows, lock up the house and turn on the alarm (if applicable) when you leave the home. If you are given keys or an alarm code, **keep them safe** and do not share them with anyone
- Talk with your family about an **Emergency Plan** and what happens in the case of evacuation, earthquakes, tsunami, floods etc.
- Please, tell your host family if you find anything **broken** in your room or if you **damage** anything yourself. Don't keep quiet or try to hide it, or your host family may be unhappy when they find out
- **Give your phone number to your host family** when you arrive so that they can call you in an emergency. If you don't have a mobile phone, you can buy a cheap one while you are in New Zealand.

NZLC Contact Numbers

NZLC Auckland school phone: 09 303 1962

If you need to contact the school during school hours or speak to the Student Services Department, please call reception. School hours are Monday – Friday 8.00am – 4:30pm.

Or email studentservices@nzlc.ac.nz.

For After-hours contacts for urgent matters: **021 180 6300**