

## Frequently Asked Questions for Hosts

### THE HOMESTAY PROCESS

#### **What is Homestay?**

Homestay is a cultural exchange between a local individual or family (called a host) and a visiting international student. A homestay allows students the opportunity to stay in a warm, welcoming Australian household, rather than in an impersonal apartment, dorm or hotel.

#### **Who can Host and what is required?**

Traditional families, non-traditional families, single people, any person or group who is willing to share daily life with an international student can be a host. As an ASCI homestay host you must:

- Make yourself and your home available to your student. Our hosts must be able to provide a clean, comfortable and private bedroom for students.
- Hosts must speak clear and correct English in the home.
- Help your student settle into a comfortable, safe home and help them to learn. You must be willing to make them feel at home with conversation, support, inclusion in family activities and personal warmth. Ideally, you will have a sincere interest in other cultures and a desire to connect with new people from around the world.
- Provide healthy food for your student.
- Show your student around the community to assist them in becoming familiar with the local area and customs.
- Help your student to access or organise important services e.g. setting up an Australian bank account and obtain an Australian mobile phone number plus assisting your student to seek medical or dental attention as necessary.
- Maintain valid clearances. To participate in the AHN homestay program, all hosts and permanent residents over the age of 18 are required to obtain the relevant Working with Children Check and National Police Check and ensure these remain valid.

#### **What will hosting be like?**

Hosting is different for each family and we find that what you put in you will get back two-fold! A lot of our families experience lifelong friendships with their students and see them as a son or daughter.

Most of our students have travelled a long way for the opportunity to study in Australia. An Australian education, strong English language skills and knowledge of western culture may set the student up for a brighter future at home. Student will often be very focused in their studies and school activities. They will want to join you at mealtimes and for family activities and outings.

#### **How long do students stay?**

Students will stay until they have completed their Year 12 high school studies at one of our Anglican Schools. This time frame will vary depending upon their starting year of study upon arrival.

#### **Where do the students come from?**

Our students come from all over the world however, the majority of our students are currently from China.

### **What areas do you need hosts in?**

Hosts must live within 50 minutes (via public transport) or less to their school.

We are looking for hosts that are located close to our 11 schools in the following areas:

- ASCI Language School- **Perth CBD**
- John Wollaston Anglican Community School- **Camillo**
- St Mark's Anglican Community School- **Hillarys**
- Swan Valley Anglican Community School- **Aveley**
- St George's Anglican Community School- **Perth CBD**
- Georgiana Molloy Anglican School- **Busselton**
- Peter Carnley Anglican Community School- **Wellard**
- John Septimus Roe Anglican Community School- **Mirrabooka**
- St James' Anglican School- **Alkimos**
- Peter Moyes Anglican Community School- **Mindarie**
- Frederick Irwin Anglican School- **Mandurah**

### **Do we need to be native English speakers?**

You will need to speak clear, correct English in your home anytime the student is around but you do not need to be a native English speaker. If your speech is heavily accented or difficult to understand, we will help you identify that early in the process and probably recommend against hosting. One of the primary objectives of homestay is for students to perfect their English therefore they need to learn from your conversation.

### **Do the students speak English?**

English proficiency will vary but students will speak some basic English when they arrive. Remember though, their goal is to improve these skills through homestay and having conversations with you. You will need to be patient, curious, kind and respectful, especially at first as you navigate new communication.

### **Are any background checks required? How do I apply for these?**

Definitely. The safety of our students is paramount. Each member of your family who is 18 years old or over will be required to submit and maintain a valid Working with Children Check and a National Police Check to participate in our homestay program.

Please contact us for a WWC Check form and we will post to you.

Please apply online for a National Police Check here

<https://auspost.com.au/police-checks>

### **Does this mean that I am the Guardian for the student?**

No. Hosts are the 'local carer', whilst ASCI is the 'welfare holder'. The guardian always remains to be the parent or legal guardian at home, unless a 157N form (<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/form-listing/forms/157N.pdf>) has been signed and approved by Immigration.

### **How long does it take to get a student placed in my home?**

Once you complete the online application, online self-assessment, in person interview, and background checks we begin the process of matching you to the right student. This can happen right away or could take months, depending on demand in your area and what students match with your lifestyle and preferences. It is also dependent on the start times of our teaching terms. The two largest intake periods for our students arriving in country are Jan and June.

**Do I need to be committed to hosting with ASCI when I submit the application?**

Not at all. Submitting the application is a great way to learn more about the specifics of hosting in your area and it doesn't obligate you in any way. You can decide to host or not host at any time, whether it is at the beginning of the process or even if you are already approved or have previously hosted students.

**I am already an active host with another homestay company, can I also be a host with you?**

Yes.

**What is the entire application process and how long does it take?**

The initial online application is just a capture of basic personal and household information and it should take only about 5 minutes to submit it and get the process started. The full process is outlined below:

- Complete the online application (5 minutes)
- Receive your welcome email
- Complete your online profile / submit banking info for payment (you can wait until later in the process)
- Take the online training and self-assessment (under 1 hour)
- Submit and wait for background checks to come back
- Schedule your home interview with your Host Manager
- You are ready!

We do advise you to take your time creating your online profile to ensure we get the best student matches possible, but there's no urgency to get it done. You just need to finish it before we start matching you with students.

**Can I request certain nationalities or a certain gender?**

Yes, you can, though we may invite you to challenge some of your thoughts or assumptions if we feel strongly we have a great match for you. Ultimately, it is your decision.

**What if it doesn't work out?**

If things aren't working and we can't resolve them for you, we'll arrange for the student to move to a different home.

## PAYMENTS

### How much do I get paid to host?

| HOMESTAY PACKAGE | INCLUSIONS   | HOST RATES   |
|------------------|--|--|
| Complete Package | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3 meals per day* (breakfast, lunch &amp; dinner)</li><li>• Private room with lock on door</li><li>• Internet Access</li><li>• Ongoing welfare checks</li><li>• 24/7 Emergency Support Centre</li></ul> | Weekly Rate: \$300 per week<br><br>Room Holding Rate: \$130 per week |

All students will be on our “Complete Package” which includes 3 meals per day.

\*If your student has a dietary requirement that is vegan, gluten free, halal or kosher then an additional \$50 per week is added to the weekly rate to cover these extra costs incurred by host. Therefore, these hosts would receive \$350 per week.

All hosts receive payments by direct deposit every 2 weeks. We provide payments in a 2-week cycle because it means you get paid more frequently and always for the exact number of days you host. Host rates may change at any time but will not affect a current individual placement without prior notice. The term “weekly payment” is equivalent to seven days. Room Holding Rates come into effect when students are not living in the host’s home after 7 consecutive days and this is usually when students return to their home country during holidays.

### Can I make a profit hosting?

Homestay is not designed to be an income generator specifically. If you are careful with your payments and efficient with your spending, you can make a small income. Payments from ASCI are designed to cover the costs associated with accommodating a student, with a little extra to thank you for your efforts.

### How many students can I host?

You can host up to 3 students at a time and as many students consecutively as you like. You are paid per student. We limit hosts to 3 students at a time because the value of homestay is bigger than just the accommodation. It is about the interaction and the personal connection, so we want you to be able to have that with all your students.

### My student wants to pay me directly. What do I do?

No money is to change hands between student and host family. The ASCI model is designed to make the homestay relationship easier by keeping any financial transactions out of your day-to-day communications at home. All financial transactions are an ASCI Finance department function.

ASCI keeps a small percentage of the homestay payments in exchange for managing the administrative and legal tasks and providing the 24/7 Emergency Support Line for hosts and students. Students homestay fees are invoiced by the ASCI Finance Department each term together with their tuition fee statement and is emailed directly to the student’s family for payment.

## FOOD

### **What do international students like to eat?**

Ultimately, students are here to experience Australia, therefore should be eating the everyday foods you prepare in your home. Some students will be very easy-going about food and others will have a harder time adapting or will just be pickier eaters. You'll need to figure this out through conversation and observation. In time, you'll find some go-to favourites and you can also invite your student to cook with you. It will be fun, you'll learn new dishes, and you'll get used to your student likes and dislikes.

### **If I spend more than my budget buying food requested by my student, can I get reimbursed by ASCI?**

If your student asks for special food (eg smoked salmon, prawns), they need to buy that themselves (not ask you to buy it and reimburse you). Invite your student to go to the store with you if you can, then give them the chance to buy the special things they want (within reason). It may be an interesting opportunity for you to learn about local international markets or foods you wouldn't normally buy. Ultimately though, they are here to experience Australia, therefore should be eating the everyday foods you prepare in your home.

### **Do I just buy the food or do I need to cook for my guest?**

Breakfast and lunch are self-serve, so you will only need to have food available for your student but you don't need to prepare it. We ask that dinner is served every day and includes interaction and conversation with your student.

Mealtimes are the best and most rewarding times to connect and build friendships with your students, especially if you are cooking for yourself or your family anyway. Be clear with your student which food is theirs and which you would prefer they do not use.

### **What if my student does not like my cooking?**

Some students will eat anything and some are very picky. But don't worry, If your student isn't connecting with the food in your house, offer to take them to the store with you so they can pick out things they like. You can also invite them to teach you to cook a dish they enjoy or help them find recipes and local ethnic markets if they are new to cooking, but just miss the taste of home. You may also want to create a dedicated shelf so they can keep their favourite foods separate from the household pantry. Sometimes something as simple as finding a sauce or condiment from home can allow your student to easily turn some simple meat and vegetables into something they will love.

### **What if my student is vegetarian or only eats Halal or some special diet?**

You will be able to specify in your profile whether you are willing to support special dietary requirements.

### **What is Halal and is it hard to incorporate it into our family meals?**

Overall, cooking Halal is usually less trouble than it sounds, especially if you live in a city where Halal butchers are nearby. Halal is a process through which meat is butchered and treated, like Kosher. It is the same to prepare Halal meals as meals with conventional meat. You must avoid pork and alcohol and you just need to keep the Halal dishes distinct from the other. However, when a student identifies as a Halal eater, it is worth having a conversation about it. Some may be very strict in their Halal practices but others may be happy to simply avoid pork and alcohol.

## INSURANCE & TAX

### **Does the student have insurance?**

It is mandatory for all students to take out their own health insurance before coming to Australia. It is **your responsibility to provide adequate home and contents insurance** for your situation. Please check with your home insurer as the homestay component may be covered in your current insurance or you may prefer to take extra cover.

### **What's my liability if something happens to the student on my watch? On my property?**

By agreeing to host, you are agreeing to do your best to help and support this visitor, providing a safe and secure environment and assisting them to adjust to the Australian way of life. If something happens to the student on your property, your risk is the same as it would be for any guest in your home.

### **Do I pay taxes on host payments?**

Generally speaking, you can host up to 2 students at any point and the payments will not be tax assessable however we recommend speaking with your accountant about your individual circumstances.

## PRE-ARRIVAL

### **Do I get to meet the student before they arrive or I accept them?**

You will receive information about the student through the online Homestay Management System (HMS), but you won't meet them in person until they arrive at your home. It would be wonderful if you can begin emailing and getting to know your new student before they leave their home country.

### **Do I need to collect the student from the airport when they arrive?**

No. Students will be collected via pre-arranged airport pickup by ASCI. This will be confirmed with you prior to ensure you are home to welcome your student at the appropriate time. Some students may arrive with their parents and stay in a hotel for a few days before arriving at your home. ASCI will contact you to arrange a suitable time for you to welcome the student in your home.

### **How do I make them comfortable?**

For some students this may be the very first time they have left their home country and be traveling alone. Making your student feel comfortable can transform their experience from scary to life-changing and wonderful. Data shows us that international students in a comfortable, warm, supportive, and harmonious home perform better in classes and other endeavors they take on in their new culture.

Making someone comfortable is simple. For example:

- have food and drinks available and offer them regularly at first. Saying "make yourself at home" is easy but most students won't feel comfortable to get what they need on their own. You will need to offer.
- Ask them what they need, especially when they first arrive. Maybe they are tired and would like to rest. Maybe they would love a shower or a meal. Maybe they are excited to get out and get their bank account set up. Maybe they are anxious to get a local Australian mobile phone SIM card so they can call and tell their family they've arrived safely. Give them options.

- Make sure their room is clean and orderly, bed is made and try to make it inviting. A lamp with soft light, some pictures, a vase of flowers, a soft throw blanket or pretty pillow – these things show that you care about their comfort.
- Take them to the grocery store and have them pick some things they like. Set aside an area in the fridge or cabinet for food that they can have anytime and let them know this is for them.
- Ask them about their studies, hobbies, or family. Ask them about anything they've noticed or been curious about since they've arrived in Australia.
- Invite them to join you for errands, to watch TV, or to just sit and visit.

### **What should I do when my student arrives?**

- Confirm the student's safe arrival on your ASCI online host profile. It is essential that you do this in order for the placement to become active and to ensure you are paid correctly.
- Swap contact details with your student (phone and email addresses).
- Provide front door key and show your student how to enter and lock up safely. Show how to use alarm if you have one, get the student to take a photo of outside the home and the nearest corner on their phone.
- Assist the student to set up a SIM card, public transport cards, and bank account.
- Talk about any food allergies, likes/dislikes.
- Sit down together and go through your Household Guidelines.
- Familiarise the student with your home and local area, including dos and don'ts, safety concerns etc.
- Show them where the local shops are.
- Show the student the bus/train route, including how to get to their school. Please travel with your student to the bus/train and run through this process with them.

### **Do I need to provide transportation for my student?**

Please show your student how to use public transport and accompany them for a few trips to allow them to feel comfortable. Please ask them to download the Transperth app and show them how to tag on and off. If you are happy to provide students with a lift this is appreciated but not necessary.

### **Can I host if I have a pet?**

Of course, it just needs to be stated on your profile. Some students will fall in love with your pets. Some will be afraid, allergic, or have a religious prohibition for being around pets. In those cases, we will ensure you aren't matched with that student.

### **What if my student smokes?**

All students under 18 are prohibited from smoking. Occasionally some of our students are over 18 years of age. You do not need to accept a student who states they are a smoker, your house is your house and smoking will not be tolerated unless you allow it. If a student is over 18 years of age and is a smoker, they will be asked to smoke only outside of the house and in whatever area you designate. They will be required to clean up after themselves as you request. If any student disrespects your smoking rules, ASCI will help you correct the problem and will remove the student if it continues.

## HOLIDAYS & OUTINGS

### **What if I need a break or want to go on a holiday?**

You simply log into your ASCI online host profile and set your availability to “unavailable to host” as you’d like. When you are ready for your next student, log back in and let us know you are available again by resetting your status. Alternatively, contact the ASCI Accommodation Coordinator via email and let us know!

### **What is the holiday policy?**

All intended holidays must be reported to our ASCI Accommodation Coordinator with a minimum of at least two weeks notice and a “Vary to Welfare” form must be completed and submitted. Students are NOT ALLOWED to be left unattended at any time.

There are three options:

1. You are welcome to invite your student to join you on a holiday. If you invite them to come along and don’t plan to pay their way (you are never obligated to pay their way), just let them know in advance what the costs will be so they can decide whether it fits with their budget.
2. If the student is staying behind you may be able to have a trustworthy and reliable family or friend to move in to look after the student. This person must provide valid clearances and will need to be interviewed in person by our ASCI Accommodation Coordinator. This person will act as the “host” and are responsible for continuing to provide all meals and a safe and clean home environment. This will need to be approved by ASCI.
3. If you want the student to be transferred to another homestay while you are away we require a minimum of 2 weeks notice, you may be requested to drop your students to the new homestay and collect them when you return. You will not be paid your weekly fee for this period if your student is temporarily in another homestay.

### **Do I take my student out to dinner, on excursions, and on family trips?**

We ask that you include your student as much as you are comfortable to but you are certainly not obligated to include them in everything. Your payment will help cover costs but if you don’t want to absorb the expense of a meal out or an excursion, just talk with your student ahead of time about what the cost will be for them and allow them to decide whether or not they would like to go along. Showing a student around and giving them new experiences can be very rewarding for your family though, so don’t miss an opportunity to be a great host and give your student a wonderful experience to remember!

### **If I invite my student to come with me to an event, do I have to pay for them?**

You are not expected to pay for your student if you go on a trip, excursion, or out to eat at a restaurant. Just talk to your student ahead of time to let them know how much it will cost and allow them to decide whether they’d like to spend the money to join you. If you’d like to offer to pay for them, you are welcome to do that.

### **Will students have their own spending money?**

Yes. All students will have their own money. You are expected to pay for their food as per their complete homestay package and to be a gracious host as you would for any guest. You are not expected to pay the student’s expenses beyond your host agreement and hospitality.

## RESPONSIBILITIES & RULES

### **Am I responsible for helping to get an Australian mobile phone SIM? What about co-signing on a bank account or gym membership for a student?**

We do ask you to take your student to purchase an Australian mobile phone SIM card and assist them in setting up a bank account when they first arrive as they will not be familiar with Australia or their surroundings. Hosts should help students understand options, contracts, and commitments, but **never** co-sign or pay for services for the student. Your student should be responsible for their own personal business, with your help and support.

### **Do I need to provide a house key for my student?**

Yes. The student needs access to the home at all times.

### **What is the student curfew?**

Students are required to comply with ASCI curfew guidelines while staying with an ASC International homestay host. These are below:

#### **Sunday to Thursday**

- ✓ Junior High School (Years 7 to 10) - no later than 6pm\*
- ✓ Senior High School (Years 11 to 12) - no later than 9pm\*

#### **Friday/Saturday and School Holidays**

- ✓ Junior High School (Years 7 to 10) - no later than 9:00pm\*
- ✓ Senior High School (Years 11 to 12) - no later than 11:00pm\*

\* unless for a school-approved extracurricular activity.

If your student is going out they must tell you where they are going, how they are getting there, who they are going with, what they will be doing and the time they will be home. It is advisable that they take with them a fully charged mobile phone programmed with your contact numbers and carry a card that contains the same details. It is a good idea for you to have a phone number for one of the people they are with, or another parent, in case there is a problem with your student's phone and you need to contact them.

### **Can I have my own set of house rules?**

Yes. It is important to set your house rules and expectations and communicate them clearly at the beginning of the placement. Remember that young students are like young people everywhere. They may need to hear the rules a few times and be shown examples of what you expect. Be clear, firm, kind and patient. It is also a good idea to leave a laminated copy of the house rules in their bedroom.

### **Do I need to clean their rooms and pick up after them? What about their bathroom?**

No – you should be a gracious and welcoming host but the student is responsible to take care of their own mess and space. Make your expectations and household guidelines very clear when the student arrives and remind them of these rules should they not be following them.

Remember however, many students, may have never cleaned before and may not know how. Consider showing your student how to clean, where to find the supplies and what you expect for frequency and standards. You may need to follow up and give them feedback (and offer some kind patience) as they learn.

### **What about laundry?**

Talk with your student to find out what works best for you and for them. Some students (especially young women) may not want anyone handling their private things. Some will want to wash things too often or not at all, in which case it may be easier and more hygienic for you to do the washing for them. If you decide together that they will do their own laundry, show them clearly how to do it. Be very detailed – how much soap to use, water levels, what times of day are ok for laundry and how often they are welcome to use it. Do the laundry together a couple of times if this is new to them. Whether they do the laundry or you do, provide the student with a laundry basket for their own use.

### **Can I ask the student to participate in household chores?**

Yes. The student is responsible for cleaning up after him or herself and for contributing to the household as a family member would. That said, it is not ok to use the student as additional household help or as a free babysitter.

## **COMMON QUESTIONS**

### **Who do I contact in case of a student emergency?**

If it is life threatening then please call local Emergency Services on 000. For all other emergencies please call our **Emergency Support Line on 1300 697 829**.

Your call will be triaged and depending on the seriousness of the situation one of our ASCI staff will be contacted immediately.

### **Who do I contact regarding general hosting or student welfare queries?**

The ASCI Accommodation Coordinator on [homestay@asci.edu.au](mailto:homestay@asci.edu.au) or phone: 6319 7780.

If it is a student welfare issue then the Accommodation Coordinator will forward to our Student Services Coordinator who will contact you.

### **The student refuses to turn off the lights at night, what should I do?**

Students sometimes feel uncomfortable turning all the lights off at night. Try a nightlight or changing the lightbulb to one with lower wattage. You can also explain to your student that electricity is expensive in Australia and that it isn't acceptable to leave lights on.

### **The student asked me to purchase a special personal item for the bathroom. Am I responsible for that?**

No. Be sure the student has the basics – clean towels, toilet paper – and offer to take your student to the store with you sometimes so they can purchase additional items they need. Students are responsible for purchasing their own toiletries such as soap, shampoos, conditioners, deodorant, etc.

### **My student is feeling very unhappy/depressed – what do I do?**

Students get homesick and overwhelmed sometimes. Studying far from home in an unfamiliar culture and language is a very difficult thing to do. If your student is struggling, please contact the ASCI Student Services Coordinator who will notify the school to get resources in line to help your student.

### **Can I be in touch with the student's parents?**

Yes. In the case of emergency however, always contact ASCI immediately as they are responsible for contacting the parents and follow a set protocol.

**Are my students allowed to have overnight guests?**

You make the rules for your house and assuming they are reasonable, your student is expected to do their best to honour your rules. Most hosts would not want additional overnight guests. If overnight guests are welcome in your house, you can negotiate the specifics with your student so that it works for you. The student will need to have permission from ASCI to have overnight guests and ASCI must be provided with a copy of written confirmation from the host and the student's parents before any overnight stays will be approved. A minimum of two weeks' notice must be given to ASCI.

**What should you do if the student's parents wish to stay?**

Homestay is for the student only. Parents must stay at a nearby hotel. It's important to have clear boundaries about whether you are comfortable having parents visit or not.

**My student would like to leave homestay. What do I do?**

Notify the ASCI Accommodation Coordinator as soon as possible and we'll work with the student to make arrangements. Students must complete and submit a "Request to Vary Welfare Arrangements" form to ASCI with a minimum of 2 weeks written notice before leaving a homestay.

We will do our best to ensure a smooth transition for you and the student. Ask them for their forwarding address so you can send on any mail that arrives for them. Ask them how they will get to their new accommodation and assist them if they need help. This does not mean that you have to transport them but they may need assistance in calling a taxi or getting to the train or bus.

**What should my student call me?**

This is your choice. It can be formal i.e. Mr. or Mrs. or casual i.e. your given name or simply Mum and Dad.

**Is it ok for me to go into my student's room when they are not there?**

Privacy is important. The student's room should be private to them during their stay with you and ideally have an internal lock. The lock can simply be a basic latch. If you plan to clean the room then let the student know when you will do this.

**What should you do on the day that a student leaves?**

Assist your student to move to their next destination or airport (if required.) Update your availability on the ASCI online profile, making sure you indicate that your home is free to receive another student if you wish.