



HOST FAMILY HANDBOOK

Last updated: February 2025



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

English Language Institute
Faculty of Education

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1

Welcome

2

How to become a host at the ELI

4

Booking a student

Student arrival/departure

5

Student moves

6

Communications & Changes to
host family situations

7

Homestay remuneration &
payment

8

Homestay rules & expectations

10

Medical attention & safety

Inappropriate behaviour

11

Loss & damage

12

Homestay team at the ELI

WELCOME TO ELI HOMESTAY

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

University of British Columbia
English Language Institute
2121 West Mall
Vancouver BC, V6T 1Z4
Canada

Tel: +1 604 822 1555
Email: eli.registration@ubc.ca

eli.ubc.ca
eli.ubc.ca/accommodation/homestay



This homestay handbook is current as of Mar 2024. Note that future editions of this handbook may contain changes to homestay policies.

Copyright © 2024

All rights reserved. Printed in Canada.

WELCOME TO THE UBC HOMESTAY PROGRAM

Thank you for your interest in the UBC English Language Institute (ELI) homestay program. We appreciate the key role homestays play for the success of our international students. Because of you, our students can 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. Please take the time to read this handbook carefully before you apply to become a homestay host family and refer to it as needed.

HOW TO BECOME A HOST FAMILY

1. Fill out the Host Family Application and Agreement.
2. The Homestay Department will review your application and if you meet the requirements, we will contact you to set up a home visit.
3. A member of the Homestay team will conduct a home visit- this is a chance to get to know you and see if your family and home are suitable for hosting an international student.



4. After the home visit you will be sent a 'Starting Up' email and must complete the following steps to set up your host profile:

- a. Complete a Police Information Check-Vulnerable Sector for every adult in the home aged 19 or older through **VPD** <https://vpd.ca/contact-us/police-information-checks/>. Drop off or send a scanned copy of the completed check to the ELI once you receive it from the Vancouver Police Department (the fee is \$86 per person and hosts are responsible for covering this cost).
- b. Fill in and submit an electronic fund transfer (EFT) form for direct deposit payments. **Please follow the instructions carefully and if using a digital void cheque, it must be stamped by your financial institution.**
- c. Send photos of your home, pets, the student's room, bathroom, shared living spaces and a photo of the family for your host profile.

5. Provide the Homestay Department information about your availability- that way you will be added to the available host lists

6. When a student(s) become available the Homestay team will contact you to confirm if you are able to host.

7. Once you confirm, you will be matched with a student. Your student(s) will be sent your contact information. Please ensure you communicate 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. Students will arrive 1-2 days before the program start date and stay upwards of 2 days after the program ends. Anything beyond please reach out to the homestay team to discuss.



BOOKING A STUDENT

To book a student please contact one of our homestay placement officers (Jessica or Jordan) to let them know your availability. Once contacted we can add you to our availability list. Once a student is available we will reach out to you. Student details are emailed via an official confirmation letter 2-4 weeks prior to the program start date.

**** Please provide at least 2 weeks' notice to the English Language Institute prior to the arrival of the student if you can no longer host that student. Failure to do so could lead to being removed from the program.****

STUDENT ARRIVAL / DEPARTURE

****Please note students may arrive 1-2 days before their program start date and depart 1-2 days after their program ends.****

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 in Canada longer for travel or further studies.

Group Students

Some students coming with a group may require a pick-up service. Hosts will be informed of this prior and will be required to pick up the students from a designated pick-up point. Students will be greeted at YVR by a transport service and taken to a pick-up point where the host will be required to pick-up their student and take them to their home.

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 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. 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 up to the Homestay Department's discretion as to 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. Hosts may send the reimbursement via cheque, cash, or bank draft.

Homestay families can host a maximum of three students, all of the same gender. Each student must have their own private room.

COMMUNICATIONS AND CHANGES TO HOST FAMILY SITUATIONS OR ABSENCES

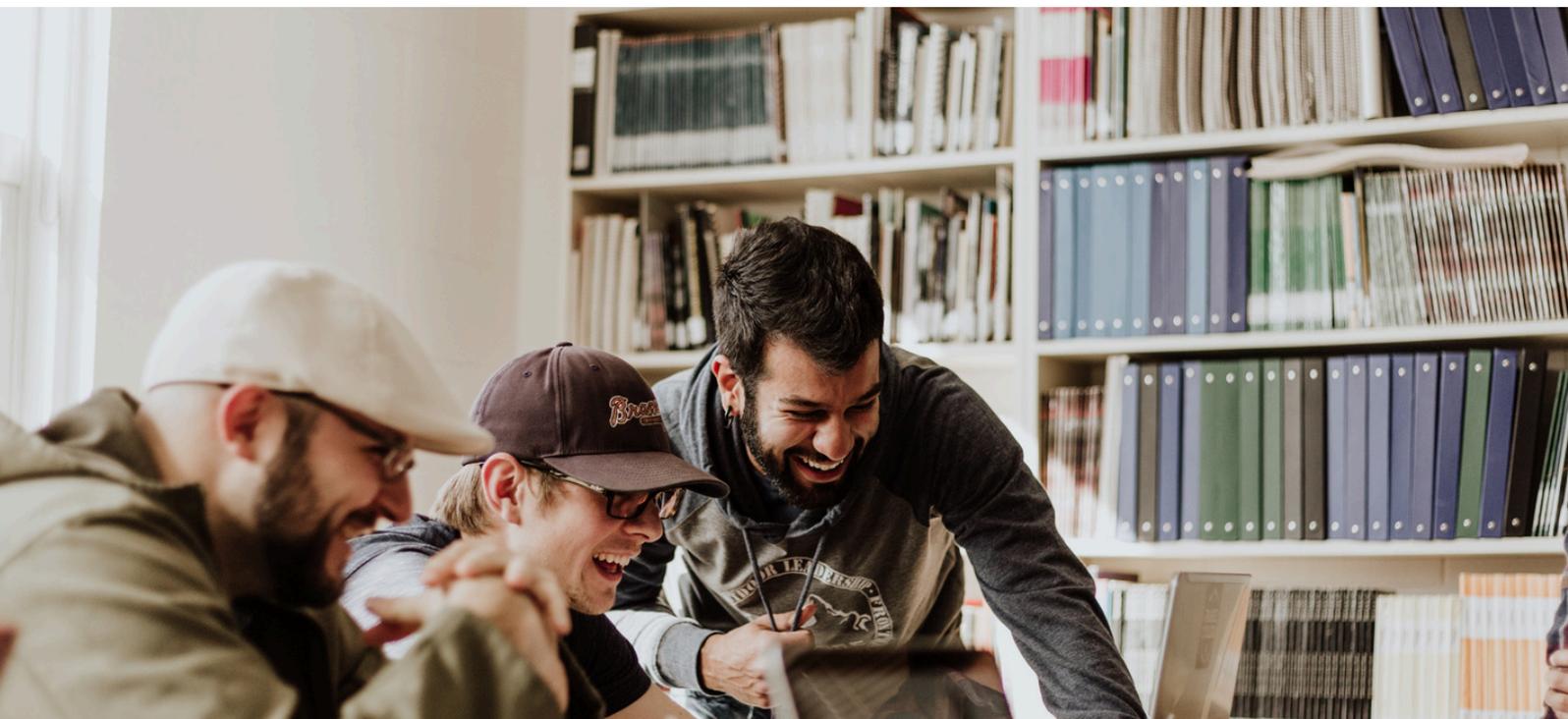
Please ensure you and your student exchange contact information.

Sometimes a host family has to leave town. Family weddings, funerals, illness, or a vacation can happen while you are hosting a student. Advise the Homestay Department if you will be going away and who will be staying with your student in your absence. The person covering for you **MUST** have a Police Information Check (PIC) **and must be cleared by the homestay team at least two weeks beforehand.**

Please let the Homestay Department know if you need your student to be placed in a temporary homestay while you are away. **Under no circumstances should students spend the night alone in your home.**

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.



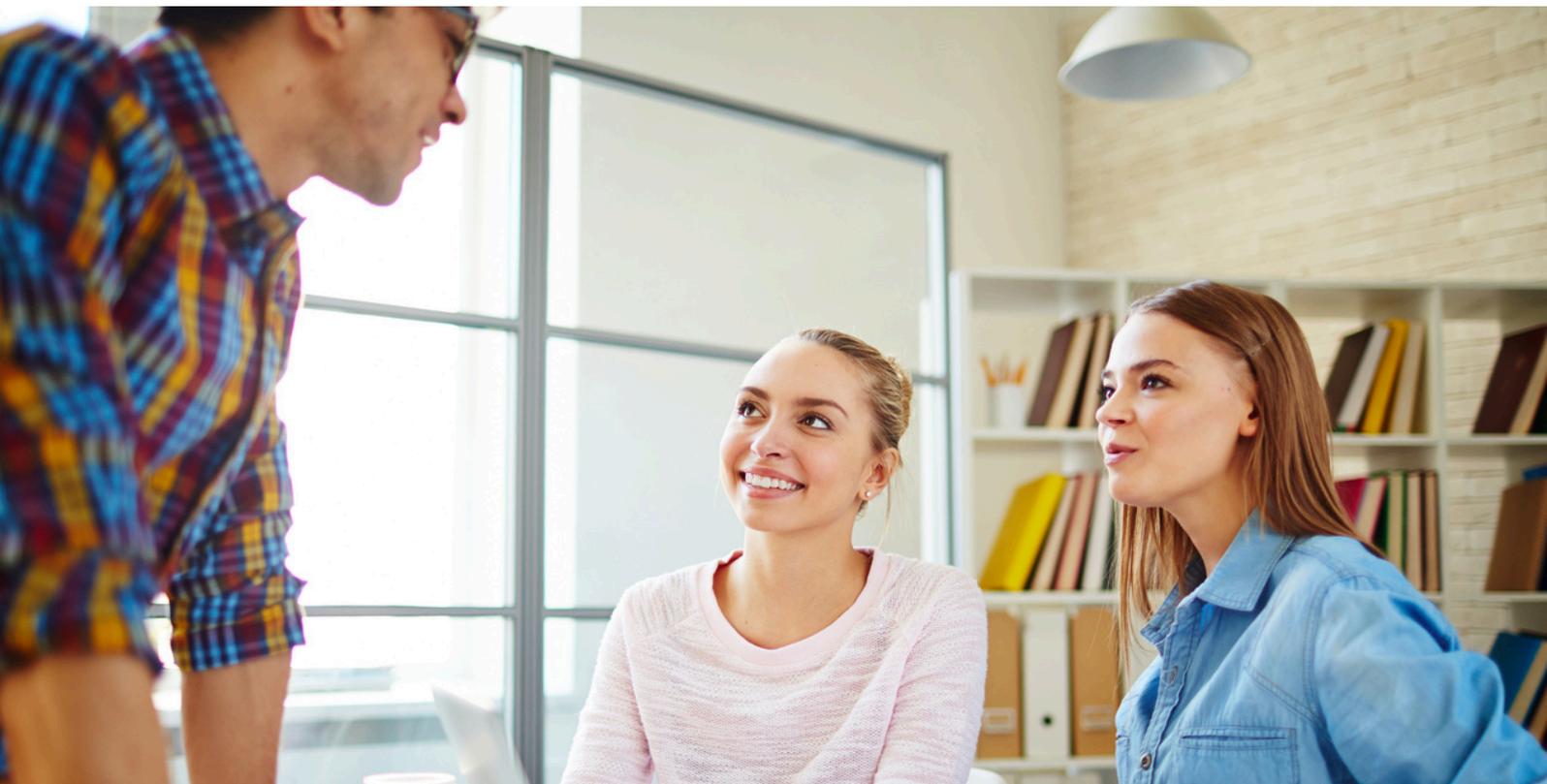
HOMESTAY REMUNERATION AND PAYMENTS

The rate for all students is \$65 per night. Independent students pay hosts directly (cash, etransfer, Paypal etc.) Hosts for group students are paid by the ELI through direct deposit. **Starting in February 2025 those host families who receive payment from UBC ELI for a group student will receive a T4a slip.** 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.

Important note

Homestay hosts cannot charge a student additional private fees (e.g. for toilet paper, extra food, gas, 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 any 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.



HOMESTAY RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

Homestay offers students a home away from home, where they can practice 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:

- 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.
- teach your student about your pet – many students have never lived with a pet
- 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 and meal schedules, laundry (at least once a week), shower times (no more than 10 minutes and no later than 10 pm), how to not disturb the family when coming home late, keeping their room tidy, etc.
- try not to assume your student knows things – show more than tell



MEDICAL ATTENTION AND SAFETY

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.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

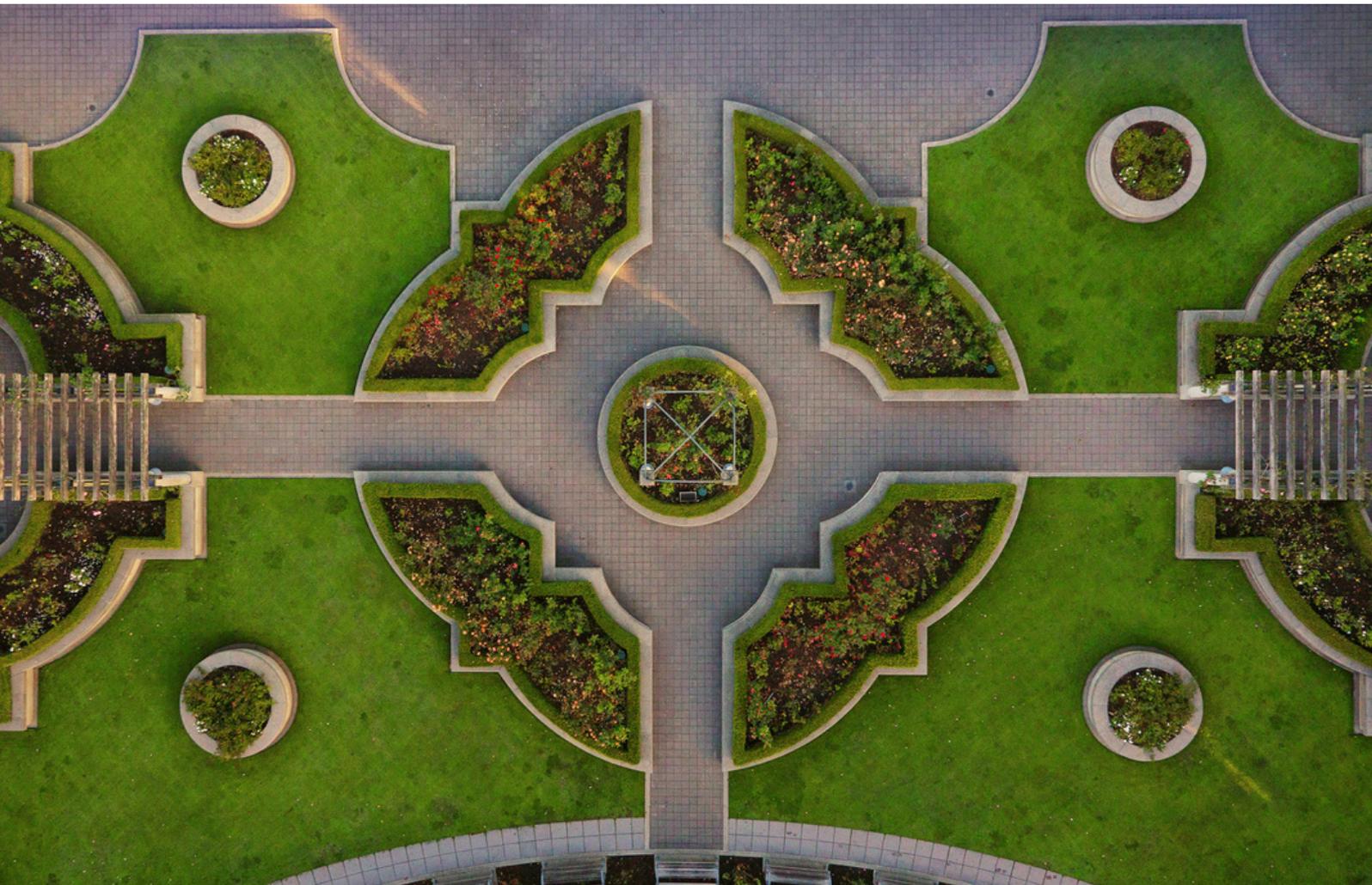
Inform the Homestay Department immediately if significant problems with a student should arise, ie: failure to attend school, illegal drug or alcohol use, or emotional issues. Respect your student's personal and physical boundaries as well as the student's culture, beliefs, values and personal boundaries.

Any behavior toward a student that makes them feel intimidated, manipulated, controlled, coerced or disrespected will not be tolerated and can lead to hosts being removed from the program. Unwelcomed physical touch or any form of aggression will not be tolerated and can be grounds for students being removed from the home and host deemed inactive.

UBC Sexual misconduct policy:
[Sexual Misconduct Policy \(ubc.ca\)](https://www.ubc.ca/sexual-misconduct-policy)

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 Department

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

Homestay & Accommodation Manager

Kerstin Dashkewytch
+1 604 822 1463
eli.homestay@ubc.ca

Homestay Placement Coordinators

Jessica Babij
+1 604 827 0271
eli.homestay@ubc.ca

Jordan Neale
+1 604 822 1531
eli.homestay@ubc.ca

Homestay Emergency Number

(in case of a missing student, student accident or severe illness)

+1 604 836 3045





**CONNECT
WITH US
ON SOCIAL!**

Facebook @TheUBCELI
Instagram @UBCELI



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

English Language Institute
Faculty of Education