

UBC English Language Institute

HOMESTAY PROGRAM

HOST FAMILY HANDBOOK

Contact Us

UBC ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

English Language Institute
2121 West Mall
Vancouver, BC Canada V6T 1Z4

Tel: +1 604 822 1555

Fax: +1 604 822 1579

eli.ubc.ca

HOMESTAY DEPARTMENT

We are available for guidance, support and advice Monday to Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm by phone. We also offer a 24-hour emergency phone number.

Homestay Placement Officer

Tel: +1 604 822 2436 or 604 822 1531

Homestay Coordinator

Tel: +1 604 822 1463

Homestay Emergency Number (in case of a missing student or student accident or severe illness)

Cell: +1 604 836 3045

eli.ubc.ca/accommodation/homestay

We acknowledge that the UBC Vancouver campus is on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Musqueam people.

This homestay handbook is current as of October 2020. Note that future editions of this handbook may contain changes to homestay policies.

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WELCOME TO THE UBC HOMESTAY PROGRAM

Thank you for your interest in the UBC English Language Institute (ELI) homestay program. You are an important partner of the ELI, and we appreciate the key role homestays play for the success of our international students.

Without you, our students would not enjoy a fully immersive Canadian cultural experience. We are grateful that you have chosen to take on this meaningful and important responsibility.

As a homestay host, you act as a team member with the ELI. The ELI Homestay Department is here to support you. Please take the time to read this handbook carefully before you apply to become a homestay host family.

HOW TO BECOME A HOST FAMILY

1. Fill out the Host Family Agreement.<
<https://eli.ubc.ca/sites/eli.ubc.ca/files/uploads/documents/eli-host-family-application.pdf>>
2. Arrange a home visit by a member of the UBC Homestay Department.
3. Consult with your home insurance provider about hosting a student.
4. Arrange for a Police Information Check – Vulnerable Sector<
<https://vancouver.ca/police/organization/records-checks-fingerprinting/index.html>> and drop off or send a scanned copy of the completed check to the ELI once you receive it from the Vancouver Police Department.
5. The ELI Homestay Department will send you an email with details about the student(s) that have been placed in your home.
6. Fill in and submit an electronic fund transfer (EFT) form for direct deposits.
7. Your student(s) will be sent your contact information. Please ensure you've communicated with your student(s) before their arrival. This can be done by email or an app like FaceTime, WhatsApp, Skype, Zoom, WeChat, etc.
8. You'll welcome your student(s) into your home up to two days before the start of their program.
9. Students are provided an orientation and watch a video about homestay on the first day of class. They're given a yellow host information sheet about important house rules that you should complete with your student.

HOMESTAY REMUNERATION AND PAYMENTS

As of January 2023, all students pay \$65 per night for homestay. Those students who come in a group will pay the host family through direct deposit. In order to sign up for direct deposit from the ELI, we will send you an electronic funds transfer (EFT) form that you must fill out with a void cheque attached to be mailed or dropped off at the ELI. Your first payment may take up to seven days to be deposited to your account and will arrive by the first of each month after that (depending on the term your student is enrolled in). Independent students who are not here with a group pay their host family directly.

If a student leaves a homestay for seven nights or more (for a holiday or to visit home or relatives) you will receive half the nightly homestay fee while they are away.

Homestay families can host a maximum of three students, generally of the same gender. Mixed genders may be placed in the same homestay if they live on separate floors and have separate washrooms.

Important note

Homestay hosts cannot charge a student additional private fees (e.g. for toilet paper, extra food, internet access). The Homestay Department reserves the right to move a student immediately and declare a homestay inactive in the event that a homestay has charged a student additional fees.

Please be aware that student placements are never guaranteed, and a homestay host must not rely on homestay fees as a source of assured income.

LOSS AND DAMAGE

The UBC English Language Institute and UBC are not liable or responsible for the actions, conduct, damage or other behaviours of the student(s) while in the homestay. Any damage or loss done by either the student(s) or the host family is to be addressed and solved by the host family and student.

HOMESTAY RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

Homestay offers students a home away from home, where they can practise English outside the classroom and learn about Canadian life and customs.

It's important for students enrolled in the ELI to have the opportunity to experience life in an English-speaking environment. To enhance language learning, we recommend that students live where English is spoken.

We require homestay hosts provide a respectful and safe space free of discrimination that is inclusive and accepting of all students and their cultures and differences.

The following are the rules, expectations and guidelines for host families:

Accommodation, Amenities and Meals

Host families must:

- provide the student a clean private room with adequate bedding, door (with or without a lock), dresser, closet, desk, chair and table lamp
- offer comfortable access to common areas of the house, such as the family room and kitchen
- supply extra blankets during the colder months. Canadians tend to keep their homes cooler than what many students are accustomed to.
- provide soap, toilet paper and detergent to wash clothes. Students supply their own toiletries (shampoo, tooth paste, cosmetics etc.)
- prepare or offer three healthy and adequate meals per day with access to snacks. Check in regularly with your student to make sure they are getting enough food.
- encourage and be available to have dinner with your student as often as possible.
- show how to make lunches/snacks more than one time. Be mindful that the kitchen and all the food is unfamiliar to your student. Be patient while they learn your household.
- provide a key or code so your student can come and go from your home
- provide internet access
- show student how and where to catch public transit and help them buy a Compass Card
- be clear about house rules about meal schedules, laundry (at least once a week), shower times (no more than 15 minutes and no later than 10 pm), how to not disturb the family when coming home late, keeping their room tidy, etc.

Communications and Changes to Host Family Situations

- Please ensure your contact information is in your student's phone, and you have theirs.
- Provide a working email address to the Homestay Department for prompt communication.
- Advise the Homestay Department if you will be away for more than two days and who will be staying with your student. Let the Homestay Department know if you need your student to be placed in a temporary homestay while you are away.
- Please alert the Homestay Department if there have been significant life changes in your home (i.e. family member moves in/out, separation/divorce, host parent illness, house is listed or sold, new pet). These can have ramifications and an effect on your student.
- Contact the Homestay Department immediately if any resident in your house has been charged with or convicted of an offence of any kind.

Medical Attention

Students have medical insurance coverage (iMed) so they can access health care in Canada. It is a homestay host's responsibility to reassure and give assistance to a sick student so they can get the care and attention they may need in order to get back to health.

It is important that you support a student if they become sick while staying in your homestay. A student may need a ride or help to see a doctor. Please be mindful that a student is far from home and will feel especially vulnerable if they do not feel well.

Advise the Homestay Department if your students will miss school due to illness and if the illness is more serious than just a common cold. Do not hesitate to call the homestay office if you are worried about your student's physical or mental health.

TRAVEL, CHANGES IN ARRANGEMENTS AND ABSENCES

STUDENT ARRIVAL / DEPARTURE

Independent Students

An independent (solo) student will arrive at Vancouver International Airport (YVR) on their own and make their way to your homestay. We advise independent students to contact their homestay before they come to Canada to discuss their arrival and the best way for them to get to the homestay.

Students can take a cab, public transit or a ride hail to your home. You are free to pick them up yourself at the airport or meet them at a predetermined location such as a SkyTrain station if you so choose.

When your student is ready to go home, they can make their way to the airport on their own, or you may choose to drive them to the airport. Some students choose to stay on in Canada for travel or further studies.

Student Groups

Students who are part of a group will be greeted at YVR by Language Limousine and delivered to their homestay. Language Limousine will also pick up departing student groups at their homestays and take them to YVR.

STUDENT MOVES

Students and homestay hosts are matched by the Homestay Department. Students are required to go to the homestay where they have been initially been placed, and cannot change before they arrive in Vancouver.

Students can, however, choose to move out of homestays and do so for many different reasons. Sometimes the makeup of the homestay changes (i.e. the house has sold or another family member has moved in/out) and sometimes the placement is just not a good fit.

The Homestay Department will talk to both parties and try to find a reasonable solution to any issue. But sometimes it is best for everyone that the student moves. It is best not to assign blame and simply move a student with respect to a different homestay.

The Homestay Department will give two weeks' notice to a homestay when a student wants to move. There are times, however, when a student must move immediately and without notice.

It is the Homestay Department's discretion how quickly a student will move. We reserve the right to remove a student without notice.

Hosts are required to return the remainder of the homestay fee if a student has moved. Failing to return the remainder of the homestay fee will result in the homestay becoming inactive.

HOST PARENT ABSENCES

Sometimes a host family has to leave town. Family weddings, funerals, illness or a vacation can happen while you are hosting a student. Please contact the Homestay Department to discuss and find the right solution for your student. **A student must not be left home alone while their host family goes out of town.**

You may have a close friend or family member who can step in and stay in your house with your student while you are away. They would need to provide a Police Information Check just like you did when you became a homestay.

The student can also stay with a temporary homestay while your family is out of town. We have many host families who are available to do temporary coverage and some families prefer to be on the temporary homestay list.

THINGS TO DO WITH YOUR STUDENT

Vancouver has an endless variety of attraction and amenities. Here are some of the more popular spots that past students and their homestay hosts have enjoyed. Note you are not obligated to buy tickets to venues or events for your student.

- Gastown
- Spanish Banks / Jericho Beach / Kitsilano Beach
- Chinatown
- English Bay / Stanley Park / Vancouver Aquarium
- Grouse Mountain
- Granville Island / Aquabus
- Capilano Suspension Bridge
- Vancouver Art Gallery
- Shopping on Main Street / Commercial Drive / West 4th Avenue
- Pacific Centre or Metrotown
- Olympic Village / False Creek
- Queen Elizabeth Park
- Sports event like Vancouver Giants, Vancouver Whitecaps or BC Lions
- Lighthouse Park (West Vancouver)
- Day trip to Whistler

For more ideas on activities, events and festivals in and around Vancouver, visit [Tourism Vancouver](https://www.tourismvancouver.com/).< <https://www.tourismvancouver.com/>>

SUPPORT FOR HOMESTAYS AND STUDENTS

Hosting an international student in your home can be an enriching, educational and rewarding experience.

We also understand, however, that becoming a host family takes time and patience, and has an impact on your household.

We ask our students to give their new homestay a chance. Students can be homesick, experience culture shock and feel stressed in a new environment. Most things will be unfamiliar – everything from the food and water, to the transit system, to Canadian culture and values. Remember, too, that English is not their first language, which can limit their ability to communicate effectively.

In turn, we ask our homestays to show patience and empathy for their student. We understand you are inviting a stranger into your home which may at first feel disruptive. **If you feel you**

need support at any time during the homestay, we are here to help. You can contact one of our staff by phone or email (contact information can be found at the front of his handbook).

Please don't hesitate to contact us for information, advice, questions or support.