

Homestay Guidelines for Overseas Students

- ❖ Overseas Students of the German International School Sydney (GISS) usually live with Australian/German homestay families. All are selected to provide good quality, safe accommodation for our students and offer an environment where students can live, relax and study in comfort and security. Homestay may be German/Australian families, couples or single people and are matched with suitable students according to their needs. The families should make the student feel welcome and part of their greater household and support them with their day-to-day problems. The host family plays a vital role in the successful stay of the student and should provide a caring, comfortable and healthy environment, which supports the student's academic progress and social welfare.
- ❖ All international students under the age of 18, who are not residing in Australia with a parent, or legal custodian, must have a guardian. In most instances the homestay family will also be the guardian of the student (see Guardianship Consent Form). In other cases the overseas student counselor will act as the guardian of the overseas student.
- ❖ GISS employs an overseas student counselor who supports the students with their transition into their new environment. Overseas counselor and international student are already in contact before the arrival of the student.
- ❖ Students should be also aware that every home is different and that the homestay family might not provide **all** the comforts of the home to which they are accustomed. A homestay family will provide the students with following basic amenities: a private room, which meets safety, cleanliness, and privacy considerations, a bed, desk with study lamp, bedroom and bathroom linens, closet, dresser and mirror optional, and a key to the house. Private bathroom is preferred but not required.
- ❖ Host families will help students by establishing an open line of communication and by having an open mind to cultural differences and practices.
- ❖ Students are advised that they could be confronted with values and customs which are different to their own. They have to come to terms with these differences whilst missing the support of their family and friends. Try to avoid constant comparisons between your homestay and your own family and remind yourself to be open-minded.
- ❖ Be prepared for a quite common initial cultural shock and the experience of homesickness: missing family, friends, food and familiar places.
- ❖ If you are experiencing any kind of problems, please contact your overseas counselor. Calling home to speak with your parents about a problem is fine, but not always advisable. The reason for this is that it causes unnecessary anxiety for parents and the problems you are experiencing could perhaps be solved more rapidly if you simply talk to the overseas counselor. Homesickness usually becomes worse with frequent contact to home.
- ❖ Australia is a multicultural country and the majority of Australian families have children and pets. Australian families often live in the suburbs, which means that family members must use transport to get to work and places of study each day. It is most unusual for any Australian to walk to work or the place where they are studying.

- ❖ Most of our homestay families have been chosen because they do not live too far away from GISS. However we cannot guarantee this and in many cases, public transport is the only option. It is not uncommon to take public transport from the homestay family's home to class every day.
- ❖ Some homestay families have pets. Most dogs are kept in the yard area and cats tend to be kept outdoors as well.
- ❖ The safety and comfort level in each place is taken into account and used to match a homestay family with the student. GISS insists that the homestay family will fill out a Working With Children Check Form. You will be given a house key and must look up upon leaving the home, including closing and locking the windows in your room.
- ❖ Remember to leave furniture and fittings the same as how they were found. Students, who want to move things or redecorate, should communicate with their homestay parents first.
- ❖ When living in a homestay family please be careful not to waste water or have long showers. Water restrictions are often in place, especially over the summer months.
- ❖ In some families the use of the telephone/internet is not included in the accommodation fee. Please talk to the homestay family regarding use of telephone and internet access. Students should know their telephone etiquette, asking family and friends not to ring before 7.30am or after 9.30pm and avoiding ringing friends late at night. Students should try not to talk on the phone for over 30 minutes, as a family member might be waiting for a call. Finally, GISS has a computer lab for students to use the Internet, but most students bring their own laptops.
- ❖ Check with the homestay family before bringing friends to visit, especially if the invitation includes meals or overnight stay. Many families have individual house rules. These house rules are usually known before the arrival of the overseas students, agreed upon and signed by all parties. Not sure about something? Just ask.
- ❖ Homestay families usually offer breakfast, dinner and the filling of the lunchbox 5 days/week and 3 meals per day on the weekend. Be open-minded to try new food. If you won't be home for a meal, please advise the homestay family in advance.
- ❖ If you are going out or coming home late, let the homestay family know. Try to keep your room tidy and offer to help around the house with chores such as setting the table and loading the dishwasher. Cooperation and communication will ensure a student enjoys the homestay accommodation. Sometimes the most polite guests can offend a family because they have not learnt the appropriate things to do and say. Australians always say please and thank you, they usually do not ask intrusive questions.
- ❖ Most homestay families prefer to do your laundry. If students are responsible for their own laundry and ironing, check with your homestay parents to find out how to use the washing machine and dryer properly.

- ❖ Unless otherwise agreed between the homestay family and the student, you should assume that you are living in a smoke free environment. If you smoke, always smoke outside unless the family has given you permission to smoke indoors. Be sure to extinguish cigarettes properly and never just throw your cigarette butt on the ground and leave it there.
- ❖ Students must not travel without adult supervision. Overseas students may travel with their homestay families, their visiting parents or with a youth travel organisation.
- ❖ Usually the homestay family will pick you up from the airport unless otherwise organized.
- ❖ Have a great start at GISS and enjoy your stay in Sydney!!!

I have read and understood all information contained in the Homestay Guidelines for Overseas Students.

Signature Overseas Student

Date

Signature Parent

Date