



## OBJECTIVE

Red Deer International Education Alliance (RDIEA)\* Homestay Services Program will provide caring, nurturing Homestay placements for international students. Our families will strive to create a family environment in which students can achieve positive personal growth, as well as academic success.

*\*RDIEA is a partnership for homestay between RDPSPD/RDRCD/RDC.*

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF HOMESTAY PROVIDERS

As a Homestay family, use your caring and nurturing talents to make your international student feel accepted as a member of your family. You need to be aware of your student's emotional and physical wellness.

Your new family member deserves proper care – emotional and physical. He/she needs the same care you would give your own child. Your student also needs to feel that you genuinely care about him/her. If your student feels this, the bonding process will be much easier.

## PHYSICAL WELLBEING

Provide healthy, nutritious meals and snacks to ensure physical wellbeing. If you will not be home for dinner, try to prepare a meal that can be easily heated or microwaved. Encourage your student to exercise, get proper sleep, and eat a balanced diet.

- Provide regular meals and snacks
- Provide fresh, healthy meals
- Encourage physical activity
- Facilitate their involvement

Most students like to be involved in physical activity – encourage your student to participate. Physical fitness will help them feel well and happy.



## EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Providing opportunities for your new family member to interact with other people will reduce boredom and improve emotional wellbeing. Include your student in your family activities, but as with any teenager, give him/her adequate time to spend with friends. Whenever possible, include your student in family discussions and decisions. Ask their advice. It might be interesting to learn how another culture might handle certain situations.

## SPIRITUAL WELLBEING

Adequate time should be allotted for spiritual devotion, personal reflection and/or quiet time. If your student wants to go to a particular church other than your own, you should make this a possibility and a priority. You may even find another family with a child of the same religion that is interested in car pooling and spending time together.

## ACADEMIC WELLBEING

As you would for your own child, you may need to provide academic support for your student. Provide quiet opportunities for students to study.

## COMMUNICATION, COMMUNICATION, COMMUNICATION

This year will be a learning experience for you in many areas. There will be awkward moments, confusing situations, and times of disillusionment. Strong communication skills are the key components to every healthy relationship. Sometimes communication is difficult and compromise is needed. Sometimes we need time to think things through. Difficult situations can usually be worked out if they are dealt with calmly and respectfully. IN CASES WHERE A MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY OUTCOME CANNOT BE REACHED, MEDIATION IS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE HOMESTAY COORDINATOR.

This will be a wonderful year for you but there will be lots of ups and downs. You will need to always be honest and open with your student. Try to be supportive. Whether your student is lonely or having trouble with school work, friends etc., your advice and reassurance is always welcome. While you cannot anticipate his/her every need, honesty and openness will provide a strong foundation for your relationships.

Your student is far from home and will likely go through culture shock and homesickness. Compassion is necessary to help your student feel accepted, secure and loved.

#### ADAPTING TO A NEW CULTURE

Your new family member will experience many changes during his/her first few weeks. He/she may feel disoriented and may suffer physical side effects. This is normal under the circumstances. This should be a short time of discomfort. As your student grows accustomed to the new environment, he/she will relax and gradually feel better.

Special considerations may have to be given due to cultural differences. Your student may require certain things in his/her diet. This provides an opportunity to share in the delights of food. Seek out ethnic grocery stores and let your student share new food from their home.

- Disorientation and physical discomfort can be expected
- Compassion and consideration will help overcome culture shock and homesickness
- Share cultural experiences such as dining.



## HOMESTAY REGULATIONS

### HOUSEHOLD DUTIES

Your student is not a houseguest, but rather considered a member of your family unit. As a member of your family, he/she will be expected to work with your family to make the household run efficiently. Taking part in household chores such as sweeping and vacuuming floors, dusting, cleaning the bathtub after use, cleaning bathroom counters, assisting with meal time dishes and helping to put groceries away are just some of the ways your student can help out. Students are expected to keep their room and study area neat and tidy and are responsible for doing their own laundry. Many students may not have performed any of these responsibilities before and you may need to supply proper instruction.

### DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

The use of alcohol and drugs is prohibited and may result in the student being sent home. In Canada it is illegal for people under 18 years to purchase cigarettes and illegal to purchase and consume alcohol. Illegal activity of any kind may result in criminal charges and the student being sent home. If you notice your student engaging in illegal activity contact the Program Director or Homestay Coordinator immediately.

### RULES AND CURFEWS

Homestay families will establish their own rules and curfews, with guidance from RDIEA when necessary. Respect and courtesy for these guidelines is mandatory during your student's Homestay. Rules and curfews should be established according to age. Curfews should be fair, within reason, and liveable for your household. Make sure your student has access to proper transportation home at night. Ensuring the safety of your new family member is your responsibility. You are your student's parents for the year and you are accountable for them.

### PHONE AND INTERNET USAGE

It is recommended that student's use their personal calling cards to make long distance calls. Canadian protocol dictates that no phone calls should come in after 10:00 pm

and no calls on weekends before 9:00 am. Students should be asked to respect these as quiet times in your household. We strongly recommend that computers with internet access are not provided in student bedrooms. Monitor student internet usage carefully. Excessive usage is strongly discouraged.



### **MONEY**

Homestay families are required to provide a home and nourishing food. Any clothing, extra school expenses, personal hygiene items, and spending money are the responsibility of your student. You may want to inquire every few months regarding how their funds are holding out and remind them to ask their parents to send more funds when necessary to avoid running out. It is unwise to lend money.

### **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

Students are expected to attend all classes daily. Homestay parents of primary and secondary students are expected to contact the school if their student will be absent due to illness. In the event that you receive contact from the school to state that your student has missed classes contact Program Director or Homestay Coordinator.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR SUCCESS**

Family expectations, household responsibilities, and rules should be established shortly after your student arrives in your home. It can be difficult and uncomfortable to try and establish routines after your student has been treated as a houseguest with no responsibilities and expectations.

Make a small itinerary to give to your student when he/she arrives. Provide information about your schedules of work, regular weekly activities, your home, business and cell numbers. It is very important that you provide your student with a key to your home.

Respecting each others' need for privacy will give everyone a little down time to regroup and rejuvenate. Please monitor this closely. If your student appears depressed and overly withdrawn, he/she may need someone to talk to about his or her difficulties.

You are not expected to cater to your student's every whim. If your student needs to do something at a particular time, let them know that you will gladly

help, but encourage them to ask with as much notice as possible to give you time to adjust your own schedule. Encourage your student to leave his/her belongings in their room. This will help your home from getting cluttered and help the student to avoid misplacing items.

Your student is here to experience life in a different culture. Help them to do so at every opportunity. For many, this is a once in a life time experience. Cherish your time with your new student. Make the most of your new adventure. Take every chance you can to offer something new – food, cultural events, and sports activities that your student may never be able to experience in his/her own country. You are encouraged to learn as much as you can about your student's culture for your own personal growth.

Please refer to our website for more information –

[www.rdpsd.ab.ca/internationalservices](http://www.rdpsd.ab.ca/internationalservices)

### **Contact Information:**

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